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EDITORIAL

Iro Konstantinou | *Editor*

Covid-19 and its possible long-lasting impact on education has been covered widely in various publications. Indeed, our previous journal issue debated what we can learn from Covid-19 to ensure schools can come out of this stronger to the benefit of students. This journal issue takes the discussion a step further and we are hoping to re-imagine education through reflecting on what the aims of education are and how it can contribute towards human fulfilment. There is a growing body of academics and educators working in the space of human flourishing, education which promotes happiness, and character education, all of which link to the idea of how education can ensure students fulfil their potential during and after their education. This journal issue forms part of this wider discussion, and the contributors come from and draw upon several disciplines and theoretical standpoints.

Our guest editor, Jonathan Beale, provides an overview of several theoretical perspectives on and practical responses to what the aims of education are. Discussing the work of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, the field of positive psychology, Abraham Maslow, UNESCO, and the Harvard Human Flourishing Program, and their definitions of what education should do to enable students to flourish and experience fulfilment, Beale sets out some of the theoretical frameworks which are explored in this issue. Following the guest editorial, three Eton College students in Year 12, Zachary Marinov, Cees Armstrong, and Maxwell DeLorenzo, set out their responses to what the aims of education should be, drawing on their experiences as current school students.

Daniel Soars argues that schools need to focus more on teaching students that they do not need to 'do' anything in order to be accepted and valued as persons and have a fulfilling life. In light of this, Soars argues that schools should teach students how to do 'nothing other than what they are doing' and how to enjoy doing 'nothing in particular'. Kenneth Primrose reflects on St Augustine's insight that character educators should seek to reach the heart before the head, and should do so by attending deliberately to the more imaginative reaches of our being. Jack Marley-Payne invites us to consider broad and narrow accounts of education which offer alternative visions of what education entails and how it can ultimately enable human fulfilment. David Johnson argues there is a triangular relationship between education, society, and human fulfilment. He draws upon his research on comparative case studies which illustrate this relationship, from several countries including Nigeria, Egypt, Indonesia, France, Turkey and the UK.

The next section includes a series of articles which provide practical examples and insights of how schools and teachers promote human fulfilment in their contexts. Blair Murray Cusati outlines teaching and learning techniques we can adopt from video games to promote effective learning, through the development of player identity, the provision of information 'on demand' and 'just in time', and the use of 'sandboxes' (in video games this is practising something, like an initial introductory tutorial). Anna Spellman argues for the importance of arts subjects in education, particularly because of their role in human fulfilment. Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III and Mark A. McDaniel draw upon their groundbreaking work in the science of learning to argue that learning how to learn is a fundamental aim of education and is important for human fulfilment. Beatrice Parolin illustrates the importance of language study for promoting multilingualism, as well as several other benefits. Al McConville, Christina Hinton, and Matthew T. Lee point to the importance of humour, gratitude, and kindness to promote flourishing in school communities.

Matthew Dennis argues that the power of digital technologies and social media can be harnessed for the benefit of young people. Lynn E. Swaner and Andy Wolfe discuss the 'Flourishing School Culture Model', based on five interacting domains: purpose; relationships; learning; resources; and well-being. Kristine E. Larson and Amrita Chaturvedi present their multi-tiered support framework for promoting flourishing in schools, and use this to put forward practical steps schools can take to promote flourishing. Daniel Langley argues that a re-imagined teacher professionalism can lead to an increase in motivation, respect and self-esteem among teachers, which can in turn support teachers' sense of self-fulfilment. James L. Ritchie-Dunham, Wayne Ysaguirre and Hardin L. K. Coleman present their vision to advance racial equity with a model focusing on children, teachers, families, and public narratives. Naishal Patel gives an example of the importance of a liberal education through teaching English Literature. Catherine Smith argues for the importance of teaching with the heart and making space for emotions in teaching. Tabatha Sheehan suggests using what she describes as the 'Pathos, Logos, Ethos' approach to teaching to support the flourishing of students.

We are extremely grateful to all the contributors, who gave their time and insights to make this issue happen at a difficult time, with Covid continuing to cause issues for individuals, schools, and communities. Special thanks to our guest editor, Jonathan Beale, who has guided the direction of this issue and has shared careful editorial insights. We hope you enjoy the articles.

GUEST EDITORIAL: HUMAN FULFILMENT AND THE AIMS OF EDUCATION

Jonathan Beale | *Researcher-in-Residence and Guest Editor, Eton College*

Debates about the aims of education have increased since the COVID-19 pandemic, both in academic circles and among the public. These debates have been generated partly because of the huge changes in educational approaches that have needed to be suddenly implemented worldwide in response to the crisis, to try to continue providing education remotely to that half of the world's student population who have been out of school or university (UNESCO, 2020). This has required fundamental changes in approaches towards teaching and learning for many educators, students and institutions, at all educational levels.

It has also led to education gaining much more attention in the media, which has included discussion over education's aims. For example, the cancellation of national examinations in the UK for the past two years has generated significant discussion about the purposes of educational assessment and how it should be fundamentally changed to better reflect education's aims.[1] Education Secretary Gavin Williamson's speech in July last year on further education reform sparked much discussion after he claimed that 'the purpose of education is to give people the skills they need to get a good and meaningful job' and 'to unlock an individual's potential so they can get the job and career that they crave'.[2]

Debates about education's purpose were fuelled further by the urgency placed on re-opening schools amidst the UK's third lockdown earlier this year. The weekend before schools in the UK re-opened, the *Financial Times* published an article entitled 'What is the point of schools?' (Kellaway, 2021). There has also been increased discussion about the heightened responsibilities placed upon individuals, institutions and states to alleviate the educational and economic inequalities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic, and how these issues relate to the purposes of education.[3]

There are a variety of positions on education's aims in the philosophy of education. What we might call the 'orthodox view' is that the aim, or the primary aim, of education is epistemic: to (i) increase students' knowledge and (ii) advance their understanding, and (iii) develop the cognitive skills and epistemic virtues that support the pursuit of (i) and (ii), such as critical thinking skills, autonomy and curiosity. Among the unorthodox views is, at the one end, the radical 'no aims' view, which holds that education either has no aims, or if it does, it is best carried out without reference to them. At the other end, there is the view that education has several types of aim beyond what are usually regarded as its core epistemic ones, such as moral, political, and civic aims. Fulfilment of these aims might include developing students' moral and civic character virtues, such as civility and neighbourliness, which enable them to become responsible, engaged and virtuous citizens, able to live good lives and contribute to society's common good. There are views on the relationship between education's aims and its relationship to society's needs, including the view that education's aims are determined or partly determined by society's current needs.

Some influential philosophers have held that education's fundamental aim is to increase happiness, both for the student and society as a whole. John Stuart Mill argued that education would increase the general amount of happiness in society and used this to argue for universal education on moral grounds. His arguments reflect the normative ethical theory he advanced, utilitarianism, which holds that the right actions are those that bring about the greatest overall happiness. Mill endorsed the 'greatest happiness principle', coined by Jeremy Bentham, according to which we should act only in a way that aims to bring about the greatest overall happiness (Mill, 1863). According to Mill, a more educated society is one that can experience a greater amount of happiness; education therefore helps to satisfy the greatest happiness principle. Relatedly, the philosopher and influential educationalist Mary Warnock held that the point of education is pleasure. She related this to education's epistemic goals, in that she held that education 'opens up enormous possibilities', such as understanding and manipulating the world, which can bring more pleasure to our lives by providing us with the ability to conceptualise and understand things we would not otherwise be able to.[4]

A conception of education's aims related to the view that its aim is to promote happiness is becoming increasingly widespread today: the view that education's overarching purpose is to support *human flourishing*. UNESCO propose that flourishing is 'the central purpose of education' (de Ruyter, Oades & Waghid, 2020, 1). The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues ('JC') state that 'flourishing is the widely accepted goal of life' and 'is the ultimate aim of character education' (JC, 2017, 1). Positive psychology ('PP') holds that flourishing is 'the goal of education' (Seligman, 2011, 97). Harry Brighouse argues that 'education should be guided… directly by the value of human flourishing' and 'should aim to improve children's prospects for leading flourishing lives' (Brighouse, 2008, 60). Former Education Secretary Nicky Morgan emphasises the role of education in supporting flourishing with a quote from a book published by the Church of England which opens by asking, 'What is the purpose of education?', and answers: 'Education is… at its heart, about human flourishing'.[5]

[1] For a collection of blogposts on rethinking assessment in light of the pandemic, see the 'Rethinking Assessment' initiative: https://rethinkingassessment.com/blogs-ra/.

[2] For the full text of the speech, see *FE Week*, 9 July 2020: https://feweek.co.uk/2020/07/09/gavin-williamsons-speech-on-fe-reform-the-full-text/ [accessed 6 June 2021].

[3] On the impact on educational inequality, see Education Endowment Foundation, 2020, 4. On what the pandemic has shown about the roles and responsibilities of schools, see McInerney, 2020.

[4] See the BBC *In Our Time* documentary on 'Education' (4 Nov 1999), in which Warnock is one of the speakers: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p005463m [accessed 7 June 2021].

[5] Wright & Watkin, 2016, 1, quoted in the introduction to Morgan 2017.

On all these views, flourishing is held to be either *the* aim of education or at least among its central aims. While the view that education's aim is to promote happiness is not as in vogue as it once was, some contemporary views on education's aims connect happiness as an aim of education with flourishing. Richard Layard, for example, holds that happiness should be understood as the proper goal of flourishing (Layard, 2011a), and argues that the well-being theory put forward by Martin Seligman, founder of PP is best understood in terms of supporting the maximisation of happiness as its end goal, unlike Seligman, who holds that happiness ('positive emotion') is one of the elements constitutive of well-being (Layard, 2011b & Seligman, 2011, 16-17).

What, then, is the relation between the aims of education and *human fulfilment*? A promising place to look for an answer is theories of human flourishing, particularly those that draw connections between flourishing and education or aim to promote flourishing in education. Among those theories, human fulfilment is often proposed as either a necessary condition for or a significant contributor towards flourishing, but the way that fulfilment is conceived varies across theories. Those theories that hold that fulfilment is a necessary condition for flourishing typically define it in terms of *fulfilment of potential.* This is the case for the JC and UNESCO, as well as Abraham Maslow's influential hierarchy of needs which, while not explicitly concerned with flourishing, can be straightforwardly interpreted in this way (Maslow, 1943).

The JC define human flourishing in terms of fulfilment of potential and happiness. According to their neo-Aristotelian framework, to fulfil our potential we need to develop various virtues, the cultivation of which is necessary for flourishing:

To flourish is not only to be happy, but to fulfil one's potential. … Human flourishing requires the acquisition and development of intellectual, moral, and civic virtues, excellence specific to diverse domains of practice or human endeavour, and generic virtues of self-management (known as enabling or performance virtues). All are necessary to achieve the highest potential in life. (JC, 2017, 1.)

On this framework, the cultivation of virtues is necessary for the fulfilment of potential – virtues 'are a key to fulfilling an individual's potential' (JC, 2017, 4). The framework does not hold that fulfilment of potential is *sufficient* for flourishing, since flourishing also requires happiness and the cultivation of the four categories of virtues mentioned above – intellectual, moral, civic and performance. Developing all four of these domains is necessary for flourishing.

UNESCO's 2020 research brief on 'Meaning(s) of Human Flourishing and Education' focuses on articulating the meanings of human flourishing and education and the relationship between them. Their account suggests that education has one overarching aim, which is to support flourishing. Human fulfilment plays a role through various 'potentials' that UNESCO argue are important for flourishing, which can be developed through education. UNESCO state that 'cognitive and emotional potentials' are needed for various areas of life, including learning (de Ruyter, Oades & Waghid, 2020, 2). They hold that 'children are entitled to develop their potentials to the full', which, they note, is recognised in the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 29) (*ibid*., 3).

An influential source to support the importance of fulfilment of potential in an account of flourishing is Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' (Maslow, 1943). On a standard interpretation of Maslow, moving up the hierarchy requires the needs on the lower level to have been met; as a person moves up the hierarchy, they get closer to reaching their full potential. While Maslow does not describe the hierarchy of needs in terms of flourishing, in many ways it could be used as a model for flourishing, or for guidance on some of the things that human beings pursue *for their own sake* – which is the methodology followed by the JC, PP and the Harvard Human Flourishing Program ('HHFP'), each of which define flourishing in terms of the things that human beings pursue as ends in themselves.

A fundamental difference between the accounts of flourishing developed by PP and the HHFP, on the one hand, and the neo-Aristotelian approach towards flourishing developed by the JC, on the other, is that the former two define flourishing in terms of well-being, whereas the JC defines it in terms of happiness and the fulfilment of potential, reached through the cultivation and exercising of the virtues that constitute good character (JC, 2017). Both PP and the HHFP aim to enhance an individual's well-being as much as possible, and insofar as their accounts have a role in education, they aim to support the maximisation of students' well-being.

There are several areas of congruence and overlap across these accounts, though. Tyler VanderWeele, Director of the HHFP and whose account of flourishing underpins their work, outlines five core domains that he argues should be included in any account of flourishing. One domain is *character and virtue.* The HHFP's 'Flourish Measure' proposes two questions for each domain, and the questions for character and virtue are based on the cardinal virtues, which underpin the Aristotelian approach towards flourishing. If we take the cultivation of character and virtue to be necessary for the fulfilment of our potential, as the JC holds, then VanderWeele's account also includes this, since he argues that 'flourishing, however conceived, would, at the very least, *require* doing or being well in… five broad domains', one of which is character and virtue (VanderWeele, 2017, 8149, my emphasis added). This domain of the HHFP's account therefore aligns quite well with the JC's neo-Aristotelian approach.

While the JC's account of flourishing is perhaps the one most explicitly concerned with fulfilment of potential, the most influential theories of flourishing that define it in terms of

well-being (PP and the HHFP) are nonetheless clearly also concerned with the fulfilment of potential as an important feature of flourishing. Character and virtue are not among the domains included in PP's account, which is a criticism sometimes made of it. Character nonetheless plays an important role in PP, though, in that PP focuses on helping people to identify their 'signature character strengths' and increase their use of these strengths in their daily lives, which supports the fulfilment of their potential (Seligman, 2011, 84). Most character strengths can be considered virtues. PP also includes 'accomplishment' as one of its domains for flourishing, as something we pursue for its own sake (Seligman, 2011, 18-20). Character strengths and accomplishment are both clearly concerned with the fulfilment of potential.

The HHFP's account does not include accomplishment among the domains we pursue as ends in themselves. But their definition of flourishing in terms of well-being is much broader than PP's and there are many ways in which it is concerned with the fulfilment of potential, as well as human fulfilment considered in other ways. The HHFP have developed several measures for flourishing, which reflect their broader approach towards defining and assessing well-being, all of which have implications for both fulfilment and flourishing overall.[6] VanderWeele defines flourishing as 'complete human well-being' – a 'state in which all aspects of a person's life are good' (VanderWeele, 2017, 8149). He also defines it as 'societal good', broadly construed (*ibid.*, 8153). For all aspects of a person's life to be good, they will surely need to experience fulfilment, including the fulfilment of their potential. A key area of human fulfilment – perhaps the most important – is a sense of *meaning and purpose* in our activities and lives. This is another of the domains in VanderWeele's account (VanderWeele, 2017, 8149). 'Meaning' is also one of the elements for flourishing in PP (Seligman, 2011, 12). Another of the domains for flourishing identified by VanderWeele is 'happiness and life satisfaction' (VanderWeele, *ibid.*). We saw above that PP includes happiness in its domain of 'positive emotion' (Seligman, 2011, 11), and that happiness is central to the JC's account. The HHFP's emphasis on *life satisfaction* draws attention to another important aspect of human fulfilment, and one that is integral to human flourishing.

There are, therefore, several ways in which accounts of human flourishing are concerned with human fulfilment. We could perhaps bring all of these under the broad categories of *fulfilment of potential* and *fulfilment in the sense of life satisfaction*, and all the areas mentioned above would fall under either or both of these, such as the development of character and virtue, utilising one's character strengths, finding one's sense of meaning and purpose, and achieving one's ambitions. These two categories of fulfilment are related in that fulfilment of potential is often a major factor that brings about fulfilment in the sense of life satisfaction. Each of these types of fulfilment should occupy an important place in any account of flourishing.

A straightforward connection can be drawn between fulfilment and education's aims when the former is defined as fulfilment of potential. If we hold that education aims to support human fulfilment and that this means fulfilment of

[6] For the HHFP's other well-being measures, see Lee, Kubzansky & VanderWeele, 2021 and https://hfh.fas.harvard.edu/other-well-being-measures [accessed 17/06/21].

potential, when we consider this in relation to education's aims, most would surely be committed to the view that this means, at the least, a student's *epistemic* potential, corresponding with something like the orthodox view above.

Fulfilment of potential means a lot more than fulfilment of epistemic potential, though, and the aims of education reach beyond the purely epistemic. Education aims to help students discover and fulfil their potential in a variety of ways. I would argue that education should also aim to enhance students' life satisfaction. These are two of the core senses in which education's aims are related to human fulfilment. This is also where contemporary accounts of human flourishing offer rich resources that can support human fulfilment, particularly in the context of education.

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LEARNING HOW TO LEARN AND WHY KNOWLEDGE IS NOT ENOUGH

Zachary Marinov | *Year 12, Eton College*

'An Eton education is not an end in itself – it is the foundation for a fulfilling life'. Replace 'Eton' with any other school name and you get a statement that most headteachers would agree with. The question, though, is twofold: is this the goal of education, to create adults that can lead fulfilling lives? And what really is a 'fulfilling life'?

Three lenses for viewing the question of purpose

We can examine the question of purpose through three lenses: society, the individual, and morality. From a societal standpoint, we should equip the next generation with the tools to, at the bare minimum, survive, and ideally further the human race. As H. G. Wells said, 'civilization is in a race between education and catastrophe'. He viewed education in a Platonic light, as a means for distributing truth and teaching people to distinguish between it and everything else, which have both become ever more important in the fake news-gushing, social media-driven information landscape of today.

I agree that the tools to distinguish truth from falsity are incredibly important for a cohesive society – just take the 2016 and 2020 American elections as examples. However, 'teaching truth' is a problematic idea, as this presupposes knowledge of what is true. In many school subjects, such as science or history, our 'knowledge' is consistently overthrown and replaced with 'more accurate' 'facts'. In addition, we are taught many of these 'facts' despite them being not entirely accurate conceptions of how the world as we know it works. Therefore, I think teaching problem-solving is far more important than truth, especially given how often we hear that 'the jobs of tomorrow don't yet exist'. As a member of Gen Z, I've heard many adults tell me that it will be 'up to us' to fix the world and deal with climate change and many other latent catastrophes. Without a capacity to reason, be creative, and try new things (all important components of problem-solving), we won't get anywhere.

EDUCATION IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN HABITS AND NURTURE ABILITIES THAT CAN SUPPORT FULFILLING LIVES SUCH AS CONFIDENCE AND SKILLS IN ORGANISATION AND TEAMWORK

Understanding fulfilment as the aim of education

From an individual standpoint, it's difficult to assess purpose because what we value varies substantially from person to person: some people are driven towards money and success, others towards 'making an impact'. Therefore, I think the purpose of education from this outlook is to be an *enabler,* so everyone can pursue whatever they want.

This means that pre-university (or pre-career) education should provide a very broad basis from which everyone can flourish. It's difficult to justify why someone who hands-down wants to be an artist should learn algebra or why a mathematician should learn art, but what is very useful to learn is how to learn[1], so that people have the ability to acquire skills that are intrinsically valuable to them. However, the basis should include breadth of knowledge to a certain degree – knowledge and skills such as addition and subtraction, writing, and real-world intuition are invaluable regardless of profession.

At the same time, education is an opportunity to learn habits and nurture abilities that can support fulfilling lives, such as confidence and skills in organisation and teamwork. There are many different ideas as to what 'fulfilment' means, from being spiritually satisfied to simply having the freedom to do what you enjoy. I would say that fulfilment is about *subjective well-being*: it's difficult to pin it down concretely, and can vary between people and through time, as the last year during the pandemic has shown.

I recognise that saying that the goal of education is to help everyone attain subjective well-being is incredibly flimsy from a quality control standpoint, but having this open-minded outlook can help us all focus less on soon-to-be-obsolete knowledge and more on transferable skills and mindsets.

Concluding remarks

To conclude, my two angles on the purpose of education are, first, that education should advance society by teaching how to solve problems and deal with falsehood; second, it should allow everyone to pursue their subjective well-being through teaching basic knowledge and habits, and how to learn. If I had to choose one particular goal to be above all others, it would be the latter - education is, after all, primarily about learning. To paraphrase the old adage, give a man some wisdom, and he'll live for a day, teach a man how to acquire wisdom for himself, and you will save his life.

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[1] See the article 'Make It Stick: Learning as Education's Primary Aim and Human Fulfilment' in this journal for a discussion of this point.

THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN FULFILMENT: BECOMING CRITICAL THINKERS

Cees Armstrong | *Year 12, Eton College*

From when we are young, education is sold to us as the secret to our future success. We spend hours upon hours learning dates in history or equations in maths. We follow carbon-copy programs in the belief that they will lead us to good exam grades. Most of education today is founded on learning for exams, in effect rote learning; what education instead should be is an endless pursuit of knowledge, where we try to learn how to think rather than what to think.

Education in its modern form rewards teaching for the test. We toil away on whatever the syllabus dictates. The actual amount of leeway for teachers is incredibly small. Teachers need to teach an overloaded curriculum to many children of different abilities. In maths, everyone gets given a formula sheet and gets told to use it. In history, a timeline to learn and a textbook to read. In short, everyone uses a process which often does not allow for much space for students to pursue their interests or how to critically reflect.

Education in this vein can take away from the enthusiasm for learning. It tends to make learning about basic facts rather than enjoyable and fascinating modes of thought. It subverts education into an exercise in rote learning. As a result, it is no surprise than many students do not enjoy education. In fact, it is to be expected that many feel that the path down education truly is not for them, since whenever they go down this path they are forced to learn facts and figures without any clue as to where these facts come from or how they are useful.

When education pivots to teaching us how to think, we naturally find learning more enjoyable. After struggling at something, when we finally succeed after a long and challenging time it is one of the greatest feelings. It is a feeling of genuine fulfilment. When we finally overcome the barriers to knowledge or have a breakthrough in understanding something which seemed impossible, then the feeling of accomplishment is truly second to none. In the most common manifestations, it is why getting into university is an accomplishment many of us feel so proud of: we had worked for long and hard hours, but after copious quantities of work we finally succeeded. The same is true for when receiving GCSE or A Level grades: the feeling of fulfilment from having worked so hard and finally succeeded is incredible.

We are privileged that at Eton education allows to pursue our interests, but education as a whole can reflect this reality. Instead of teaching children a formula in maths, children can be shown how to get to the formula in the first place. Instead of getting children to learn a timeline, children can be taught how to critically analyse a historical figure's actions. We need students to understand critical thinking and all these associated skills. Instead of getting told what to think, we need to instead get taught how to think. We need to be given challenges and be given time to figure things out.

At the end of the day, a lot of the fact-based learning we learn about at school will be entirely useless. What instead will be useful though is the understanding of how to think in difficult situations; how to overcome challenges and how to have a critical understanding of facts and knowledge. This comprises an appreciation of hard work and also the ability to think for yourself. Through this, we both better fulfil the purpose of education and provide fulfilment to everybody in education. Thus, education needs to teach people how to think rather than what to think. Only then can education be both genuinely enjoyable and fulfilling for all children.

THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN FULFILMENT: THE NEED FOR FOSTERING WELL-BEING AT SCHOOL

Maxwell DeLorenzo | *Year 12, Eton College*

The individualism and humanism of the Enlightenment had fundamental ramifications for the perception of the role of education in society. Rather than education simply being a means to mould humans to fit 'ideal' moral and social standards, usually decided by religious dogma and conservative traditions, it became an engine for the development of individual autonomy and happiness. This relates to what we might call the question of education and human fulfilment: how can education best be designed to meet an individual's emotional and physical needs throughout life?

Positive psychology suggests that the psychological well-being of an individual can be measured using the 'PERMA' model, where positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment are the crucial metrics for measuring well-being (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

- *Positive emotions* include pleasure, hope, joy, pride and gratitude.
- *Engagement* refers to participation in meaningful interests.
- *Positive relationships* encompass the positive interactions individuals have with others.
- *Meaning* describes the sense of meaning or purpose people can find for themselves in their activities and lives as a whole.
- *Accomplishment* is the fulfilment of goals and the achievement of mastery.

These yardsticks may seem vague, and often there is a great deal of overlap. However, the advantage of the model is that it takes into account the range of psychological influences that guide our happiness and psychological well-being, and the need to balance these against each other in order to achieve long-term happiness. For example, whilst positive emotions may seem beneficial in and of themselves, often positive emotions need to be sacrificed for greater accomplishment. In the case of an individual who puts themselves through great physical pain training their body athletically, they recognise that striving for self-improvement in certain cases can be more important than short-term pleasure.

The field of positive psychology studies how best to maximise happiness, and psychologists broadly believe that four elements of life are crucial for this (Hyde et al, 2013; O'Neil et al, 2014):

- Optimism refers to the treasuring of the belief that life overall will have more good outcomes than bad, and is proven to strengthen mental resilience
- Physical activity has demonstrated to chemically decrease the likelihood of negative emotions, and reduce problems such as depression
- Good nutrition is associated with higher levels of overall well-being
- Regular sleep habits of 7-9 hours improve an individual's ability to relax and cope with problems such as stress

Education is fundamentally important to the concept of fulfilment. First, the education system constructs the environment in which individuals spend the majority of time throughout their childhood and adolescence, and therefore has a large and direct impact on students' experiences and emotions. Second, individuals are their most impressionable during their early formative years, whilst they are still in school.[1] As a result, education has long-lasting impacts on students' expectations of life and their habits throughout their adulthood.

There are three glaring problems that threaten the well-being of students around the world. The first is the presence of negative emotions as a result of social interactions. These range from the insecurities caused by social media, to bullying, to the cultures of sexual assault which have recently received a great deal of media attention. The education system must tackle the barriers that many individuals face in their pursuit of positive relationships. For example, better education about the threats of social media and the concept of consent, as well as extended support for victims are clearly necessary to fight the current epidemic of mental health problems.

Another critical issue is the unmitigated focus on the concept of achievement to the exclusion of other elements of well-being. This is most clearly manifested in the vast amount of stress associated with the university admissions process, where students base their self-worth on their ability to gain acceptance to universities of sufficient quality and prestige.

[1] https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/teenage-brains-are-like-soft-impressionable-play-doh-78650963/

AFTER STRUGGLING AT SOMETHING, WHEN WE FINALLY SUCCEED AFTER A LONG AND CHALLENGING TIME IT IS ONE OF THE GREATEST FEELINGS

It is unclear what exactly the education system can do about this, given that the greatest source of pressure usually comes from students themselves or their parents. Ultimately, the best way to ensure that a focus on achievement is beneficial as opposed to harmful for students is for schools and universities to ensure that competition is as accessible and meritocratic as possible. This not only ensures that students can excel in something they enjoy, but also that stress is reduced by the presence of a fair process.

Finally, a lack of awareness and understanding about mental health problems in general is damaging. This is particularly prevalent among young males, where there is a stigma against speaking out about one's own mental health, which often results in the bottling up of emotions and the isolation of individuals from help when they most need it.[2] Parents and students must be informed about the habits that are fundamental to maximising well-being, such as healthy sleep patterns. Unfortunately, a widely observable 'sleep deprivation epidemic' is affecting teenagers all around the world (Richter, 2015).

In a society where competition and individualism can be prevalent, the education system must be a safe haven in which students can truly find their own sense of meaning and enjoyment. Currently, schools are at best imperfect and at worst actively detrimental to well-being. Fortunately, researchers, educators and policymakers around the world are waking up to the problem and are increasingly coming to a stark realisation: sweeping reform is necessary to better look after the emotional needs of students.

[2] https://www.healthline.com/health-news/how-can-we-reduce-mens-mental-health-stigma

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PARENTS AND STUDENTS MUST BE INFORMED ABOUT THE HABITS THAT ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO MAXIMISING WELL-BEING, SUCH AS HEALTHY SLEEP PATTERNS

WHY WE SHOULD TEACH PUPILS HOW TO DO NOTHING

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Teaching pupils how to do nothing might sound like a strange aim for a school to have. Indeed, I think it would be a strange aim if we saw our main purpose as being to help pupils pass exams or to find a job or to become useful contributors to society. If any of these outcomes were understood to be the *raison d'être* of a school, then we would likely be doing our pupils a disservice by encouraging them to do nothing. After all, doing nothing is unlikely to secure anyone an 'A' grade or an internship.

If, however, we want to take seriously the notion that education should be geared towards the loftier end of human fulfilment – with what it means to be a flourishing human being – then I think it is crucial that we teach pupils how to do nothing. More specifically, I think we need to teach pupils how to do *nothing other than what they are doing,* and also how to enjoy doing *nothing in particular.* By the time they reach secondary education, I think many young people have unlearned how to do nothing in both these senses – and thus we have to re-teach a set of skills (or, better, a way of being) which once came naturally. The problem and challenge here is that teachers are often poor role models in this regard, having spent far longer than their adolescent charges accepting and embodying an ethic of productivity, which they then pass on either deliberately or by osmosis to their pupils. Like parents, teachers can set children on the wrong course without meaning to – as Philip Larkin sort of once said.

Teaching pupils how to do nothing other than what they are doing

The emotional and spiritual benefits of being able to rest in and attend to the present moment are well known. This is perhaps part of the reason why babies, small infants and animals can have such calming, positive psychological effects on us: their natural mode of being is being-in-the-present, and thus they allow and invite us to be-in-the-present with them. In other words, they are naturally good at doing nothing other than what they are doing. Whether it is a toddler absorbed by the look and feel of a blade of grass or a dog who just wants to be tickled, neither spends (nor wastes) their time (or emotional energy) brooding on the past or worrying about the future.

If we are not careful, though, school can be a good training ground for being anywhere other than the present. Data tend to focus on pupils' 'past performance' or 'future potential' and there is always something just around the corner or over the horizon which we ask young people to keep in mind: no sooner have they started secondary school than they need to choose GCSE subjects, select A Levels, write personal statements, and consider university courses and careers. While those sorts of dilemmas might not plague teachers directly, we can fall into the trap of

missing the present by inhabiting the future in different ways: the very rhythm of a school year and a scheme of work encourages us always to keep one eye on the next topic, the next term, the next holiday. One of the reasons I find my own teaching most rewarding in the midst of the long autumn months is that I can just enjoy the topics we are 'in' – without worrying too much about finishing them, about revision, or about 'what comes next'.

Now, none of this would matter if (a) human nature was such that flourishing and fulfilment did not depend to a large extent on our capacity to be in and savour the present, or if (b) we did not think that human fulfilment is among education's main aims. For the sake of this article, I am taking the theme of this journal issue as read and assuming that as educators we are concerned with broad issues of human fulfilment, so I will discount (b). I am also taking for granted an acceptance on the part of the reader that human nature is so constituted as to mean that dwelling too much in the past or the future is not conducive to a life of flourishing and fulfilment, so will discount (a). Once we have agreed that education should be about human fulfilment, and that human fulfilment does depend at least in part on our ability to be in the present, then the only reason not to teach pupils how to do this (i.e., how to do nothing other than what they are doing) would be if it was a skill or a way-of-being that did not need to be taught.

As I suggested above, I do not think that being-in-the-present or doing nothing (other than what we are doing) needs to be taught to a baby, an infant, or an animal, but once we move past childhood it becomes surprisingly difficult. If it were easy, I suspect Jenny Odell's 2019 book *How to Do Nothing* would not have topped the *New York Times* bestseller lists. Indeed, she opens by claiming that 'Nothing is harder to do than nothing'. Now, we might be tempted to laugh this off and content ourselves with the idea that our teenage pupils are perfectly capable of doing nothing and – given half a chance – that they would do even more (or less?) of it.

The nub of Odell's thesis is revealed in her subtitle, though: doing nothing means 'resisting the attention economy', choosing deliberately to pay attention to nothing other than what we are doing rather than having our attention constantly hijacked and assailed by outside forces. As Odell puts it,

In a world where our value is determined by our productivity, many of us find our every last minute captured, optimized, or appropriated as a financial resource by the technologies we use daily. We submit our free time to numerical evaluation, interact with algorithmic versions of each other, and build and maintain personal brands…yet a certain nervous feeling, of being overstimulated and unable to sustain a train of thought, lingers.

The fact that we even metaphorically associate attention with an economic transaction suggests the need to spend this commodity wisely – and this is arguably much harder for a generation used to filling every spare moment with an attention-grabbing meme or 15-second TikTok. We can teach our pupils how to do nothing (other than what they are doing) in a variety of ways. We can engage them in activities which encourage the psychological state described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi as 'flow' – reading, sport, music, and art are all recognised as especially apt for their attention-absorbing qualities. We can encourage pupils to be more reflective and intentional in their use of social media and foster the virtues of digital prudence and self-control by limiting the use of phones and personal devices. We can even teach disciplines such as meditation and mindfulness which are specifically designed to help us to centre ourselves in the here and now. Above all, though, we as teachers can try to model the sort of being-in-the-present and doing nothing other than what we are doing which is so central to human fulfilment by savouring this lesson with these pupils now.

Teaching pupils how to do nothing (in particular)

If learning to do nothing other than what we are doing is an important component of human fulfilment, learning how to do nothing in particular is perhaps even more important. Again, it might be objected that school pupils need no encouraging – still less teaching how – to do nothing in particular and that they are perfectly good at frittering away time procrastinating over a piece of homework or watching Netflix rather than writing an essay. What I have in mind, though, is the much more radical and existential capacity simply to be, without feeling the need to fill every spare moment by doing. This is the sort of 'doing nothing' which Josef Pieper identifies as 'leisure'.

Pieper was aware that it might seem counterintuitive to offer a defence of leisure in 1947, just as the world was trying to re-find its feet after the horrors of World War 2, but his little book came to be regarded as one of the gems of 20th century philosophy, and its message is as urgent and thought-provoking today as it was then. Pieper's concern was that western societies were heading towards an obsession with work for work's sake and with productivity and value measured in purely utilitarian terms. Leisure is central to a fulfilled human life, Pieper thinks, because it is about who we are when we have nothing in particular, nothing 'useful', to do. This suggests that we should not be making pupils so busy that they can never learn how to do nothing in particular and that we should certainly be wary as teachers of modelling an unhealthy work-life (im)balance.

Lest any students reading this think that I am advocating idleness, they would do well to remember that we get our word 'school', via the Latin *scola*, from the Greek word for leisure – *skole.* The very essence of leisure in ancient Greece meant being free enough from work that one could indulge in the pleasures of learning – not to pass an exam or to qualify for a job, but simply because it was core to what it means to live a flourishing life. What I am arguing, therefore, is not that we teach our pupils how to be lazy, but that we

retrieve an understanding of education as leisure – that is, as something pursued and enjoyed for its own sake, rather than as something we 'do' for some particular end. Indeed, one of the most thought-provoking elements of Pieper's book is the way in which he dismantles any semblance of a link between leisure and idleness. He argues, on the contrary, that idleness is a source of restlessness (and, I would suggest, restlessness can also lead to idleness, in a sort of feedback loop of mutually enforcing listlessness) and such restlessness actually makes it impossible to enjoy leisure and prevents us from being able to do nothing (in particular).

The ancients took this inner restlessness so seriously that they diagnosed it with a particular word: *acedia*. While the word might have become obsolete, the affliction certainly has not. In her 2008 book *Acedia and Me*, Kathleen Norris points to its ubiquity in modern western culture: it goes by different names (indifference, lethargy, listlessness, and melancholy, to mention a few) and can take surprisingly different forms (from inaction and phobia of commitment to workaholism and multitasking), but at root *acedia* signifies an absence of peace in one's own being. This is not the same as depression – a word we are much more accustomed to – but the boundaries between the two are, in Norris's view, rather fluid. Pieper explains this existential restlessness as meaning that 'a man does not, in the last resort, give the consent of his will to his own being; that beneath the dynamic activity of his existence, he is still not at one with himself' (Norris, 2008). If we have a duty to do anything as educators, we surely have a duty to help our pupils to be at peace with themselves.

Concluding thoughts

I have taken for granted in this article that one of the aims of education is to provide the skills and conditions needed for a fulfilling life. While passing a test or gaining a qualification might be important ingredients or by-products of such conditions, I think we need to teach our pupils that they do not need to 'do' anything in order to be accepted and valued as persons. This might sound counterintuitive to certain ways of thinking about education, but for their physical, mental, and emotional health, I think it is crucial that we teach our pupils how to do nothing.

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and should not be taken to represent the views of Eton College.

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CAPTURING HEARTS BEFORE MINDS:
AN AUGUSTINIAN APPROACH TO CHARACTER FORMATION

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One of the understated influences of twentieth-century philosophy was the fourth-century Christian thinker St Augustine of Hippo, whose ideas haunt the works of Sartre, Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Arendt, among others. One of Augustine's cornerstone ideas that speaks to the field of character education is his doctrine that humans are, fundamentally, animals that worship. What exactly we worship will in no small part shape the people we become and the places we look for satisfaction in life. If one of the grander aims of education is to orientate pupils towards living a fulfilling life, educators would do well to consider the ideas we are implicitly or explicitly encouraging those in our care to strive towards and worship.

Establishing the fundamentals

Education is always going to be wedded to a philosophical anthropology, however implicit or inarticulate this branch of philosophy might be (Smith 2011, 27). One of the dominant working models in education is that we are thinking beings – that each of us is, as Descartes famously put it, 'a thing that thinks' (1641, 82). The belief that thinking is primary to our being has an intellectual lineage at least as old as Plato, though through the enlightenment and modernism this doctrine became an unquestioned part of our mental furniture (*homo sapiens* is Latin for 'the knowing one'). This has carried considerable influence on how the aim of education in general is regarded as primarily to transfer knowledge from teacher to pupil; to shape a person is to first influence the form and content of their thinking. St Augustine offers a refreshing alternative to this, which relegates the importance of cognition on behaviour and places the affections in the driving seat. Augustine believes that the primary agent in shaping our character is desire or love. Or, to put it in somewhat theologically freighted language – we are not fundamentally thinking animals, we are worshipping ones (*homo adorans*). What we end up loving will ultimately direct how we act, and indeed the way that we think.

Using the word 'worship' might suggest that this desire has a distinctly religious flavour - though the concept of worship is relevant in the absence of religious devotion. This observation was made by American writer David Foster Wallace in his famous commencement speech at Kenyon College:

Because here's something else that's weird but true: in the day-to day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. (2005)

This idea that we are driven by feelings more than thoughts has gained currency in the academy. Psychologists such as Jonathan Haidt explain that our behaviour is primarily governed by emotion, and only rationalised in hindsight. That is to say, we may make our decisions based on desire, and subsequently justify these with some semblance of rational argument. Haidt points out that we flatter ourselves that our decisions (political, moral or religious) follow rational argument, though these are often post hoc justifications of actions that were emotionally driven.

Worship is teleological

What we worship and love propels and motivates us in a particular direction through the fuel of desire. In this sense it is teleological - it has an end in sight, albeit implicit and inarticulate. What we love is a vision of the good life: an implicit picture of what we think human flourishing looks like. Our ultimate love is oriented by and to a picture of what we think it looks like for us to live well. Drawing on Augustine, James K. Smith points out that the telos at which we aim is not a list of ideas or propositions, but a vision which works 'by painting a picture of what it looks like for us to flourish and live well' (2011, 59). Such pictures are typically communicated by myth and story, rather than monographs or manifestos.

The need for myth or story to envision the good life has been observed by Alex Evans in his book *The Myth Gap* (2017). Evans points out that our behaviour and attention towards the environment is relatively unchanged, despite being burdened by endless data on the need for a seismic shift in behaviour. As his book title suggests, this is because we need myths and stories more than hard data if we are to change our behaviour. Stories and myths furnish us with a narrative of what the good life is, and, in Augustinian terms, how we should order our loves. Understanding how stories shape us can help both institutions and individuals ask a question that Carl Jung thought crucial: 'What myth am I living in?'. In listening for an answer to this question, we would do well to consider the myths that dominate the cultures and institutions that form us.

Smith considers the question of character formation through an Augustinian lens. For Smith, all cultural institutions are religious, inasmuch as they capture our heart with a particular vision of the good life – 'They [institutions] don't want to just give us entertainment or education, they want to make us into certain kinds of people' (2011, 90). To explain how we are formed by culture, Smith considers what he calls 'cultural liturgies'. Discussing liturgies, Smith explains that 'worship practices are rituals of ultimate concern that are formative of our identity - they both reflect and shape what matters to us' (2011, 93). In a bracing cultural exegesis

of consumerism, Smith offers the reader an exegesis of the shopping mall. A shopping mall offers a very clear vision of the good life (beauty, material wealth, etc.), but also conveys a story of redemption. Smith comments that shopping malls traffic in the following notions: an implicit notion of brokenness, akin to 'sin'; the hope of redemption in consumption; and a vision of human flourishing. We are presented with perfect, happy and problem-free people who represent an ideal. We all fall short of that ideal, but the implicit suggestion is that having whatever they are selling will help redeem us. As Smith observes, malls really are like modern places of worship, with their vaulted ceilings, objects of worship and places where we try to buy into 'the good life'.

While this is just one simplified cultural exegesis of the three Smith offers, it should drive the point that these places traffic in the language of desire, and in so doing they deliberately re-order the things we love. This happens through the rituals (cultural liturgies) in which we take part, which shape our desires and in turn our behaviour.

Applying Augustine to character education

Above I tried to establish several relevant points for education from Augustine's view of human nature. Firstly, that humans are creatures who are motivated and shaped by their loves and desires more than by their thoughts. Secondly, that these desires are shaped by narratives of flourishing which vary in the direction that they will take us in (e.g., the discussion of Smith on shopping malls). While such narratives may not be explicit, they will be embodied through practices and rituals. The significance of these points cannot be overstated for any institution intent on character formation – both in terms of making visible the implicit value system and repointing it to align with an institution's stated ethos. In thinking about how this comes to land in a school, it is worth asking the question of how the prevailing culture seeks to shape people, and whether a school intends to be a passive (and therefore co-operative) or subversive force to that culture. The Scottish writer Nan Shepherd wrote that her 'heaven-appointed task' in teaching was to 'prevent a few of the students who pass through our institution from conforming altogether to the approved pattern' (1996, 82). It's a sentiment that many educators might also echo.

IN DEVELOPING A CULTURE WHICH AFFECTIVELY CULTIVATES CERTAIN DESIRES, THE INTERVENTIONS WORTH CONSIDERING ARE OFTEN THOSE THAT WILL APPEAL TO THE IMAGINATION

A cultural exegesis of an institution should seek to establish the desires that are being motivated and encouraged in students through the stories and rituals they participate in. In David Brooks' book *The Road to Character* (2015) he makes a helpful distinction between 'resume virtues' and 'eulogy virtues'. The former concern our career accomplishments, the latter describe one's qualities of character. While most would concede that eulogy virtues are more to be treasured, culturally we tend to prioritise the former. Indeed, a school may have a virtue-laden vision of the eulogy sort, though what the school applauds and champions may encourage a focus on the resume virtues in certain pupils. If such narrations of success focus narrowly on performance virtues, status and careers, it should come as no surprise that desires conform to this particular vision of success. In Augustinian terms, our loves will be organised in accordance with the vision of the good life we are steeped in.

In developing a culture which affectively cultivates certain desires, the interventions worth considering are often those that will appeal to the imagination. What role models do we wish to extol? What rituals and behaviours would pass on values which align with the school ethos? As the above points out, to shape character, a culture must give students a particular vision of flourishing and what 'a good life' actually means. Attempts to shape this vision will be multifaceted, though should appeal to the imagination as the seat of desire, which will in turn direct our behaviour.

Augustine observed that we are beings who are motivated and shaped more by what we worship than what we think. Because the objects of our worship are cultivated by the institutions we move through, this has implications for the work of character education. In short, Augustine offers the insight that character educators should seek to reach the heart before the head – and should so by attending deliberately to the more imaginative reaches of our being. If Augustine's observations on human beings as worshipping creatures are correct, this provides a valuable perspective for individuals and institutions interested in the work of character formation.

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HOW OUR CONCEPT OF EDUCATION HELPS OR HINDERS HUMAN FULFILMENT

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Our common sense concept of education is ambiguous between a narrow and a broad application. On the one hand, we tend to think of almost all instances of learning as, in a sense, educational, which leads to a very wide range of applications – consider all the circumstances in which the expression "it was an educational experience" is apt. On the other hand, we associate education specifically with formal education and the learning that goes on within such an environment, which covers a much narrower range of cases. Whether education applies to all learning experiences or just to school will dramatically affect the role it plays in promoting human fulfilment.

We might go further and ask whether one understanding of the concept or the other – narrow or broad – is better suited to promoting human fulfilment. Philosophers of education have typically favoured extremely broad accounts, in line with Rousseau's definitive statement: 'All that we have not at our birth, and that we need when grown up, is given us by education' (Rousseau, 1892, 12), which entails that virtually all aspects of a child's upbringing are part of their education. Though such philosophers tend to assume this broad conception is suited to promoting human fulfilment, they do not in general subject this assumption to explicit analysis.

Ameliorative analysis is a project in analytic philosophy that aims to identify the definition of a concept best suited to promoting a particular normative goal and argues that this is the account of the concept that should be adopted (Haslanger, 2012). The task of this paper will be to come up with an ameliorative analysis of the concept of education, relative to the goal of promoting human fulfilment.

The Pernicious Equivocation

Indeterminacy in our concept of education leads to some problematic consequences. In particular, it invites a reactionary line of argument that we'll refer to as the *pernicious equivocation*. The argument proceeds by identifying a social problem to which education in a broad sense is a natural place to find a solution, but then restricts attention to a narrow definition when specifying what such a solution might be.

If one looks at almost any disadvantage currently faced by particular social groups in adulthood – be it regarding finance, health, or social standing – the solution to ensuring that future generations fare better lies in education in the broad sense, almost by definition. Crucially, though, improving education in this sense could involve changes to healthcare, housing, or family income, since these all have a significant role in human development.

In practice, however, once the problem has been identified as concerning education, permissible solutions within a given policy debate are restricted to formal education reforms. In this way, the possibility of improving the prospects of disadvantaged children through, for example, expanding welfare is taken off the table without ever being discussed.

As common sense dictates, and a wealth of empirical evidence confirms, many aspects of a child's life that occur outside of school play a huge role in determining the various traits they develop as an adult and significantly influence their academic achievement. This includes their pre-school upbringing, the neighbourhood they grow up in, their diet, their family life, the pollution levels in their environment, and their housing – to name just a few (Butcher, 2017).

Financial and material security are necessary for reaching a reasonable level of well-being over time and are, we will assume, prerequisites for human fulfilment. The ambiguity in our current concept of education, between the narrow and broad accounts, results in a lack of clarity over the extent to which education can be regarded as a means of combating poverty and promoting widespread material welfare. This lack of clarity enables equivocal arguments which obstruct the promotion of widespread material welfare and, in turn, human fulfilment. Ameliorative analysis requires that we remove this ambiguity in our concept of education, so we can defang the pernicious equivocation.

Broad Accounts

Philosophical accounts of education since antiquity have tended to be all-encompassing. In the *Republic*, Plato outlines his program of education for members of an ideal society, which involves state control of virtually every aspect of citizens' lives from birth until old age. This includes requiring that the stories told to children by their nurses meet strict moral standards, as well as subjecting youths to extreme psychological hardship to test their resolve (*Republic*, Book 3). Similar ideas are posed in Aristotle's *Politics*, though he allows that youths may watch comedy once they are 'old enough to drink strong wine' (*Politics*, Books 7-8). We saw above that Rousseau offers a definitive statement of the broad conception of education, including almost all aspects of child-rearing in his idealised education program – for example, forbidding praise of a child's early words, to avoid encouraging lazy enunciation. Similarly broad ideas are defended by modern philosophers of education, from Dewey to the present day.

A natural question to ask at this point is why philosophers are drawn to a broad account of education over its narrow alternative. Philosophical accounts of education tend to be teleological in nature. Roughly speaking, they start by looking at the aims of education, then work backwards to investigate what practices or experiences are required to achieve these aims.

Plato and Aristotle understand the aim of education in terms of the good of the state. Its goal is to produce ideal citizens and rulers. Other philosophers suggest that education should aim to produce well-being in the individual student. For example, Locke opens his notes on education by stating that 'A sound mind in a sound body, is a short, but full description of a happy state in this world' (1693, §1), and views producing such a happy state as the task of education.

Whatever the specifics, if education aims to produce model citizens, in one sense or another, it's clear that this cannot be ensured by what goes on in the classroom alone. As discussed above, virtually all material aspects of a child's upbringing have a bearing on whether they develop into a fulfilled adult, and thus are part of education on the broad account.

Narrow Accounts

A compelling narrow account of education requires motivating the particular focus on formal education. Though few philosophers attempt to make such an argument, we can find inspiration in a passage from Dewey, who writes:

[A]s civilization advances, the gap between the capacities of the young and the concerns of adults widens. Learning by direct sharing in the pursuits of grown-ups becomes increasingly difficult except in the case of the less advanced occupations. Much of what adults do is so remote in space and in meaning that playful imitation is less and less adequate to reproduce its spirit. Ability to share effectively in adult activities thus depends upon a prior training given with this end in view. Intentional agencies – schools – and explicit material – studies – are devised. The task of teaching certain things is delegated to a special group of persons. Without such formal education, it is not possible to transmit all the resources and achievements of a complex society. (1916, 13.)

As Dewey notes, much of the knowledge we wish children to acquire during their upbringing can be learned more or less naturally. That is, it will be acquired over the course of day-to-day experiences – through play, or "on-the-job" in performing familial duties and, later on, in formal employment. Crucially, though, Dewey points out that not all essential knowledge can be learned this way: some requires dedicated training activities that would not be pursued for other reasons.

By analogy, consider skill development in sport. Certain skills can be acquired simply by playing the game over a sufficient period of time. This learning is natural since playing the game is, presumably, fun and so is an activity that children will perform in their everyday lives. On the other hand, certain sporting skills will not be acquired simply by playing the game – instead, they require dedicated training routines. For example, one will not learn how to make three-point shots in basketball simply through playing live games. Instead, one needs to perform shooting drills where one develops the fundamentals of shooting technique while not being harassed by an opposing player.

The same pattern holds, as Dewey notes, for what is learned in school. Consider the canonical goals of formal education: literacy and numeracy. A child will not in general learn to read simply by hanging out in a newspaper office and engaging in "playful imitation". Similarly, they will not pick up arithmetic if only they spend a sufficient period in the company of an accountant. Developing these abilities requires being guided through specific activities which do not count as play and serve no direct practical purpose.

Based on this, it's natural to view the purpose of formal education as providing children with the dedicated training activities required for developing certain skills or knowledge that adults require in order to live appropriately. Further, we can give a narrow definition of education in terms of the institutions and experiences related to these dedicated training activities.

Evaluating the Accounts

With the two possible accounts motivated, it's time to compare and evaluate them. Three key considerations favour the narrow account. First, it allows for a clearer division between the different components of domestic policy, leading to a more effective policy agenda. On the broad account, education policy ends up overlapping with virtually all aspects of welfare policy, so it is unclear how to separate the distinct agendas for each.

Second, the narrow account ensures that attention and resources are dedicated to the specific goal of developing knowledge and skills that cannot be acquired in the natural course of life. There are currently many cases in which scarce class time is dedicated to the kinds of practical and social skills that are best learned naturally – for example, so-called home economics and citizenship education – because the distinctive aims of formal education are not sufficiently well understood. The narrow account of education, by making these goals explicit, would be a remedy to this.

Third, the narrow account more effectively undermines the pernicious equivocation. Education, on this account, only applies to processes that develop knowledge and skills that are not acquired in the natural course of life; this clearly does not cover all developmental processes. Therefore, the initial premise in the pernicious equivocation – that the solution to improving the lives of the young must lie in education – is obviously false, and the argument cannot get going.

The rebuttal is murkier if we're working with the broad account. Though many areas of policy affect developmental processes, not all do so as their primary purpose, or directly. Formal education, and other practices that teach or train, do have development as their primary goal and they achieve it directly, through the teaching or training process. Welfare programs, on the other hand, do not necessarily do so, as they are aiming to alleviate immediate hardship, and they promote development indirectly, by allowing recipients to learn more effectively in other areas of their life. This means that when thinking of education policy, the canonical programs associated with it will be formal education, as well as other kinds of teaching and training. When talking about education policies, there may be ambiguity between whether this concerns all policy areas that are relevant to educational goals or just the canonical educational policies. This lays the groundwork for the pernicious equivocation to be compelling.

Conclusion

If we accept the narrow account, what comes next? As well as pursuing the overall project of promoting human fulfilment with improved conceptual tools, the account can guide our thinking as to the specifics of education itself. A crucial empirical project is deciding which kinds of skill, knowledge or understanding are best learned in a formal training

environment as opposed to being learned through everyday life. Only the former will be appropriate subject matter for education, according to our account. It's plausible that many of the core academic areas, especially those requiring the development of mathematical skills, fall into this category. On the other hand, it's much less clear that various social and moral behaviours are best developed by such means.

None of this implies that these other behaviours are less important than those properly targeted by education, but that if we want to promote them, we must develop the other areas of social policy that do so most effectively – for example, comprehensive welfare expansion. One of the most important things our concept of education can do to promote human fulfilment is avoid undermining these other vital projects.

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SOCIETY, EDUCATION AND HUMAN FULFILMENT

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The relationship between the aims of education, society and human fulfilment goes back at least as far as Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Émile*, which was published, banned, and publicly burned in 1762. Rousseau looked at the relationship between the 'purity' of the child at birth and the corrupting influences of the society in which it grows up. Through a depiction of *Émile* and his tutor, Rousseau attempts to illustrate the meaning of education and in its use, the choices between the 'making of a man or a citizen'.

Apart from A. S. Neill's Summerhill School, there are few examples of schools that adopt a 'hands-off' approach to child development. It seems indeed that it is the changing nature of society that drives the philosophy of education, and that there are at least two other strands of philosophical thought that persist today.

First, in direct contrast to the romantic tradition, the 'environmentalist' school of thought believed that the primary aims of education were the transmission of rules and values collected in the past. Learning occurred through repetition and elaboration of the correct response, and was dependent on feedback and reward. Society, by extension, was shaped and built on modelling 'correct' behaviour and through the teaching of rules and values through various instruments of the state. This idea that the formal school curriculum was represented by 'packaged values' in which norms and behaviours are transmitted, was much derided by Ivan Illich (1971) in his *Deschooling Society*, and by Paulo Freire (1970) in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

A second tradition associated with John Dewey (1938) developed as part of the pragmatic functional-genetic philosophies of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As an educational ideology, 'progressivism' is built on the belief that education should nourish the child's natural interaction with society or the environment. For progressives, children are active thinkers and develop (both cognitively and emotionally) through engaging with resolvable but genuine problems or conflicts and learning is seen as an active construction of meaning forged in the interaction between mind and environment (Vygostsky, 1978).

This paper argues that there is a triangular relationship between education, society, and human fulfilment. In short, that education is almost always employed to shape a vision of society – a worldview; and that worldview dictates the ideals of human fulfilment.

The organisation of education and the idea of human fulfilment

Given the lingering nature of the philosophical traditions described above, education, it seems, sits at the confluence of two fast-moving and swollen streams of political thought: progressivism which invites openness and diversity, and populism which invites a return to singularity and closed borders. In this complex and contested relationship between education and the shaping of society, what is human fulfilment and how is it achieved?

Human fulfilment (beyond basic need gratification) is described by Abraham Maslow (1943) as a process of self-actualisation rather than as an end state. The educational process is key to the development of motivation (character growth and character expression), and growth and self-actualisation include markers such as the setting aside of prejudices and embracing doubt and uncertainty; accepting the frailties of self and those of others; thinking beyond the conventional and treating problems as challenges rather than dilemmas; changing the status quo for the better without the need for approval; ignoring class, race and status to learn in humility from others; being able to laugh at oneself; and to embrace and even thrive on creative differences.

Human fulfilment then is the motivation to embrace society, to rise above its contradictions, and to actively change it. The question for this paper is the extent to which the educational process facilitates open-mindedness, motivation and self-actualisation.

The relationship between society, education, and human fulfilment: comparative case studies

I led a research team that conducted a study into the aims and uses of education in 16 countries and I discuss briefly some of the findings here. A major finding across our case studies was that overly-politicised education systems threaten human fulfilment and pose a danger to open-mindedness and societal cohesion. In such systems, the school curriculum existed primarily (or even solely) to serve the interests of a dominant political force.

HUMAN FULFILMENT THEN IS THE MOTIVATION TO EMBRACE SOCIETY, TO RISE ABOVE ITS CONTRADICTIONS, AND TO ACTIVELY CHANGE IT

The purpose of education

Although the majority of countries within our sample acknowledged that the aims of education should include the promotion of tolerance, open-mindedness, and social cohesion – all key prerequisites of human fulfilment – the curriculum and the organisation of schooling constrained this outcome.

In Indonesia, an interview with an official in the education ministry revealed that education was seen as important in promoting peaceful co-existence between more than three hundred ethnic and cultural communities[1] and had the potential to either 'foster harmony' or 'perpetuate prejudicial and biased thinking'.[2]

In Pakistan, education was also seen as a legitimate means to root out intolerance and radicalisation. The 2014 *Curriculum Implementation Framework* promotes a focus on learning objectives that emphasise 'peace', 'gender' equality' and 'higher order thinking', and discourages 'passive learning in order to infuse in students the habit of learning by doing and with understanding'.[3]

In Turkey too, the curriculum was designed to 'create a consciousness of history to bind the past, present and future', as well as teaching the 'notions of tolerance, peace and mutual understanding'[4] . And in Palestine, the Education Ministry's stated vision lays out a commitment to preparing human beings who are 'capable of building a society based on equality between males and females and upholding human values and religious tolerance'.[5]

In France, a new curriculum of 'moral education' is tied inseparably to the values of citizenship, cultivating a secular ethic based on critical reason, respect of religious beliefs, pluralism of thoughts and freedom of conscience, while in Northern Ireland, the Education Ministry is committed to building on 'equality, human rights and social change … and building a united community' through the curriculum and through the promotion of integrated education.[6]

The content of the curriculum and constraints on human fulfilment

In more 'secular' countries there was evidence of the conflation of national belonging and religion. In the USA, a strong conservative influence on the Texas school book board resulted in books being purged of content about religions other than Christianity and the contribution of diverse cultures to US history. The Texas State Lieutenant Governor, for example, openly expressed his belief that creationism needs to be taught in schools and the 'issues' with the 'theory of evolution' need to be explained in textbooks.[7]

Interestingly, it was not always what was in textbooks, but what was omitted that led to ambivalence in interpretation. A report on education in Israel and Palestine, for example, found that it was not open examples of dehumanisation within curricula that led to prejudicial views, but rather what they failed to say about minorities and the other side in the decades-long conflict. The omissions created ignorance in students, leaving them vulnerable to believing prejudicial accounts of others, and allowing misconceptions.

Avoidance of specific topics can also offend communities. In many social studies and history textbooks in the US, slavery was only mentioned briefly, usually as a passing reference in the history of the desegregation of the military in 1948. In an interview with an American teacher, she complained that 'Public school teaching does little to teach students about topics that are hard to discuss or that might raise controversy, topics that students and teachers alike have varying opinions on … Topics are skimmed over and taught in a superficial manner'[8] if not altogether left out or twisted.

At the time the study was conducted there was a strong sense of outrage over the fact that a social studies textbook used in Texas contained a caption describing African slaves as 'immigrant workers', and failing to clarify that they were in the US performing slave labour.[9] Although the publisher apologised, the textbook was approved by the Texas State Board of Education after a 'months-long' review process.

[1] The Indonesian constitutional concept of 'Pancasila' (literally 'five principles', the official philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state) in part defines Indonesian identity 'as belief in one god,' excluding atheists and indigenous spiritual animists.

[2] Interviewee 1: Official in Indonesia Ministry of Education.

[3] Pakistan Curriculum Implementation Framework, 2014, 5.

[4] Compulsory Religious Education in Turkey: A Survey and Assessment of Textbooks, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, December 2014, http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/TurkeyTextbookReport.pdf

[5] "Victims of Our Own Narratives?" Portrayal of the "Other" in Israeli and Palestinian School Books. Initiated by the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land.

[6] http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/separate-schools-benign-apartheid-28565119.html

[7] V Zack Kopplin, 'Texas Public Schools Are Teaching Creationism', Slate, January 2014.

[8] Teacher interviewee.

[9] Yanan Wang, "Workers' or slaves? Textbook maker backtracks after mother's online complaint," Washington Post, 10 October 2015: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/10/05/immigrant-workers-or-slaves-textbook-maker-backtracks-after-mothers-online-complaint/ [accessed 1 June 2021].

There are parallels to this in the UK, where Britain's colonial history is not consistently interrogated across various official textbooks.

In Egypt, the description of Israel as an 'other' is done with great care and neutrality, although the term 'Zionist entity' is used to describe Jewish settlements in Palestine prior to 1948. However, the omission of the 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt is notable; one Ninth Grade History and Geography textbook analysed failed to explicitly lay out the normalised relations between Egypt and Israel. 2009 research focusing on Egyptian textbooks found that many crucial issues were avoided in the Egyptian curriculum, such as the heterogynous nature of Egyptian society, and the various identity constructs that exist. Representations of those not part of the narrow conception of the 'national fabric' are 'superficial', and silence is maintained on historical and political issues of 'others'.

In Nigeria, textbooks were found to avoid explicit mention of controversial religious topics, such as homosexuality, abortion, or women's rights. There was a similar tendency in Somaliland. Such issues might go undiscussed to avoid discomfort, but ignoring important areas for study does as much harm as covering them badly, failing to prepare students for discussing those issues outside school.

In the UK, there was evidence of expressions of solidarity with the international community. This included expressions of concern in the classroom over attacks around the world, including a bombing in Turkey, while global media focus was centred on the Paris attacks in November 2015. Students asked themselves questions about the nature of preferential empathy for certain communities over others.[10]

Conclusions

If the argument that human fulfilment is achieved through an educational process that enables students to set aside prejudices and embrace doubt and uncertainty, and to think beyond the conventional and embrace and even thrive on creative differences, our case studies hold some promise but also raise concerns. Despite promising signs from classrooms globally, our research raised questions about the application of lessons about minorities, critical thinking, and human rights, to everyday life. A report that examined the degree of integration of human rights principles in the curricula of secondary schools in countries of the Arab world described students as having a state of 'schizophrenia in their formation', in part because of the conflict between idealistic values learned at school and life experience.[11]

More positively, our research showed an almost universal willingness by teachers and students across all our case studies, spanning Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America, to raise standards of critical thinking in schools. This was linked to a number of outcomes, including effective citizenship, conflict prevention, job success, and resilience against hateful and extreme voices.

In the US, students indicated a general belief that education was essential to preparing them to be informed and engaged citizens. But most Texas students interviewed said that textbooks are failing to do this due to their promotion of what a number of students called 'Christian fundamentalism' and 'American exceptionalism'. They argued that textbooks, and the extent that education is politicised, constrained classroom teaching methods and debate. In particular, the glossing over of important historical events directly relating to racial and religious minorities deprived students of opportunities to develop open and critical minds.

In France, teachers are encouraged to apply a critical approach to, and discussion of, the 'week of the press and media'. This dissection of the week's press in the classroom is intended to encourage an exploration of bias and ideological agendas. This practice stood in notable contrast to findings in England, where students complained of schools' hesitancy to apply critical thinking skills to current affairs.

In Northern Ireland, the history curriculum encourages a range of perspectives on historical events and conflicts to be explored, through activities such as writing speeches from two different sides of a debate. This approach encourages students to question and consider differing drivers of conflict and behaviour, and shows the opportunities that history can offer for reflection. The curriculum actively works to unpack bias, by looking at propaganda, and the agenda of certain sources, with teachers providing generic skills for resisting biased narratives by highlighting blatant propaganda used in recruitment processes.

In Maslow's taxonomy of self-actualisation, education systems should be providing students with opportunities to develop the habit of questioning and analysing ideas, to reflect on sources, and to make informed and rational judgments. The gearing of many of the systems that we studied offers optimism, but as ever, the political push and pull over the idea of society threatens to constrain fulfilment.

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CAN TEACHERS LEARN ANYTHING FROM VIDEO GAMES?

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Video games present a paradox for those of us in education. While there has been recent focus on the potential uses of 'gamified learning' and 'gamification' in educational settings, many organisations have highlighted the potential dangers of video games, focusing in particular on their excessive use. The World Health Organisation introduced the concept of 'gaming disorder' in 2018 (WHO, 2018), and parental concerns regarding video games are often reported in the media (Rapaport, 2020). However, recent studies have found that playing video games can have positive impacts: for instance, Niklas et al found 'a small positive relation between game play and well-being' (2021, 2) and Pine et al concluded that 'CVGs [casual videogames] may have promise for treating anxiety, depression, stress, and low mood' (2020, 263).

This paper examines what teachers can learn from the design of video games. Good video games are powerful learning machines, developing high-level skill and expertise through the recruitment of extended commitment, focus and drive. They also put players in a state of flow, recognised as a key component of human fulfilment and contentment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, 32) and human flourishing (Seligman, 2011, 2 & 11). The inspiration for this is the pioneering work of James Paul Gee, who specialises in psycholinguistics, discourse analysis and literacy studies. The paper responds to his 2005 article, 'Learning by Design: good video games as learning machines'.

Three principles of good video games and their relation to effective learning

Gee addressed the following question: 'How do good game designers manage to get new players to learn long, complex, and difficult games?'. The answer, he argued, is that game designers are 'practical theoreticians of learning' who have developed 'profoundly good methods of getting people to learn and to enjoy learning' (2005, 5). Good video games facilitate effective learning, and they encompass thirteen principles.[1] I will focus on three: the development of player identity; the provision of information 'on demand' and 'just in time'; and the use of 'sandboxes'. Three video games from my own teenage years which encompass these principles include *Super Mario 64* (1996), *Diddy Kong Racing* (1997) and *SimCity 4* (2003). I discuss these below.

[1] The thirteen principles are collected under three headings: empowered learners ((1) co-design, (2) customise, (3) identity, and (4) manipulation and distributed knowledge); problem-solving ((5) well-ordered problems, (6) pleasantly frustrating, (7) cycles of expertise, (8) information 'on demand' and 'just in time', (9) fish tanks, (10) sandboxes, and (11) skills as strategies), and understanding ((12) system thinking and (13) meaning as action image).

Looking at Gee's three principles, can teachers learn any pedagogical lessons from good video game design?

The development of player identity

Deeper learning in any setting requires long-term commitment, and 'such a commitment is powerfully recruited when people take on a new identity they value and in which they become heavily invested' (Gee, 2005, 7). *SimCity 4* is known by aficionados of the series as the most challenging version of the game, and was infamous for its demands on computer memory. Nevertheless, it was the third highest selling PC game of 2003, and has generally received critical acclaim.

What made the game so compelling is that players did not just design cities by placing buildings in plots on the screen. Players became urban planners: they designed complex neighbourhoods, developed transportation networks and ensured that city inhabitants had access to clean water, energy, health and education facilities, and employment opportunities. Noted city planner Jeff Speck stated that the traffic model of the game was 'more advanced than what most traffic engineers use in real life' (Koebler, 2015). For fans of the game, it was an immersive playing experience, characterised by high-quality learning.

Many other games (for instance role-playing or first-person shooter games) present characters that players can project themselves onto, becoming involved in the history and development of the character. The player, for the purposes of the game, essentially takes on or inhabits another identity, which deepens the level of investment in the gameplay and outcomes.

There may be applications of this principle in schools. Gee argues that '[s]chool is often built around the "content fetish"', whereas learners 'need to know how to take on the identity of a certain sort of scientist, if they are doing science, and operate by a certain set of values, attitudes, and actions' (2005, 8). To take an example from my own subject of A Level Politics, when exploring the nuances of constitutional theory I can imagine the positive learning impact of encouraging learners to take on the identity of a constitutional scholar themselves, to become a rival to A. V. Dicey, Walter Bagehot, or Ivor Jennings. Rather than trying to learn a series of disembodied facts or set of arguments, this might encourage them to develop greater expertise and mastery of the content, and to learn and to cultivate the skills necessary to engage in high-level analysis of conceptual points.

The provision of information 'on demand' and 'just in time'

Video games that are too hard or too easy are not good learning machines. The type and timing of information provided to someone engaged in any activity helps determine the level of challenge required. In this respect, video games are highly interactive, and can provide instant feedback to players. A player can interact with the game before they receive lots of information to familiarise themselves with the environment, so that the information can be situated in a meaningful context. The first level of *Super Mario 64* allows players to wander around without any immediate goal, and the player then chooses when to approach characters that are designed to provide information to help make progress in the level. The same is true for many similar platform games, such as *Banjo-Kazooie* from the same era. As it is the player in control of when the information is provided the timing of external interventions to facilitate greater progress is tailored to each individual player.

This personal tailoring of information provision makes for good video games. It also makes for good learning, although it may be difficult to achieve in practice. Gee suggests that students 'need to play the game a bit before they get lots of verbal information and they need to be able to get such information "just in time" when and where they need it and can see how it actually applies in action and practice' (Gee, 2005, 11-12). The problem, of course, is that what is 'just in time' for one learner will be different than for another learner, and so providing information in this way in a classroom context is challenging.

This balance of skill and challenge can also be linked to the concept of flow, stemming from the pioneering work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Well-designed video games provide players with regular flow experiences, which helps explain why players often report losing track of time when they play video games. Csikszentmihalyi outlines nine components of flow, one of which is the balance between challenge and skill (2013, 111-112). Too much information given to learners too quickly diminishes the challenge of the activity, reducing the effectiveness of learning as it may induce a lack of intellectual stimulation (or, indeed, boredom) in the learner. Too little information and the activity requires too high a level of skill for the learner at that particular time, so the task becomes excessively frustrating rather than enjoyably frustrating. Gee referred to this point when he wrote that '[l]earning works best when new challenges are pleasantly frustrating in the sense of being felt by the learners to be at the outer edge of, but within, their "regime of competence"' (2005, 10).

If this principle can be achieved, we could improve the balance between skill and challenge for a greater number of learners. This could enhance learning, since, as Csikszentmihalyi writes,

Flow tends to occur when a person's skills are fully involved in overcoming a challenge that is just about manageable. Optimal experiences usually involve a fine balance between one's ability to act, and the available opportunities for action. (1997, 30.)

Use of 'sandboxes'

'Sandboxes' are an analogy to explain the importance of providing an initial opportunity to explore a piece of content or practise a skill without risk or with the risks greatly minimised. This takes place at the very beginning, essentially acting as an introductory tutorial with clearly defined parameters enabling learners to develop an early sense of competence. This mitigates against the well-researched 'fear of failure', which has been broadly recognised as problematic in education and associated with anxiety, burnout, depression and stress (see, for instance, OECD, 2019, 188-189).

Video games regularly have an introductory tutorial which acts as a sandbox replicating the actual game but without the risk of 'losing' or 'failing'. Players can familiarise themselves with the controls and the environment, building an element of confidence in the game before entering a situation in which the stakes are raised. Both *Diddy Kong Racing* and *Super Mario 64* provide good examples of this, with an open space to play around and get to grips with the game mechanics. Importantly, the pace of the exploration is determined by the player themselves, and they are free to test things out without negative consequence.

This points to a problem in formal education: 'The cost of taking risks, trying out new hypotheses, is too high' (Gee, 2005, 13). Because learners sometimes have insufficient confidence before embarking on a task or activity, the fear of failure can act as a barrier to effective learning. Through sandboxes, video games help players 'feel competent when they are not' (ibid.). Players will fail, of course: they will lose in a level or their character may die. They will have to try again until they have developed sufficient skill to succeed. The main point is that failure is perceived as part of the fun of the game, not something that negates further progress.

Huéscar Hernández et al define fear of failure as follows:
Fear of failure has been defined as the tendency to anticipate embarrassment under circumstances of failure … [and] is more likely to occur when an individual anticipates that failure is likely to be aversive and under those circumstances when the person delegates control to others, searches for approval, or fears disapproval from others. (2020, 1-2.)

Fear of failure can be corrosive. If failure is correlated with embarrassment, it is understandable that individuals would avoid activities associated with failure. The use of sandbox activities in the classroom context could mitigate against this, encouraging greater risk-taking in learning and the exploration of more challenging concepts.

This is important because failure is a key part of learning. Maltese et al (2018) and Lottero-Perdue and Parry (2017) found value in failure as an opportunity for learning, persistence, resilience and perseverance. It is how failure is perceived that is essential: normalising and destigmatising it means it can be seen as a valuable aspect of learning.

As Gee argues, learners 'need always to see failure as informative and part of the game, not as a final judgement or a device to forestall creativity, risk taking, and hypothesizing' (2005, 13). Video games present teachers with a potential tool in achieving this, through the use of sandboxes.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that the design of video games has educational benefits which can be illustrated by three principles in Gee's work. These principles – the development of player identity, the provision of information 'on demand' and 'just in time', and the use of 'sandboxes' – have real relevance in education today. Thinking creatively about learner identity in a task could facilitate more effective content mastery and engagement in higher-order thinking. Differentiating the timing of information provided to students helps personalise the scale of the challenge of a particular task to each learner. Sandboxes create an open space in lessons in which learners are encouraged to experiment and to be bold, to make mistakes and to learn from mistakes.

GOOD VIDEO GAMES ARE POWERFUL LEARNING MACHINES, DEVELOPING HIGH-LEVEL SKILL AND EXPERTISE THROUGH THE RECRUITMENT OF EXTENDED COMMITMENT, FOCUS AND DRIVE

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STUDY THE ARTS FOR THE SAKE OF HUMAN FULFILMENT

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The global pandemic has reaffirmed the importance of the arts within our society and yet, in many schools, these subjects are increasingly marginalised. Many of today's educators, who listened to their own teachers speak of 'education for education's sake', feel at odds with this narrowing of the curriculum. Teachers often enter the profession aiming to inspire students to love their subject for its own merits and imagine examinations to be merely a necessary extra at the end of each two-year course. Sadly, for some, this ideal becomes obscured as they begin delivering ever new examination content whilst adapting to continually changing pedagogical initiatives. It certainly appeared to me, at the outset of my career, in 2001, that the culture within the education system was no longer 'education for education's sake' but instead 'education for results'.

Over the years, education secretaries and examination boards have taken turns to rethink assessment methods but, like most teachers, I have learnt that it is possible to foster a love for learning alongside preparing students for the examination room. Teaching English is about far more than just analysis of the prescribed set text ready for assessment. I am fortunate enough to spend each day discussing with students all manner of important life questions raised by the novels, plays and poetry we read. Harper Lee's 1960's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* debates issues of race and prejudice; J. B. Priestley's 1945 play *An Inspector Calls* demands understanding of social responsibility and class privilege; Michael Frayn's 2002 novel *Spies* leads to discussion about the very nature of what it means to

understand anything at all. The lessons learnt in an English classroom extend far beyond those simply about reading and writing: they equip students with skills to navigate moral questions, critical debate and human psychology.

However, in recent years, I have become increasingly aware of a growing belief among students and parents, that although English and other arts subjects are enjoyable, they are not the sensible choice for study beyond GCSE. Michael Mircieca, CEO of the Young Enterprise, said when interviewed by *The Telegraph* that students should be 'careful about what they study' and consider whether their chosen subject is a 'good career move'.[1] In contrast, Geoff Barton, General Secretary of the Association of Schools and College Leaders, warned in the Independent that the curriculum 'is in danger of being narrowed … depriving students of broader opportunities'. There have also been worrying reports from the BBC of arts subjects being 'squeezed out of schools'. A BBC report in 2018 found that 9 in every 10 schools had recently cut back on lesson time, staff or facilities in at least one creative arts subject. With the increasing cost of university education, many students and their parents are considering the value and necessity of study beyond school level and there is a growing desire to achieve value for money. Students are opting to exclusively study subjects they believe guarantee job-prospects in the future, such as STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths), despite often admitting they would also love to study the arts. So where is this leading and what does it mean for the future of arts subjects in our schools?

[1] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationopinion/12074215/Whats-wrong-with-education-for-educations-sake.html

Since the outset of the Global Pandemic in March 2020, the UK has faced school closures for extended periods of time, and this has given many the opportunity to reflect on the role of education within our society. As students flooded out of the school gates on the final day before the first national lockdown, I was struck by the piles of books they were tightly gripping under their arms. A quick visit to the school library confirmed what I suspected: shelves had been stripped bare! In the face of society being cleared of all its alluring trappings, our students had turned to literature for solace. Spurred on by this revelation, I began a programme of competitions, encouraging students to use this rare offering of time to try their hand at creativity. The outpouring of writing I received from students, staff and alumnae was truly uplifting. Sharing this work became incredibly important to the well-being of our school community, giving us the opportunity to remain connected during this profound experience.

This uptake in creative pursuits has been reflected nationally, as many have felt moved to protect the 'cultural wasteland' emerging because of venue closures.[2] Piano sales have increased to record levels, book sales have soared by more than a third and the Duchess of Cambridge has inspired millions with her photography competition 'Hold Still', launched with the National Portrait Gallery. What has become clear, is that the arts are still very much 'essential' to human fulfilment, even when schools, music venues and theatres are closed.

[2] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/ politics/2020/07/22/britain-will-become-cultural-wasteland-without-arts-support/

[3] https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB119378674197376882

ANY TEACHER OF THE ARTS KNOWS INSTINCTIVELY THAT DESPITE THE POWERFUL ATTRACTION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY AND MODERN SCIENCE, CREATIVE SUBJECTS CONTINUE TO PROVIDE CRUCIAL INSIGHT INTO THE VERY NATURE OF HUMANITY

Any teacher of the arts knows instinctively that despite the powerful attraction of new technology and modern science, creative subjects continue to provide crucial insight into the very nature of humanity. John J. DeBauer argues that a study of literature can 'influence the manner of one's thinking, feeling and acting'. In 2012, the Education Standards Research Team reported that reading for pleasure improves personal development, alongside improving attainment across the whole curriculum. Most important, however, are the lessons we learn about ourselves from a great work of literature, piece of art or composition of music. Shakespeare's plays performed on stage help us confront our own family dynamics; Beethoven's music teaches us about the 'human soul'; historians put modern political problems into historic perspective.[3] The arts play an important role in developing our attainment, knowledge and understanding of the human condition, and this in turn can help to build our resilience in an increasingly unpredictable world.

At the start of the pandemic, Winston Churchill was quoted by several politicians and his words trended on Twitter:

'Ill fares the race which fails to salute the arts'.

I would argue that the global pandemic has renewed our understanding of the intrinsic link between the arts and human fulfilment and therefore these subjects must remain at the very centre of education.

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MAKE IT STICK: LEARNING AS EDUCATION'S PRIMARY AIM AND HUMAN FULFILMENT

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What you learn about learning shapes a lifetime of opportunities seized or missed.

For this reason alone, the most important skill set to develop during the school years are the strategies and self-discipline for mastering new knowledge and skills.

Learning is the wellspring of fulfilment. When you're an adept learner you have an advantage in all aspects of a rewarding life – job skills, new technologies, career advancement or jumping the job track into something new. Playing at sports and diving into new hobbies.

The primary aim of education is to learn. To achieve that aim as well as possible, students need to be aware of how to learn most effectively. But there's a catch: cognitive science shows that the best strategies for durable learning are not intuitive. Re-reading, highlighting and underlining, for example, turn out to be largely labour in vain. Single-minded, focused repetition of a new skill? The gains you observe during this kind of massed practice lean on short-term memory and quickly fade.

Our 2014 book *Make it Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* (Harvard University Press) describes how to excel at learning, the key points of which are summarised in this article.

Retrieval practice

Durable learning is established by working to get new knowledge out of the head, not working to drive it in. Athletes on the soccer field understand that watching videos will not make them great players. As they are taught technique, they must practise applying it, making errors and getting corrective feedback to refine their execution and consolidate the information. So goes all learning.

Consolidation is the process of moving learning to long-term memory, by making sense of the new information, filling in gaps, and connecting it to what you already know. Unlike short-term memory, durable memory is built by forming a network of physical connections between neurons. The more connections you make to what you already know and can do, the more readily the new knowledge or skill comes to mind again later when you need it.

All learning evolves through practice at recalling and applying new knowledge or skills, improving through feedback and practice. Difficulties that make learning harder but can be overcome through effort foster repeated consolidation –

making learning stronger, longer lasting, and more versatile for application in new circumstances. Cognitive psychologists call these 'desirable difficulties' because they engage the mind in ways that make learning stick. Retrieval practice – demonstrating that you can recall and apply what you have learned – is a desirable difficulty.

Spaced practice

Another desirable difficulty is spacing out your study and retrieval attempts, allowing enough time to pass between attempts so that the memory has grown a little rusty. Spaced retrieval keeps prior learning sharp, connects it to recent learning to build more complex mastery, and helps embed the learning in memory with many cues for retrieving it in the moment when you need it.

Suppose you set off for a year in Italy but you don't have the language. Taking lessons before you go will help you land on your feet, but the greatest learning will seep in as you move around asking directions, ordering food in restaurants, hearing idioms and practising verb tenses. It's a mishmash. But, in time you will surprise yourself by engaging in spontaneous conversation with new friends and strangers.

The same benefits of spacing your practice apply in setting out to acquire any new skill or body of knowledge: computer coding, starting a new business (where early setbacks deliver vital insights for success), or taking up flamenco guitar with aspirations to fan the strings in that characteristic artistry called *rasguead*o.

Mixed practice

The typical maths book works students through problems one at a time, learning the solution (for example, how to calculate the volume of a wedge in solid geometry) and then practising many examples of the problem so as to solidify the learning before moving on to practise a different problem (finding the volume of a cone).

Likewise, the typical tennis player might practise different strokes in the same way, blocked by type: hitting forehands for a basket of balls, for example, then switching to backhands for the next basket, then hitting volleys, and so on.

During practice, a learner typically does very well with this kind of blocked repetition, and the performance improvement is taken as evidence of solid learning. However, mixing up the types of geometry problems or tennis strokes during practice is a far more effective strategy.

Most learners prefer blocked practice because they do well at it. Performance during mixed practice is more ragged, as each new problem must be correctly identified in the moment, then the correct formula to solve it recalled and applied. The student makes more errors and may feel like "I'm not getting it", but when tested weeks later, the student whose practice problems were mixed will far outperform those whose practice problems were blocked by type.

The student of Italian living abroad might mix some tutoring into her schedule: lessons in grammar, verb tenses and conjugations, and reading and writing, supporting what her ear is learning as she moves through her days. The beginner artist might interleave his exercises in drawing shapes, with exercises in illustrating objects' surface value, capturing light, and showing perspective. Each informs the other. The same benefits of mixed practice accrue on the athletic field, or in the cockpit or the operating room. Wherever the learner wants to be adept at discerning differences, correctly identifying a challenge, and applying an effective response, spaced and mixed practice will have embedded the knowledge and skills for success.

In writing our book *Make it Stick*, we illustrated the science through real-life stories where these learning strategies enabled people to pursue opportunities or work their way out of trouble. The stories recount incidents from a wide spectrum: pilots, cops, a brain surgeon, classical pianist, football coach, medical student, gardener, an investor, army jumpmaster, and others. Possessing deep skills at learning is a core human competency that touches all aspects of life, but it is not intuitive; like many skills, it must be taught and practised, and it is worth the effort.

In summary, the science of making learning stick calls for embracing these desirable difficulties:

• Retrieving new skills and knowledge from memory rather than focusing on trying to push new knowledge into the brain through methods like reviewing, re-reading, and cramming.

• Spacing out your episodes of practice so that reaching back to retrieve and apply what you have learned requires some effort and becomes better connected to what you have learned since.

• Mixing up your practice of different problem types within a domain rather than practising many examples of one problem type before moving on to practise another type. Mixed practice improves your ability to (i) discern their differentiating and unifying characteristics, (ii) select the correct solutions, and (iii) build conceptual understanding of the domain.

It's worth the effort. Excellence at learning opens one to many paths: as the saying goes, 'life is short, but wide'. The stronger the learner, the broader the horizon.

A webinar discussion with the authors of this article is available on the CIRL podcast: etoncirl.podbean.com/e/the-science-of-successful-learning-1606381019
For blog posts on each chapter of Make It Stick*, see the CIRL blog: cirl.etoncollege.com/our-blog*

ENHANCING PUPILS' MOTIVATION TO LEARN LANGUAGES: THE ROLE OF LINGUISTICS AND CREATIVITY IN THE MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES CLASSROOM

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Languages in Anglophone countries

Language learning plays a paramount role in pupils' development. It does not only enable pupils to communicate in a different language, but also fosters pupils' curiosity, deepens their understanding of the world, and stimulates their ability to think critically. Despite the benefits provided by language learning to pupils' development, the uptake of foreign language courses in the UK has seen a sharp decline in recent years (Collen, 2020).

One of the main causes of the lack of interest in language learning is the status of English as an undisputed *lingua franca.* Many teachers, from both the state and independent sectors, have reported difficulty in motivating young people to study languages and in raising awareness of the importance of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) education confronted with the 'English is enough' attitude (see, among others, Board & Tinsley, 2016; Collen, 2020). This article investigates whether, and if so how, it is possible to enhance pupils' motivation towards languages in Anglophone contexts.

Embedding linguistics and creativity in language teaching

It is widely acknowledged that motivation is an indispensable part of character education. Highly motivated pupils show greater levels of persistence and achievement (Department for Education, 2019). However, it is important that pupils feel a sense of relatedness and competence to be motivated (Konstantinou, 2021). Teachers can foster motivation towards language learning by encouraging students to think about how language learning links with what they are studying and with what they experience in life, as well as by demonstrating the applicability of what students learn in the MFL classroom.

To this purpose, I designed two short teaching interventions aimed at increasing Year 9 pupils' motivation towards language learning. The first intervention was based on linguistics and adapted from the Speakglobal project (Lanvers, Hultgren & Gayton, 2019). Its aim was to raise awareness of multilingualism among pupils and to demonstrate the cognitive benefits of language learning. It was specifically aimed at promoting a sense of relatedness, by encouraging learners to think about how languages link with other areas of their learning and, more broadly, their lives.

For the second teaching intervention, I adopted a creative approach as an alternative to the prevalent emphasis on language learning for functional purposes (Kohl et al., 2020). This intervention was aimed at encouraging project-based learning (Betterton, 2021). Students were first introduced to the Italian artistic movement 'Futurism', and subsequently asked to produce Futurism-inspired postcards by using words in several languages. Working on art-based projects can stimulate pupils' linguistic creativity, which ultimately fosters their enjoyment and motivation for language learning.[1] This intervention demonstrates the possibility of learning and utilising languages in applied contexts to promote a sense of competence.

I trialled the two teaching interventions at Rugby School. Among the 122 students who took part, 74 were exposed to the linguistic intervention and 48 to the creative approach. To understand the impact of the two interventions, I collected data on pupils' attitudes towards languages through an adapted version of the questionnaire designed by Lanvers, Hultgren and Gayton (2019). This enabled me to retrieve insights into several aspects associated with language learners' motivation: the cognitive benefits of language learning; awareness of multilingualism; English as a global language; the image of MFL as a school subject; the image of MFL learners; self-efficacy; and the impact of language learning on creativity.

Students were asked to complete the questionnaire both before and after being exposed to the intervention. This allowed for the collection of qualitative data to evaluate the effectiveness of each intervention. It also allowed me to compare the linguistic and creative approaches with respect to their potential to improve motivation towards language learning. Below I present some preliminary findings of this evaluation.

LANGUAGE LEARNING PLAYS A PARAMOUNT ROLE IN PUPILS' DEVELOPMENT, ENABLES PUPILS TO COMMUNICATE IN A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE, AND FOSTERS PUPILS' CURIOSITY

[1] For a definition of 'linguistic creativity' see Hofweber and Graham (2018), and Kohl et al. (2020).

Language learning motivation in Anglophone and non-Anglophone contexts

Before discussing the impact of the two teaching interventions, it is useful to consider differences between pupils in England and those in non-Anglophone contexts. The questionnaire used at Rugby School was also administered to 173 pupils in three secondary schools in Italy, two international schools and one *Liceo*. This data provides useful insights into pupils' attitudes towards languages in a non-Anglophone context.

It was apparent that students in the three schools in Italy strongly appreciated the importance of English as a global language and the benefits associated with knowing English from a personal and professional point of view. For example, one pupil stated that:

"Learning English is important to travel and to work abroad. It may give you the opportunity to have a good job".

However, they also recognised that all languages play a key role in defining people's identities. One student stated that:

"I believe that English is the most common language, but each country should preserve its own languages and identities".

The pupils in Italy also believed that languages can be a vehicle to learn about different cultures and traditions, as well as your own culture:

"I love languages because they can give you the possibility to communicate with foreign people and understand others, and also to understand your culture and other cultures".

From this study, we could infer that learning languages is extremely appealing to those students in Italy involved in the intervention. One student stated that:

"Learning several languages is the most exciting thing in the world".

Among pupils in Italian schools there was often a strong feeling that languages make you more open-minded and help you in life, for example by providing more career opportunities in your own country and abroad. This, ultimately, tends to reflect positively on the image of MFL learners. As one pupil stated:

"I think that speaking many languages allows you to be understood worldwide. There are many people who don't speak English at all, so knowing their native language could help you communicate with them. Learning a new language makes you also more open-minded and more open to new cultures".

This is a slightly different and more positive picture from that which tends to emerge in Anglophone contexts. For example, Rugby pupils appreciate the value of multilingualism and understand that languages are important;

however, languages are perceived as challenging and difficult to learn. One pupil stated:

"I really enjoy languages. I think they are good fun but a challenge".

One of the aspects that Rugby pupils demonstrated to value the most about language learning concerns its cognitive benefits:

"Languages are good as they push your brain to be more intelligent and to think outside the box".

The role of linguistics

Rugby pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the cognitive benefits of languages, but the data I gathered suggests that the linguistic teaching intervention could be an important leverage to further motivate pupils to learn languages. For example, referring to the content of the linguistic intervention, pupils reported:

"I enjoyed finding out about how bilinguals differ from monolinguals. It made me want to try harder in my language lessons to learn a little bit more about another language".

"I think the session was useful and I learnt a lot. I learnt that bilinguals are less likely to get dementia and I more likely to".

The linguistic intervention also seemed very effective in raising awareness of multilingualism, with many Rugby pupils realising that there are other languages which are more widely spoken than English:

"English is not as big as I thought".

"It was fun and I learnt more about languages and I learnt that there are so many more languages than I thought".

Thanks to the linguistic intervention, Rugby pupils seemed to appear to have changed their attitude towards English as a global language and seemed more willing to study languages:

"I learnt that English is not the world's first language and that learning more languages is very beneficial".

"This session surprised me about how many languages there are around. It also showed me that you can actually learn a lot more languages than I thought you could".

Pupils at Rugby School reported that they felt more optimistic about their ability to learn a new language. This suggests that the linguistic intervention can positively influence pupils' self-efficacy, the lack of which is often a hurdle to language learning. One pupil stated:
"I am going to try harder to learn a language fluently".

Moreover, some Rugby pupils recognised that they are lucky to be given the opportunity to learn more than one language at school. This sense of gratitude can have a positive impact on the image of MFL as a subject, as indicated by some pupils' comments:

"I already liked languages, but now I am even more interested in doing more languages".

"Although learning more than one language can be hard, we are lucky to be given this opportunity".

The role of creativity

My findings from the creative intervention suggest that it can also be effective in increasing motivation towards the study of languages. The creative intervention seemed to make pupils more aware of the cognitive benefits of language learning and raised the image of MFL learners. The data collected also suggests that a teaching approach based on creative tasks enables pupils to enjoy learning languages through the lens of art. This can stimulate their ability to think imaginatively and, more broadly, their linguistic creativity:

"Learning languages is important. It helps brain development and imagination".

"It was good fun. It helps you think more creatively and understand more about the word".

Additionally, Rugby pupils involved in the creative intervention reported that they felt a sense of competence and achievement, as they quickly made progress in their language learning. For example, one pupil stated:

"I really liked this lesson because when I was filling in the painting I said the words out loud and practised saying them".

Concluding remarks

Within the limitations of a small-scale study, the insights presented in this article suggest that pupils in Anglophone contexts tend to be less motivated towards languages than their non-Anglophone counterparts. The data collected to evaluate the teaching interventions at Rugby School also suggests that both the linguistic and the creative approaches towards language learning can be effective in positively changing students' attitudes towards language learning, although in different ways.

The linguistics intervention has the potential to counter the 'English is enough' attitude and encourage language learners to value multilingualism and its benefits. This, in turn, can have a positive impact on self-efficacy and can contribute to raising the profile of MFL as a school subject and of its learners.

The creative approach can increase pupils' motivation. This can be done by employing creative activities in the classroom that enable students to experiment with languages, which can develop students' understanding that the value of languages is not merely defined by their communicative usefulness. The creative approach can make pupils feel more competent in their learning and support the development of creative thinking skills.

Further research would be needed to fully assess the effects of these interventions on a larger scale. However, it is possible to conclude that embedding linguistics and creative activities in the MFL classroom in Anglophone contexts can enhance pupils' motivation to embark on the fascinating, enriching and intellectually stimulating journey of learning languages.

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EMBEDDING LINGUISTICS AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES IN THE MFL CLASSROOM IN ANGLOPHONE CONTEXTS CAN ENHANCE PUPILS' MOTIVATION

WHAT CAN SCHOOLS DO TO BETTER SUPPORT PUPILS' FLOURISHING?

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What greater aim could we have for our education system than that it enables the flourishing of all our young people in the broadest possible sense? In framing our overall wish for education, we might well include sub-domains of flourishing: economic, relational, spiritual and so on, but as a starting point, holistic flourishing seems uncontroversial as an aspiration. We want pupils to be happy, healthy in mind and body, engaged with a sense of personal and social purpose, and poised to make contributions to the greater good.

As a cohort, though, secondary school pupils in the UK are not flourishing to nearly the extent we would wish them to at the moment, by any definition. OECD results reveal that the UK saw the biggest drop in life satisfaction of 15-16 year-olds between 2015 and 2018 out of all OECD countries, with a quarter of them indicating that they were not satisfied with their lives in 2018 (PISA, 2015). One in six 17-19-year-old pupils in the UK had a diagnosable mental health disorder in 2017. The statistics have only become more concerning during COVID-19. This is an alarming situation.

What can schools do to better support pupils' flourishing? We invite educators to thoughtfully consider this important question. In this article, we offer a few ideas to inspire further thinking among our fellow educators. We do not, by any means, provide an exhaustive discussion, but rather offer a few illustrative examples in the hopes of galvanizing further conversation.

How schools may be hindering rather than promoting flourishing

To begin to consider this question, we can first reflect on how schools might unwittingly be part of the problem. Research suggests that, on average, the longer students stay in school, the less engaged they become (Busteed, 2013). We know how to cultivate deeper learning experiences in school that engage students in meaningful work that fosters intrinsic motivation, but these experiences are currently the exception (Mehta, 2019). Schools need to offer deeper learning experiences to support students' sense of meaning and purpose, which is a key aspect of flourishing (VanderWeele, 2017, 8149).

Might school also unintentionally contribute to pupils' struggles with mental health? A blog by University of Cambridge Professors Sarah-Jayne Blakemore and Tamsin Bond, a psychologist and a psychiatrist respectively, shows that the peak age for mental health conditions occurs in mid-adolescence, at about the time of GCSEs in the UK, not coincidentally, they suggest (Blakemore and Ford, 2020). They point to repeated surveys citing exam stress and fear of academic failure as UK pupils' most prominent worry. They argue that the placement of such all-dominating, high-stakes assessments at a time of peak adolescent susceptibility is likely to be a contributory factor in such alarming outcomes. In light of this, we may want to critically evaluate our approach to assessment. Indeed, Rethinking Assessment,[1] covered in the previous issue of this journal, is set to do just that.

Beyond this, how can schools actively promote flourishing?

Philosophers have been musing on the nature of human flourishing since Aristotle, and no doubt before, but in recent years rigorous empirical studies have provided many more insights into relevant factors. Perhaps most noticeably, the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University has co-ordinated interdisciplinary work on the issue, including a number of specific activities that previous research has demonstrated to be sound boosters of flourishing (Seligman, 2011; VanderWeele, 2019b).

Activities that can promote flourishing

Educators can draw on this academic literature base to infuse their practice with activities that promote flourishing. Perhaps one of the easiest places to begin is with encouraging pupils to practise gratitude. A variety of simple, easy-to-use gratitude interventions have shown measurable benefits. One study showed that participants who kept a 14-day diary in which they recorded five things for which they were grateful each day showed improved optimism, life-satisfaction and social connectedness, as well as decreased anxiety levels and even decreased complaints about physical pains (Kerr, O'Donovan & Pepping, 2015). Simple gratitude interventions can have long-term impacts. For example, another study showed that participants who spent just one week writing down three things that went well each day and why they went well had higher levels of happiness and lower levels of depressive symptoms that held, without any further intervention, even six months later (Seligman et al., 2005). Another common variation of a gratitude practice is writing thank you notes. In controlled experimental studies, secondary school pupils who wrote thank you letters to others who had been kind to them reported statistically significantly higher levels of life satisfaction (Khanna and Singh, 2019). In his role as Director of Empirical Research for the Human Flourishing

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[1] https://rethinkingassessment.com/

Program, Matthew Lee often conducts a short exercise in seminars based on a speech by the loveable American television host Mister Rogers in which participants intentionally reflect with gratitude on all those who have 'loved them into being'.

Some teachers may be concerned that adolescents might perceive such approaches as too idealistic, or even potentially mockable. Not necessarily. The remarkable secondary XP School in Doncaster uses an exercise called 'Appreciations and Apologies', in which pupils publicly thank one another and their teachers for a wide variety of actions or attitudes, as well as saying sorry for their shortcomings. This activity is built into their weekly assembly. Witnessing this first-hand, it is obvious there is not a whiff of cynicism in the air, since XP has nurtured a mutually supportive culture in which appreciating others at school is as natural as reading. Without irony, pupils throw a big fluffy microphone to one another as they take turns to share their appreciation for one another. It is a thing to behold. This practice is in part inspired by Ron Berger's work around establishing a culture of 'Crew' (Berger et al. 2020) in which pupils feel accountable to one another and generate a sense of common purpose through their mutual support. The ensuing sense of purpose is another factor linked to flourishing (VanderWeele, 2017, 8149).

Assessing the impact of flourishing activities in schools

Let's imagine that schools found ways of building in versions of gratitude practice appropriate to their different school cultures and framed in their own terms of reference. How would they know if these interventions were having an impact?

Fortunately, researchers have created and are continuing to develop tools and programmes that can support schools in this endeavour. An influential recent example is the measure developed by Tyler VanderWeele (2017), Director of the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University. VanderWeele has created an instrument for capturing a person's overall flourishing score through a short, valid and reliable Flourishing Measure.[2] There is a modified version for adolescents as well, which is available along with a couple of other Measures of Flourishing that relate directly to flourishing in a school context.[3]

Another useful resource developed by researchers is the Flourishing App, also created by the Harvard Human Flourishing Program. The app allows you to conduct both the survey and a variety of activities related to flourishing, including gratitude practices, all of which have been shown to be linked to increased flourishing. It schedules and tracks your activity and subscribers can check progress in terms of an overall flourishing measure at any time.

Schools could readily build gratitude practices into their tutorial or well-being sessions without cost and with virtually no preparation. Parents repeatedly emphasise that what they most want out of education is for their children to be happy so they would no doubt be supportive of this activity, given its empirical effectiveness. Grateful, even.

[2] https://hfh.fas.harvard.edu/measuring-flourishing

[3] https://sites.google.com/view/teachereducationforflourishing/projects/measures-of-flourishing?authuser=0

What else works? Humour as a means of enhancing flourishing

Studies with adults show that the use of humour is an effective way of enhancing flourishing. Simply watching a comedy show can measurably decrease psychological and physiological stress (Rizzolo et al., 2009). Humour also promotes social bonding, thereby deepening relationships (Dunbar et al., 2011). The research is clear that close, positive relationships are fundamental to flourishing (Mineo, 2017). Teenagers use humour with their peers as a means of dealing with stressful situations and enhancing their socioemotional functioning (Cameron, Fox, Anderson & Cameron, 2010).

Should teachers intentionally incorporate humour into their instruction? Sceptics might wonder if such humour could distract students from learning. However, research in neuroscience suggests that humour can actually improve our memory of information (Coronel, O'Donnell, Pandey, Delli Carpini, & Falk, 2021). Likewise, studies show that pupils report that when teachers use humour, it improves instructional quality (Evans-Palmer, 2015). To those who enjoy a reasonably well-developed sense of humour, it will be no surprise to hear that, when well-judged, humour can support the atmosphere and productivity of a class.

We might wonder what practical steps schools can take to intentionally promote the use of humour. How well would staff receive an INSET day on 'being funnier to raise pupil achievement'? We suspect that this would actually be received rather well, as long as the trainer was themselves skilled in the dark arts of making teachers laugh. Some practical applications suggest themselves. Intentionally consider a candidate's sense of humour in their interview? Why not? A good interviewer should be on the lookout for all sorts of traits, and it would do no harm if 'sense of humour' was on the checklist of reminders for debriefs. Pupil panels at interview are especially effective at judging the capacity of candidates to act in an easy and good-humoured manner with them. At Bedales School, student panels invariably ask interviewees to tell them a joke. Responses are instructive. Some recall good jokes, others do not, but whether they can or not, a great deal can be inferred from the humour with which prospective teachers take this challenge from youngsters! Left-field challenges are hardly unknown in the classroom.

Regular and warm encouragement from a school's leadership team to staff to use humour would be useful. The leadership team should also model humour, not only for humour's own sake, but also because of its efficaciousness. This would do no harm and could perhaps take place in discussions of lesson observations. Such nudges may have staff actively seeking out amusing starters when they would otherwise not have done. Google has an amusing cartoon for just about any topic you can think of, and these can set the tone of a class. Teachers can work on the skill of humour just as we do with any other teaching skill, even if a growth mindset is required. For example, teachers could arrange outings with colleagues to see stand-up comedians to learn new tactics. We imagine this might deepen friendships among staff as well, who also deserve to flourish!

Creating flourishing school communities through acts of kindness

The list of activities that research has linked to improved flourishing is extensive. The list includes acts of kindness; intentionally 'savouring the good'; reflecting on character strengths; contemplating virtues; volunteering; imagining one's best possible self; forgiveness activities; and attending religious services.

Given that a robust body of evidence points the way to the importance of and means for enhancing flourishing in education, why would we not work out how to align our practices in schools with this intrinsically desirable outcome? We invite you to join us as thought partners in this endeavour.

What shifts in education policies are we aiming to bring about to be sure schools are not unwittingly part of the problem? How might we connect the flourishing of individual students to the well-being of school communities? The Human Flourishing Program has developed a measure to help make this connection (VanderWeele, 2019a). A student who disconnects from a school community in which trust is low and relationships are unsatisfying may find a great deal of satisfaction in their personal life. They might even score highly on some of the individual flourishing domains. But coping in this manner is not the same as complete flourishing. Students thrive more fully when engaged in a healthy school community that contributes collectively to the greater good. Such contributions might seek to balance the meeting of human needs with the ecological ceilings of the environment, in a manner that strengthens a holistic well-being ecosystem (Raworth, 2017).

As we work toward creating flourishing school communities together, what research-informed approaches can you use straight away to promote your students' flourishing? On a particularly sunny day, could you encourage them to savour the sunshine? Could you remind them, in the midst of a global pandemic, to be grateful for all of the miraculous ways their healthy bodies are working in this moment? Could you ask them how they can bring kindness to others during this challenging time? Research shows that acts of kindness inspire others to do similar acts of kindness, which in turn inspire others to do further acts of kindness, and so forth (Fowler & Christakis, 2010). With this, who knows what butterfly effect your small nudge toward flourishing might bring about!

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DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES & THE POWER OF ONLINE CELEBRITIES

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Digital technologies are changing many aspects of the educational environment. Given the pace of technological change, it is easy to get distracted by how emerging technologies are transforming how we educate children and young people, as well as how they are educating themselves. Smartphones inside (or outside) of the classroom, online proctoring, gamified learning activities, unlimited educational content (podcasts, videos, or virtual assistant teachers), and the ability to ask Google anything in real-time have transformed education in ways that few could even imagine a decade ago.

These changes should not be underestimated. Nevertheless, it is vital to recognise that online technologies are changing the purposes of education too. These changes could be rightly regarded as more subtle, but I suggest that they are also more profound. Changing the purpose of education not only stands to transform how we teach, it also has the potential to help us understand why (and what) the next generation of learners feels they need to learn.

Teachers and educational institutions are used to responding to technological developments. When scientific calculators were first introduced into UK maths and science exams in the 1990s, the cries of the popular press were rebutted by teachers and examination boards who recognised that the ability to do mental arithmetic on paper was quickly becoming otiose. The widespread availability of online tools and services today has resulted in a similar acceptance of emerging technologies. Most teachers today champion a model of learning that makes use of what the internet has to offer, while also focusing on the skills their students need to successfully navigate the ever-changing digital terrain.

BEING AN ONLINE INFLUENCER CAN ALSO INVOLVE LIVING A LIFE THAT EXPRESSES A DISTINCTIVELY ETHICAL AND POLITICAL MANDATE

But what happens when technological developments start to change what learners themselves regard as the purpose of education? Technology does not just affect how students learn, it also creates new careers and ways of life that change the very point of learning. Understanding how technology is rapidly doing both these things, I propose, presents us with both a risk and an opportunity.

In 2019, on the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing, Lego Group conducted a survey to see how popular the ideal of becoming an astronaut was among 8-12-year-olds. As the researchers of this study note, since Neil Armstrong's 1969 moonwalk the vocation of astronaut has consistently been the most popular career goal among this age group, one that has encouraged countless students to study the natural sciences beyond their GCSEs. To their surprise, however, the researchers found that, of the 3000 children and young people they interviewed (from China, USA and the UK), only 11% now want to be an astronaut, compared to 29% who wish to be a YouTuber. This result is significant because it gives us an intimation of how the goals of education are subject to change, at least from the perspective of those who are being educated.

So how can we understand why being a YouTuber is now a sought-after lifestyle for this demographic? Why are young people now enamoured with such ideals, over and above the (perhaps more obvious) attractions of space flight? There are likely to be many reasons for this. But aside from the vanity and eye-watering renumeration that many associate with being an online star, there seem to be more serious reasons why young people are interested in this. These reasons are connected to how online technologies facilitate the ability of young people to become politically well-informed and active citizens, even to engage in online activism (Vink, 2019). As Jonathan Beale notes when discussing Emily Robertson's claim that the civic and epistemic aims of education intersect, there is something right about viewing education as a hybrid process that comprises both epistemic and civic goals (2019). Being an online influencer does not have to involve imparting knowledge, incessant commercial activity, or documenting a life of frivolity. It can also involve living a life that expresses a distinctively ethical and political mandate.

Examples of online influencers with an ethical mandate are increasingly common in today's online world. We may immediately think of the ecological activist Greta Thunberg, someone for whom it would have been difficult to become famous without the internet. Since she was nominated as *Time Magazine's* Person of the Year in 2019, Thunberg has consistently ranked as a highly influential ethical exemplar (5 million Twitter followers). She has personally met with

distinguished personages such as Barak Obama (2018), addressed the United Nations on climate change (2018), and received three nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize (2019–2021). Even compared to the popularity of would-be astronaut Elon Musk, Thunberg's achievements have massively influenced how millions young people view the importance of thriving in the world of social media.

Some may object that it is difficult to extrapolate from the example of Thunberg to why young people regard YouTubers as worthy of emulation more generally. This objection should be taken seriously. We can only speculate what it is about being a YouTuber that was so attractive to the 8–12-year-olds interviewed in Lego Group's study. Most obviously, there are likely to be many less high-minded reasons for being globally famous online than wanting to save the planet (Cocking & van den Hoven, 2018). There can be no doubt that the allure of 'likes', gushing comments, or the prospect of going viral are all highly motivating. Nevertheless, it is important to note that using one's platform for ethical purposes seems to be becoming increasingly important. It would be difficult to conceive of the #MeToo campaign, for instance, without the connective power of online technology.

The desire to further one's ethical and political commitments online is even shown by more conventional (and much more famous) celebrities. Take Kim Kardashian West, for example. Kardashian West is one of the most famous online celebrities today. Unlike Thunberg, her fame did not arise from her political or ethical commitments (to the contrary). Yet in recent years Kardashian West has used her platform to raise awareness of her political and ethical commitments, albeit while promoting her various business lines.

In 2019, Kardashian West denounced the Dutch tradition of '*Zwarte Piet*' to her 70 million Twitter followers, igniting a global debate that caused many in the Netherlands to reject the practice. She has documented herself retraining as a lawyer, attending law school, and advocating for victims of mistrials and unfair sentencing (the Justice Project). More recently, Kardashian West has used her influence to criticise Instagram and Facebook for spreading 'seeds of hate, propaganda and misinformation' which she claims has resulted in 'sowing division and splitting America apart' (September 2020). Even many of Kardashian West's detractors now concede that her ethical interventions have been significant.

Online celebrities such as Thunberg and Kardashian West are clearly exceptional. There is also only limited room for others to join them at the very highest level of the influencer pyramid where they currently reside. Nevertheless, how Thunberg and Kardashian West express their political and ethical commitments offers a way to understand the aspirations of the young people interviewed in the Lego Group's study, and to take these aspirations seriously. These young people want to be like Thunberg and Kardashian West because they are interested in having an active role in the world of tomorrow, and they see the power of social media as a key way of doing this.

They may well be right. Even if few of today's young people will go on to command large social media audiences for the purposes of activism, encouraging their inchoate desire to influence others online could be one way to foster the next generation of ethically aware and politically empowered citizens.

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DEVELOPING AN ECOLOGY OF FLOURISHING IN EDUCATION

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Quite understandably, a significant amount of attention has been given to the description, analysis and measurement of the flourishing of children in schools. This is frequently rooted in Aristotelian virtue ethics, character education, positive psychology, and well-being. However, when considering flourishing schools as whole institutions, it is important to highlight the importance of the flourishing of adults alongside, and interacting with, children. This 'ecology of flourishing' is a vision of interdependence of all parts of the school system, for without flourishing adults, there will be few flourishing children.

Ecosystems are complex biological environments that are defined not only in terms of all the living organisms that populate them, but also by those organisms' interactions with each other and with inanimate elements in the environment (such as topography or climate). A poignant example of this interconnectedness can be observed over the last twenty-five years at Yellowstone National Park in the Western United States (Boyce, 2018). After a seventy-year absence due to overhunting, wolves that had once been native to Yellowstone were reintroduced in 1995 in very small numbers. With the reintroduction of these apex predators, the overpopulation of elk – and their destructive overgrazing of the park – diminished. As native vegetation began to regrow in turn, species like beavers increased in numbers as well. Perhaps most remarkably, this process of re-vegetation and re-population began to reshape the actual topography of the park, including the shape and health of waterways. Twenty-five years later, the number of wolves has only grown to upward of sixty – but their impact on the ecosystem's health during that short period of time, even given their small number, demonstrates the 'intricate web of relationships that is the power of nature' (BBC, 2020).

Similarly, schools are not simply collections of discrete programs and classrooms run by individuals who operate independently of each other. Rather, schools involve webs of relationships and reciprocal actions between and among leaders, teachers, staff, students, families, and others who engage with and in the school community. We are reminded of the words written by the Rev. Dr Martin Luther King, Jr., in his 'Letter from a Birmingham Jail': 'We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny'.[1]

Yet, across much of education, flourishing is often far from the norm. In fact, it seems like many factors serve to inhibit flourishing in schools. These include external factors like economic pressures, students' struggles outside of school, and societal rifts related to inequality and injustice.
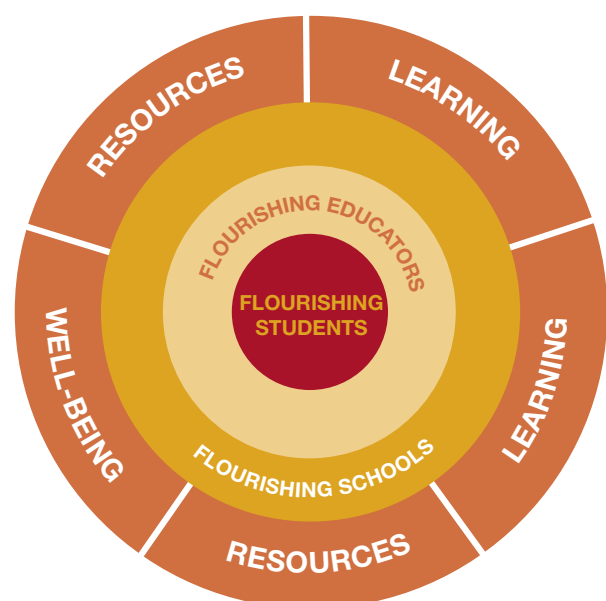
Structural factors common in educational systems may also work against flourishing, such as an underlying competition model (with students and schools competing on the basis of academic achievement, and schools and individual teachers often lacking and competing for resources). Schools are also impacted by reductionist views of the purposes of education, reflected in shallow definitions and measures of success for which our societies have settled, such as defining the aim of education simply as preparing young people for the workplace. Thus while schools' mission statements may be loftily expansive, the daily experience of educators and students alike reflects a much narrower story around education.

Our goal is to call us to a broader vision for educational flourishing, in the hope that by doing so, we will find fresh vision and energy to re-imagine our schools – and ourselves – as what we desire them to be. This begins with the understanding that – much like the various species of Yellowstone – the health, both physical and mental, of everyone in the educational ecosystem matters to the health of everyone else. Put simply, students, educators, and school communities flourish together, or not at all.

Domains of Flourishing: Insights from Research

Our vision for 'Flourishing Together' (Swaner and Wolfe, 2021) is based on a long-term quantitative analysis of the components of flourishing undertaken across a group of 15,000 educators, students, alumni, and school families between 2017 and 2019, resulting in the publication of the Flourishing Schools Culture Model (FSCM), shown below.

Figure 1: The Flourishing School Culture Model (Swaner, Marshall & Tesar, 2019)

[1] Martin Luther King, Jr., 'Letter from a Birmingham Jail' (1963): https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/letter-birmingham-jail [accessed 27 May 2021].

This validated model offers a definition of flourishing based on five interacting domains: purpose; relationships; learning; resources; and well-being, outlined as follows.

- **Purpose:** A clear understanding of our shared purpose – why we are together at school – sets us on the path to flourishing. A common purpose helps us to be unified around clear goals and to work toward a 'greater good' to which we aspire together.
- **Relationships:** Our flourishing is dependent upon who we are with – that is, who we are together with in and as a community. As social beings, the degree to which we value, honour, and care for each other – students, teachers, leaders, and families alike – impacts our mutual flourishing. School communities that are characterised by a sense of belonging are places where we can flourish together.
- **Learning:** Undoubtedly, learning is what students are supposed to do at school, and the quality of that learning is supremely important. At the same time, student learning is intricately linked to the learning of educators and the school itself as an organisation. When we all learn together in a community of practice, as a group of people who share a concern or passion for something we do and learn how to do it better through regular interactions, we grow together.
- **Resources:** Our schools are shaped by our access to physical, technological, and human resources, which in turn shapes our experiences at school – students, educators, and families alike. However, simply 'having' enough is not really 'enough'. Instead, practising good stewardship and generosity contributes to flourishing.
- **Well-being:** The physical and emotional heath of students, for example characterised by healthy habits and developing resilience, is critical to whether – and how – students flourish. The same holds true of teachers and those in educational leadership. Those in helping professions like education can only help others out of a place of abundance themselves; otherwise, educator burnout and poorly educated students may result.

These five domains do not work alone in shallow silos but together in deep interdependence, at the level of the student, the educator, and the school itself, as shown in the centre of the model above. The FSCM thus encourages school leaders to reflect deeply on these elements of school life, with a particular call to consider the flourishing of adults and children together, which leads to the flourishing of the school as a whole.

Dispositions for Flourishing: Translating Research to Practice

Cultivating this ecology will lead us to re-assess our priorities, change our rhythms, and re-imagine our practices so they better align with a vision for flourishing together. To help in this transformational process from research to practice, we identify three essential dispositions – or qualities of mind and character – for educators. We call these being 'called', 'connected', and 'committed' to flourishing.[2]

Being called to flourish

The first disposition for flourishing is a sense that we are *called* to flourish. We mean 'called' in the sense of 'vocation': there is a goal worthy of our life's work, one that is deeply meaningful and for which we are well-suited, and one that will produce fullness in our own lives as we pursue them. This is true for the children and young people who are our students, for us as educational leaders and teachers, and for our schools and communities.

This view toward flourishing allows us to re-envision the holistic nature and process of education and to move beyond efforts to reform, improve, or otherwise change schools based on a narrow set of criteria. It permits us to re-imagine our schools as places that are designed, organised, led, managed, evaluated, and known for flourishing together.

This sense of vocation is not limited to individualised pursuits, but one we can explore and develop together. It can help define our why, our motivation and our underpinning structures of thought and language which ultimately define our practice and the pursuit of our outcomes.

SCHOOLS INVOLVE WEBS OF RELATIONSHIPS AND RECIPROCAL ACTIONS BETWEEN AND AMONG LEADERS, TEACHERS, STAFF, STUDENTS, FAMILIES

[2] This trio is drawn from the Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership's most recent publication on leadership practices: Ford, D. & Wolfe, A., (2020).

Being connected to flourishing

Secondly, we are *connected* to flourish. In her virtual address to Oak National Academy during the global coronavirus pandemic, the Rt. Revd. Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Bishop of Dover, defined this disposition as follows:

There is a Zulu word called ubuntu. It means "I am, because you are." In other words, we are a people together. We are interdependent. We do not exist by ourselves. No one really flourishes unless we flourish together. Black and white, young and old, rich and poor, with and without disability. We are all God's children.[3]

This vision is not solely for students, educators, nor schools, but the three interacting together. The three need each other, in times of plenty and in times of want. They are 'all parts of the same body', as apostle Paul observed in his Letter to the Church at Corinth; they are the different sections of the orchestra playing as one; they are conversing guests eating together at the same table; they are fellow labourers in the same garden. They can only exist in the same place – in a school – because of one another. Each one's flourishing is dependent on their flourishing together.

We have seen how this orientation fundamentally shifts our grammar in schools, from 'I' to 'we', and from 'me' to 'us'. It also calls us to think more expansively and inclusively about who we count as part of the 'we' – who is called to flourish with us – perhaps more so than we have in the past, and perhaps not without discomfort.

Being committed to flourishing together

Thirdly, we must be *committed* to flourishing together. We know intuitively that flourishing takes time. Moreover, the journey to flourishing is often circuitous instead of direct. This means that students and adults may look very much like they are 'failing' at something, but if they are given the opportunity to grow through setbacks, they can acquire important skills like patience and build essential capacities like resilience. It is crucial then to see flourishing not just as a state of being, but also as a long-term process – one to which we must be fully committed.

Having a long horizon for flourishing is perhaps the biggest challenge to the way our educational systems are currently designed, as most prioritise immediate, observable results, as well as every identifiable efficiency to obtain those results. Effecting change will require a commitment to an ecological understanding of the time it takes for children and young people to learn and develop, as well as the uniqueness and unevenness of the process for every individual.

WE KNOW INTUITIVELY THAT FLOURISHING TAKES TIME AND THE JOURNEY TO FLOURISHING IS OFTEN CIRCUITOUS INSTEAD OF DIRECT

Re-Imagining Education for Flourishing

Ultimately, re-imagining schools as sites for flourishing together will require us to push beyond various illusions of the industrial and information revolutions, many of which have obscured very important realities about what it means to be human – and in turn, what it means to educate human beings. Where those illusions have shaped our practice in schools, we will need to commit to questioning, dismantling, and re-imagining those practices, so that our students, educators, and school communities can truly flourish.

We must also encourage one another and hold each other accountable to a more expansive vision of flourishing. This is why the Church of England's inspection framework prioritises flourishing in its overarching question, 'How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?'. When reformulated and particularised for the unique vision of each school, this question can help guide educators in their re-imagination of educational practice in the domains of flourishing: from our school's purpose, held and enacted together; to our mutual relationships which engender belonging; to our collective learning; to our wise and generous stewardship of resources; to our holistic and interdependent well-being. This question can also generate the inspiration and courage we will need for transformative change, as we reflect on our shared calling, connectedness, and commitment to flourishing together.

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A MULTI-TIERED SUPPORT FRAMEWORK TO PROMOTE FLOURISHING

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Exactly one decade ago, John Peter White suggested that schools should be mainly about equipping people to lead a fulfilling life (White, 2011). He wrote, 'It is time for the whole world to detach itself from an educational paradigm that has got us in its grip and rethink what education should be, centrally, about' and noted that well-being, fulfilment, and flourishing were becoming more visible on the educational landscape (2011, 7). Two years later, Reiss and White (2012) proposed that the aims of education should be the same as the aims of the home: first, to lead a flourishing life, and second, to help others to do so, too. In their book, Reiss and White detailed how to develop an 'aims-based curriculum' where the well-being of students is supported alongside the well-being of others. They outlined the content and activities necessary to support flourishing in schools.

In this article, we build on and frame this area of scholarship by proposing a multi-tiered support framework based on the Education for Flourishing Standards (Larson, Chaturvedi & Lee, 2020; see Table 1) to meet what is widely considered to be the ultimate aim of education: human fulfilment and flourishing.

Human Flourishing

Tyler VanderWeele defines human flourishing as a 'state in which all aspects of an individual's life are good' (2017, 8149). On this model of flourishing, which underpins the work of the Harvard Human Flourishing Program, for students and the adults that work with them to flourish, they will have to do well or be well in five domains: (i) happiness and life satisfaction, (ii) mental and physical health, (iii) meaning and purpose, (iv) character and virtue, and (v) close social relationships (*ibid.*). Some accounts argue that it is necessary to fulfil one's potential to flourish (see, for example, Jubilee Centre, 2017, 1). One way to support human fulfilment is to use a standards-based approach towards flourishing. In this paper, we follow VanderWeele's definition of flourishing and assume that human fulfilment is at least an important condition for flourishing.

Education for Flourishing Standards

The Education for Flourishing Standards (Larson, Chaturvedi & Lee, 2020; see Table 1) can serve as the basis for the content and assessment that guide educators in making instructional decisions to support human fulfilment and promote flourishing. These standards synthesise the main tenets of Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) and the domains outlined by VanderWeele (2017) that constitute well-being. Specifically, the Education for Flourishing Standards (Larson, Chaturvedi & Lee, 2020) supports a hierarchy of critical thinking and application of skills in each of the five domains of flourishing. Moreover, using these standards, educators can structure curriculum for students and staff using the Multi-Tiered Support for Flourishing (see Figure 1), outlined below.

A Multi-Tiered Support for Flourishing Framework

Research suggests that individuals can be at various levels of flourishing (Keyes, 2002). As such, using a multi-tiered support framework ('MTS'; Freeman et al., 2017; Grasley-Boy, Gage, & MacSuga-Gage, 2019; Simonsen et al., 2014) allows for the needs of each school community member to be met by providing varying levels of support across three tiers. The MTS for Flourishing is a model implemented for all members of the school community. To make this process more salient for readers, however, we will use teachers as our example of how MTS for Flourishing could be implemented.

Tier I

At the first level, all teachers receive content related to the five domains of flourishing as well as tools and strategies to support teacher flourishing (e.g., breathing, mindfulness, and gratitude practices). These sessions systematically use the Education for Flourishing Standards (Larson, Chaturvedi & Lee, 2020) to guide participant outcomes. For instance, the objectives for professional development for staff might be first, to define mental health; second, to identify factors that promote mental health; and third, to apply research-based tools of flourishing to increase mental health.

One example of a research-based tool to support mental health is mindful breathing. Research shows that a simple act of mindful breathing can 'serve as an entry point for physiological and psychological regulation' and thereby increase one's well-being (Courtney, 2009, 78). Not only do participants receive coaching on mindful breathing during the whole-group session, but they are encouraged to attend 8-10 minute daily coached breathing sessions facilitated by a coach to support their flourishing. Participants in the whole group session also receive resources to aid in their understanding and application of the concepts outside of the whole group session.

Tier II

At Tier II, a small group of teachers receive further guidance on flourishing content and participate in activities related to individual and community flourishing in professional learning communities. Over the course of five sessions, teachers learn about the five domains of human flourishing (VanderWeele, 2017) and how to apply those domains not only to their lives, but also how to integrate these skills and this content (i.e., the Education for Flourishing Standards; Larson, Chaturvedi & Lee, 2020) into their classrooms and curricula. In addition to receiving content knowledge and skills, these sessions promote cohesion and community among members, thereby increasing community flourishing.

Tier III

At Tier III, an even smaller group of teachers receive individualised coaching using a modified version of the 'Classroom Check-up' ('CCU'; Reinke, et al., 2008 & 2011). During the traditional CCU experience, a trained coach uses motivational interviewing (Reinke, Herman, & Sprick, 2011) to help participants make positive changes to their teaching practice. In this model, the CCU is modified to help participants make positive changes to their lives and overall levels of human flourishing.

Teachers at this level participate in individualized coaching sessions. Research suggests that motivational interviewing and the CCU are effective avenues to change teacher behaviour (Pas, et al., 2016; Pas, Larson, Reinke, Herman, & Bradshaw, 2016). As such, at Tier III, we use a modified version of the CCU, the 'Flourishing Check-Up' with teachers to increase knowledge and skills to further promote their flourishing.

In this example, all teachers receive Tier I support in a whole-group professional development format. After receiving Tier I support, teachers have the flexibility to self-select and determine whether they want further support to increase their own individual flourishing or guidance on integrating the Education for Flourishing Standards (Larson, Chaturvedi & Lee, 2020) in the curriculum in either a group (Tier II) or individualised coaching (Tier III) format. We anticipate that by providing multi-tiered support, teachers will improve their overall flourishing and fulfilment.

Implementation

The MTS for Flourishing implementation process begins with providing content and skill-building activities to administrators and then to teachers. It is necessary to begin with school leaders because they affect the climate of the entire institution (Pepper & Thomas, 2002) and are responsible for helping to carry out each school's mission and vision. Once school leaders understand the importance of focusing on flourishing and human fulfilment, they are better able to support their teachers' flourishing and fulfilment. When all the staff at an educational institution have been trained in the concepts related to flourishing, they can integrate flourishing into school programs and curricula using the Education for Flourishing Standards (Larson, Chaturvedi & Lee, 2020), thereby supporting students and their families.

Conclusion

Almost a decade ago, scholars White and Reiss made a case for rethinking the purpose of education and provided the content and activities to support human fulfilment and promote flourishing within education. This work is even more important now as we continue to experience the short and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has only further highlighted the need for schools to rethink education. As such, the purpose of this article is to outline a multi-tiered support framework to support human fulfilment and promote human flourishing as the principal aims of education in schools.

Using this model allows members of school communities to tailor their programs and curricula to better meet their goals – not only the goals related to academic performance, but also the goals related to helping students and adults to lead better lives. Moreover, focusing on the elements of flourishing and human fulfilment is vital, because of the short-term outcomes correlated with targeted interventions, but also in terms of supporting people in living healthy and balanced lives throughout their lifetimes.

Lastly, implementing a multi-tiered approach to promoting flourishing is needed since individuals can be at various levels of flourishing, and therefore require varying levels of support. We anticipate that using this multi-tiered approach to flourishing, all members of a school community will be able to identify, define, and apply tools that support human fulfilment and lead to more flourishing lives.

HAVING A LONG HORIZON FOR FLOURISHING IS PERHAPS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE TO THE WAY OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS ARE CURRENTLY DESIGNED

Table 1: Education for Flourishing Standards

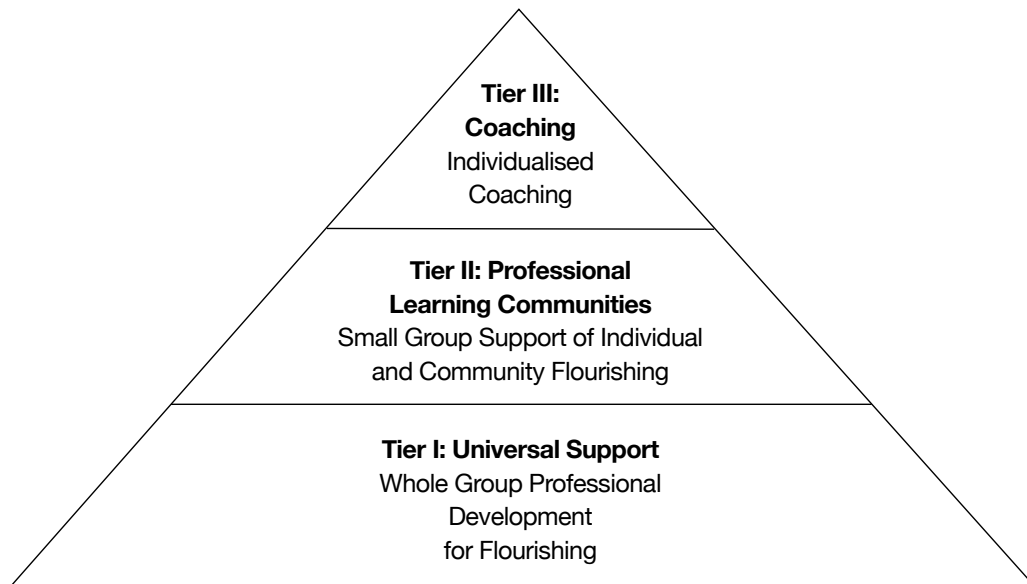|	
Standard I: Happiness and Life Satisfaction	**Standard IV: Character and Virtue**
HF1.1: Define happiness and life satisfaction.	HF4.1: Define character and virtue.
HF1.2: Identify factors that promote happiness and life satisfaction.	HF4.2: Identify factors that promote character and virtue.
HF1.3: Apply tools of flourishing to increase happiness and life satisfaction.	HF4.3: Apply tools of flourishing to increase character and virtue.
HF1.4: Analyse resources and draw connections between actions and happiness/life satisfaction.	HF4.4: Analyse resources and draw connections between actions and character/virtue.
HF1.5: Evaluate various strategies that contribute to happiness and life satisfaction.	HF4.5: Evaluate various strategies that contribute to character and virtue.
HF1.6: Create an action plan to increase happiness and life satisfaction.	HF4.6: Create an action plan to increase character and virtue.
Standard II: Mental and Physical Health	**Standard V: Close Social Relationships**
HF2.1: Define mental and physical health.	HF5.1: Define close social relationships.
HF2.2: Identify factors that promote mental and physical health.	HF5.2: Identify factors that promote close social relationships.
HF2.3: Apply tools of flourishing to increase mental and physical health.	HF5.3: Apply tools of flourishing to increase close social relationships.
HF2.4: Analyse resources and draw connections between actions and mental/physical health.	HF5.4: Analyse resources and draw connections between actions and close social relationships.
HF2.5: Evaluate various strategies that contribute to mental and physical health.	HF5.5: Evaluate various strategies that contribute to close social relationships.
HF2.6: Create an action plan to increase mental and physical health.	HF5.6: Create an action plan to increase close social relationships.
Standard III: Meaning and Purpose	**Standard VI: Financial and Material Stability**
HF3.1: Define meaning and purpose.	HF6.1: Define financial and material stability.
HF3.2: Identify factors that promote meaning and purpose.	HF6.2: Identify factors that promote financial and material stability.
HF3.3: Apply tools of flourishing to increase meaning and purpose.	HF6.3: Apply tools of flourishing to increase financial and material stability.
HF3.4: Analyse resources and draw connections between actions and meaning/purpose.	HF6.4: Analyse resources and draw connections between actions and financial and material stability.
HF3.5: Evaluate various strategies that contribute to meaning and purpose.	HF6.5: Evaluate various strategies that contribute to financial and material stability.
HF3.6: Create an action plan to increase meaning and purpose.	HF6.6: Create an action plan to increase financial and material stability.

Larson, Chaturvedi & Lee, 2020

Figure 1. Multi-Tiered Support to Promote Human Flourishing

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TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM AND SELF-FULFILMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN THE UK

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At the time of writing this paper it had been exactly one year since the United Kingdom entered its first full national lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was difficult to believe at the time that school closures and remote learning would become a regular feature for the majority of students except those recognised as vulnerable and the children of key workers. Since then the pandemic has impacted school life in unprecedented ways and the full gamut of detrimental implications will only be fully understood in the years to come. However, the consequences of school closures on students' learning and mental health have been more immediately apparent with both issues making headlines throughout the year. Recent research has emphasised the adverse impact of school closures on secondary school-aged children due to the critical developments that take place within the brain during adolescence (Bignardi et al., 2020; Orben et al., 2020).

Teachers and researchers have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to mitigate such consequences with varying levels of technical support in schools spanning the full socioeconomic spectrum. Classroom practice was adapted to remote learning conditions overnight and useful guidelines for working online appeared soon after (EEF, 2020; Lemov, 2020). However, the unstable climate created by the pandemic opened the floodgates for external commentators from the Department for Education through to celebrities and media outlets to give their views on the best way to navigate this 'new normal', with teachers facing an intense level of scrutiny as a result. This paper explores some of the implications of this scrutiny on teacher professionalism, before optimistically suggesting that the pandemic may provide key opportunities to reimagine the future of the profession by supporting teachers to achieve higher degrees of motivation and self-fulfilment.

Recognising the professional status of teachers

The idea that teachers should be recognised as professionals is often taken for granted. A genealogical enquiry shows that whilst the 'classic professions' of law, medicine and theology have been accepted for hundreds of years, the inclusion of teachers amongst their ranks has been much more recent (Crook, 2008). However, teacher professionalism has often been challenged and eroded in the face of real-world pressures. Ball (2008) has argued that decisions about curriculum content and pedagogical delivery have been variously challenged by those outside of the classroom since at least the introduction of the 1988 Education Act, when the socio-political mechanisms of neoliberalism took full hold of educational policy (Kumar & Hill, 2008). These challenges have continued throughout the pandemic. Whilst some positive implications are discussed in a later section of this paper, the regular interventions by the media, talk show hosts and celebrities have provided a critical discourse at the expense of teacher agency, autonomy and professional status.

Recognising teachers as professionals first requires an acknowledgement of their distinctive or 'special' knowledge (Schon, 1983; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Sachs, 2000). Currently, entry to the profession relies on the specific content knowledge of an academic subject the individual wishes to teach, which is typically evidenced by an undergraduate degree. Whilst this domain-specific knowledge is essential, it is certainly not unique to teachers. What the teacher acquires throughout their professional development and classroom experience is the fundamental knowledge of how to teach, by which I mean the strategies, techniques and practice which are uniquely held by those in the classroom. This pedagogical knowledge is distinctive and special amongst teachers and educators.

Second, entering and maintaining status within any profession requires adherence to the ethical and moral codes of conduct set out by its members (Lunt, 2008; Freidson, 2001; Koehn, 1994). Notable examples of members breaking codes of conduct are visible in other professions such as law and have shown a loss of trust and confidence in those professions as a result (Sullivan et al., 2007). In education, such a code of conduct is exemplified by the teachers' standards (DfE, 2011), which set out a series of professional behaviours that all teachers are expected to enact. Failure to adhere to the teachers' standards can lead to capability measures and even expulsion from the profession.

Finally, part of what makes a teacher a professional is the idea that they recognise themselves to be so through the construction of a professional identity, which differs from their personal sense of self (Burke, 2008). In addition, the interaction between professionals and the shared understanding they possess can contribute to what makes each individual feel valued as part of a larger professional body (MacLure, 1993). This amplifies the professional status of each individual, who may consequently be empowered to think of themselves as the person who can make the important decisions about what takes place in their own classroom. Taken together, these three elements provide a framework for exploring teacher professionalism.

A challenge on professionalism is a challenge to self-fulfilment

If achieving a sense of teacher professionalism requires an acknowledgement of the three elements just outlined, then the enormous uncertainty caused by the pandemic has created a challenging set of circumstances. This state of affairs is problematic for the teaching profession because although recent data shows a slight increase in applications to enrol on initial teacher training courses, the targets for teacher recruitment and retention have not been achieved in several years (DfE, 2020). Furthermore, it may be that the current rise in applications has more to do with economic uncertainty than a sudden urge to enter the teaching profession and I would argue that the numbers are likely to reduce to pre-pandemic levels over the next few years. Thus, it is worth considering what motivates people to enter the classroom and the qualities required to keep them there.

According to Maslow's (1943) landmark theory of human motivation, individuals are motivated through the attainment of a five-tiered 'hierarchy of needs', which is typically presented as a pyramid. Whilst Maslow's original conceptualisation was conceived several decades ago, it can still provide a useful basis for analysing human motivation today.
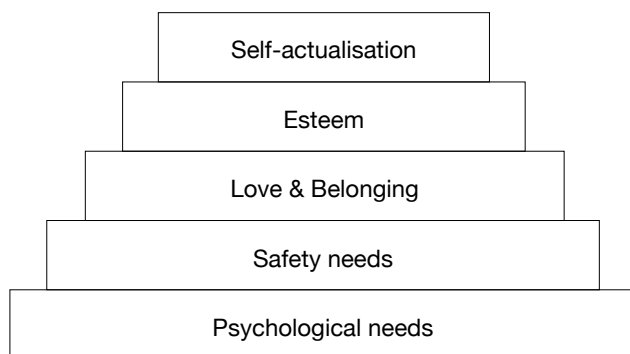

Figure 1. Maslow's hierarchy of needs

According to the standard interpretation of Maslow's hierarchy, as the basic 'physiological' needs for survival located at the bottom of the hierarchy are met, the individual is able to progress to the next level. Recently, more nuanced interpretations of Maslow's theory claim that degrees of human fulfilment can be achieved throughout the hierarchy of levels, where self-actualisation is the most acute (Frame, 1996). Achieving fulfilment on any level requires an individual to realise their own potential in an area they feel passionate about, by which they are able to build a strong sense of self-esteem and self-respect. It is also necessary for others to offer acknowledgement and respect from an external standpoint. Maslow states that:

All people in our society have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect, or self-esteem, and for the esteem of others. By firmly based self-esteem, we mean that which is soundly based upon real capacity, achievement and respect from others' (Maslow 1943, 381).

Thus, achieving a sense of self-fulfilment, respect and esteem has two dimensions, with both the individual and those around them playing an equally important role. In light of the current discussion, I suggest that teachers, government and the media all have an important role to play in ensuring teacher motivation and self-fulfilment are achieved and that doing so requires all three dimensions of teacher professionalism to be satisfied.

Reimaging teacher professionalism

I suggest that the COVID-19 crisis provides an important opportunity to 'reimagine' teacher professionalism, leading to an increase in the motivation, respect and self-esteem required to achieve a higher degree of self-fulfilment. This could be achieved in a number of ways.

First, all stakeholders could recognise that teachers have acquired the experience of delivering lessons in an online environment, increasing the 'special knowledge' they possess. This new skill could be more overtly acknowledged by external commentators, reinforcing a stronger sense of teacher competency and achievement. Second, teachers have navigated this new landscape within a reimagined code of conduct, traversing real-world and digital environments. Here, the reopening of schools as a national priority for governments could be further acknowledged by the profession as a sign of support because it demonstrates a level of respect for the critical role education might play in the wider recovery from the pandemic. Finally, a renewed sense of teacher identity could be established as the successes of individuals and the larger professional body come to light. It will be critical for those within the profession and beyond it to continue to offer credence to such achievements.

This collaborative effort could help to provide an antidote to the historic erosion of teacher professionalism outlined at the start of this paper and help to turn the tide of the teacher recruitment crisis.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude this paper optimistically, by suggesting that as we start to reflect on the last twelve months there is a real opportunity to 'reimagine' and restore a stronger, more successful sense of teacher professionalism and self-fulfilment. Creating and maintaining a healthy, happy workforce of teachers will go some way to securing a strong recovery in the education sector as the pandemic subsides and may ultimately lead to more successful academic and pastoral outcomes for students.

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A BOLD VISION TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY AND PREPARE UNDERSERVED YOUTH TO THRIVE IN WORK AND LIFE

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Framing Our Large-systems Change

Many of us are deeply concerned about the future for all of our children. We can imagine a future that is safer and healthier, with greater access to a high quality of living that our grandparents could not have imagined. At the same time, we can imagine how unresolved inequities in our current system will perpetuate and exacerbate inequities in the future, in such a way that may only lead to incessant conflict among the haves and havenots and the dissolution of our global economy. Many of us believe that if we do not make some radical changes in the manner in which we provide equitable opportunities for all children to thrive, few of us will benefit from the emerging economy.

Focusing on the United States over the past decade, we have seen phenomenal growth in wealth with per capita GDP up 38%, the unemployment rate dropping by 38%, and the childhood poverty rate dropping by 23%. This leaves one in six children living in poverty, with the largest percentage of those children being Latinx, black, indigenous, or multiracial. We know that time spent in poverty has a lifelong, negative impact on the quality of a child's health, educational attainment, and opportunity to generate family wealth. These were the numbers before we entered a worldwide pandemic in March 2020. There is every indication that this pandemic will have a disproportionately negative impact on the well-being of children living in poverty. This disparity in opportunity will remain a threat to our ability to grow a healthy and sustainable civic society and economy.

In this essay, we share a systematic attempt to reverse the growth of these disparities by explicitly focusing on levers of system change to improve life conditions for children. We will 1) begin by briefly discussing what we mean by system change, 2) describing how a model for system change in a particular ecology was designed, 3) summarising this model, 4) providing a report of the progress that has been made in implementing this model, and 5) describing some of the challenges being faced in that implementation process.

What is meant by system change?

Thriving for all school students is defined as healthy life conditions for every student in the K-12 education system. This requires a holistic approach, integrating the whole of the developing child, their family, their school, the community that raises them, and the public narrative guiding the education system. The design of the current system does not take a holistic approach. It does not align the federal, state, and local policies and structures for all children.

With the wealth and educational expertise in Massachusetts, often ranked among the top educational systems in the USA, only 52% of the students graduate with a score of proficient or better on the state exam, with children living in poverty faring far worse. From a systems perspective, the outcomes we are getting are built into the design of the system. If we want different outcomes, therefore, we need to redesign the system, which means more than just changing parts of the system to address negative symptoms. A group of leaders in K-12 public school education and youth-serving, community-based organisations from across Massachusetts took up this challenge.

How was this model of system change developed?

With the support of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, a small group of leaders committed to holistic, systemic change, joined a one-day gathering in which they imagined a future state where all children thrive. They committed to convening a larger group of key stakeholders. In a two-day gathering in April 2018, that larger group identified an overall goal for children in Massachusetts, as well as the core system dynamics that were generating the gap between the aspirational and current state. They identified people who deeply understood the dynamics in that area of the system, and invited them to participate in the systems modelling part of the process. Over the next two months, these stakeholders were interviewed and their perspective on the system was mapped by strategic-systems mappers from the Institute for Strategic Clarity. These individual systems maps were then validated with each of the stakeholders, and the individual systems maps were integrated into one map of the whole system. This integrated map was then analysed with a set of strategic systems tools to identify potential systems leverage points. In a two-day gathering in July 2018, the stakeholders and the convening group met to understand each of the individual systems perspectives and the integrated map, and then the group worked iteratively to identify the leverage points that would shift the whole system. The model and leverage points are described below. This group identified key stakeholders to work on each of the leverage-point teams. Over the next couple of months, the leverage-point teams met to develop strategies (a) to leverage their specific intervention, and (b) to formulate, among the leverage-point teams, a systemic strategy that integrated the four leverage-point strategies and a network strategy for organising the work going forward.

The first step in developing a model for system change is identifying the desired outcome for the system, articulating your North Star Goal. This group's North Star Goal is that 'Each child and student in Massachusetts thrives in life as a contributing member of a healthy, diverse, democratic and equitable society'. The next step in the process is identifying the levers that, if appropriately managed, can transform the systems that influence a child's ability to thrive. Based on the systems analysis process described above, this group identified four areas where focused and co-ordinated efforts could leverage existing efforts in the system towards the North Star Goal. The leverage points — children, teachers, families, and public narrative —are described below.

IF WE WANT NEW OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN, SCHOOLS NEED TO BE REDESIGNED

What is the model?

1. Children

Design and implement a cross-sector, community-wide learning system that supports community-based learning for youth (business internships, civic engagement, out of school time, youth development, etc.) focused on advancing youth holistic development. This community system is deeply connected to schools in that it drives culturally relevant pedagogy that fosters in each child a sense of agency, belonging, and future life envisioning. This strategy supports the transformation of learning through stronger school-community partnerships.

2. Teachers

Transform the profession by designing a system that enables educators to thrive and develop professionally to help students attain a new vision of holistic success (academic, social-emotional, and culturally relevant). The new vision is based on a holistic education framework and is driven in part by a revised accountability system. It focuses on the development of a new culture of cultural competence as well as more educators of colour, educator decision-making autonomy to address distinct student needs, strengthening relationships with parents/students/teachers, and redesigning working structures (e.g. time for professional development, schedule and school day, parent/student meetings and personalising of classroom instruction).
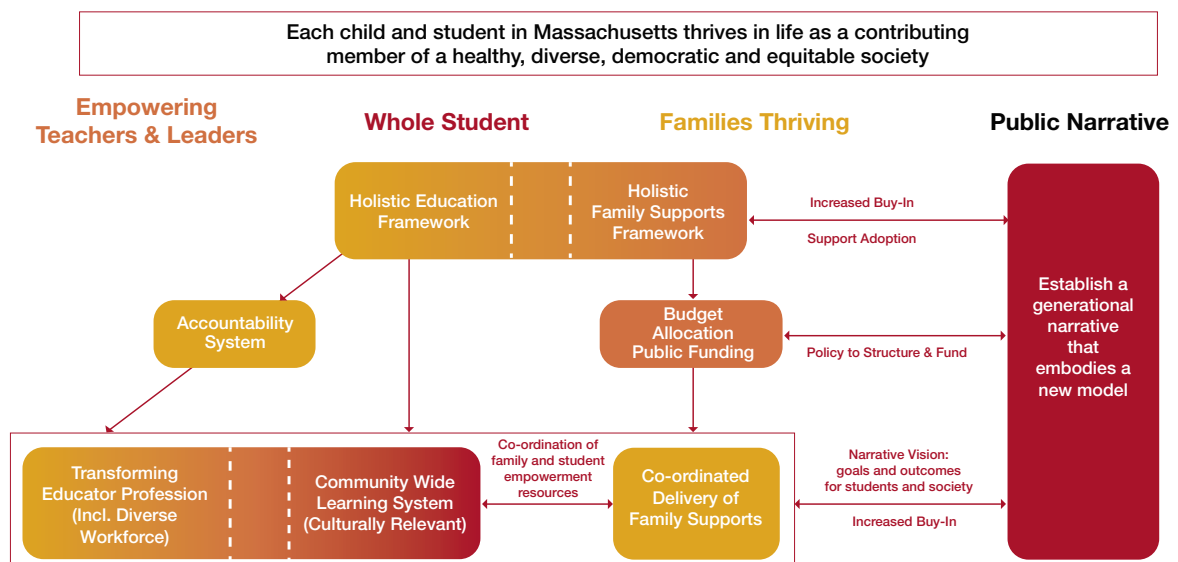
3. Families

Design and implement a new model for coordinated delivery of comprehensive family support that fosters family agency and well-being, emphasising economic stability and success. Supports are flexible to address the self-expressed needs of families at different life stages (e.g. housing, early childhood, job training). This model includes both coordination at a state-agency level and cross-sector local delivery by networks at a community level (i.e. products, services, policies). It also includes sustainable, equitable funding to ensure long-term success.

4. Public Narrative

Create a narrative change by enlisting a diverse group of influencers with strong youth participation to co-create and activate a new societal norm of a healthy, diverse, democratic, and equitable society. The resulting narrative change mobilises the political, behavioural, capital, and social resources needed for the systemic leverage point shifts that achieve the North Star Goal.

Figure 1 represents the way in which these leverage points align to drive system change.

Figure 1. The alignment of leverage points to drive system change

Implementing The Leverage-Point Network Strategy

What progress has been made at implementing the model? Moving from theory to practice is always exciting and complex. The implementation of this model was complicated by two changes: (1) the foundation that initiated the project changed its strategic focus and put a time limit on future funding; and (2) the group decided to have a local organisation manage the project, rather than the national organisation engaged by the funder. Symbolic of these changes, the group took on the name of Open Opportunity Massachusetts (OOMA). and chose a local education research and policy non-profit to serve as the 'backbone' organization.

This backbone organisation is critical to the development of this system change work. It manages finances, fundraising, communications, facilitates meetings, and tracks and coordinates the efforts of the leverage-point teams. The leverage team chairs serve on the OOMA leadership team.

The initial success of OOMA to initiate systems change in Massachusetts has been its focus on building cooperation among relevant networks, each doing work in particular geographic regions, each associated with the system changing levers identified within the model. As part of the implementation process, each leverage team is creating collaborative networks focused on the issue relevant to that team. For the Empowering Educators team that includes developing a Massachusetts-wide network for groups focused on the recruitment and preparation of culturally and linguistically diverse education, with the skills to serve all students. It invites deep collaboration with the state education department, with districts serving culturally and linguistically diverse students, and with other organisations, e.g. teacher unions, focused on the recruitment and retention of highly effective educators. For Thriving Families that includes working with placed-based agents who, in particular geographic areas, build out networks that implement OOMA's strategies with a particular focus on (a) reducing child homelessness in collaboration with the school district, (b) improving access to quality childcare, and (c) energizing parent networks.

As OOMA was initiated, the pandemic hit, which radically changed some of its implementation foci. For the Whole Child team, this meant focusing on how to create multi-sector collaborations about getting access to digital learning for all students, particularly our least resourced families. This led to an exciting and innovative concept named 'Campus without Walls (CWW)'. CWW is an educational initiative that leverages the power of public schools and technology to promote greater equity, access, opportunity, and liberation for all.

Some of the challenges being faced in that implementation process

As one can imagine, there have been and are a number of challenges to successfully pulling the Levers of Systemic Change. Most of us are trained and conditioned to develop and improve programs to make improvements in education.

If children are not reading by third grade, we develop literacy programs and initiatives. This seems so obvious to us and, therefore, we invest resources, political capital and infrastructure development on these programs. We might recognise that the child who is homeless, hungry, or racially traumatized is less likely to have the opportunity to focus on literacy activities, but schools fund literacy not housing, jobs, or anti-racism efforts.

Another challenge in system change work is where there are important adjacencies vital to the success of a child's experience in school that have nothing to do with the classroom and the pedagogy. Since efforts to improve education almost always draw from education experts, it can be challenging to ask those experts to focus and support investment of time, relationships and funding to the adjacencies where their own knowledge is less relevant and useful. To address important adjacencies requires significant cooperation across communities and government.

In addition, few of us have much experience with mapping and understanding how systems work and what drives them. This makes it difficult to imagine how to work the levers of change, since it is a universe that is so unfamiliar. We are, of course, capable of learning about the complexity of system change, but the lift to continue to bring others into the work who did not go through the mapping process can be challenging.

With each Leverage Team focused on their work, another challenge is knowing how to ensure that the many activities are integrated when relevant, coordinated when necessary, and sequenced as appropriate. It may prove challenging to develop a narrative that encompasses each of the leverage team strategies. The role of the backbone is extremely important here.

Funders often have beliefs and approaches to address the issues for which they exist. Since foundations usually have a narrower focus, system-wide strategies speak to them theoretically, but it is difficult for them to make the investments needed as they often cross boundaries important to the funders. The very comprehensive nature of systems change challenges their approach.

K-12 institutions are designed around stability and rigorous learning. Their infrastructures, from central offices, disparate schools and labor unions, all feel a deep sense of commitment to children, which can make them resistant to change. For example, we know children do better if they have effective teachers that reflect their race and cultures, yet the mechanisms that produce the current crop of teachers serve primarily white populations in districts that are predominantly people of colour. Making the necessary changes requires more than intentions, it requires redesigning the infrastructures producing the results we say we do not want. These ships are hard to turn.

Recommendations

If you are considering engaging in this work, here are a few recommendations that are worth considering.

1. If you want solutions relevant to children, families and communities of colour, have a diverse group of participants that include members for a variety of ethnic backgrounds. White people, even the most well-meaning white people, are insufficient; necessary but insufficient.

2. Include grass-bottom as well as grass-top organisations. Those of us working in grass-top organisations have thrived within the current system and therefore, in spite of ourselves, are insufficient to the task. This also means you will need to build financial support for getting grass-bottom organisations to the table, since they often cannot be there otherwise.

3. Practise bravery and compassion. Creating systemic change requires a willingness to be creative with stakeholders with varying perspectives, and you will need compassion to resist the pull of certainty and righteousness. It also requires bravery as you will need to speak truth lovingly to power in a manner that is constructive. Recognise that schools and other social institutions are, in fact, doing what they were designed to do, so, if we want new outcomes for all of children they need to be redesigned.

4. Include parents and teachers every step of the way. If you find yourself making excuses for them not being there, in sufficient numbers, to wield influence, then you need to reflect and redesign.

Acknowledgments

SHOULD A LIBERAL EDUCATION BE REPRESENTED IN ENGLISH LITERATURE SYLLABUSES? A CASE STUDY USING *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW* BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND *THE TRAGEDY OF MARIAM, THE FAIR QUEEN OF JEWRY* BY ELIZABETH CARY

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The advantages of a liberal education can seem attractive from the off, for it champions learning as a pleasurable and voluntary pursuit, especially at a time when teachers, parents and pupils are pragmatically focused on final outcomes and constrained by prescriptive syllabuses. As a concept, it can be defined as 'the philosophical view that education is intrinsically worthwhile rather than simply a means to an end such as economic efficiency or respect for traditional values' (Hickox & Moore, 1995, 49). The research outlined here sought to investigate whether a liberal education should be implemented in English literature syllabuses, taking as a premise the idea that it 'provides a broad introduction to those major aspects of literate culture in which human beings have most significantly expressed their intellectual, imaginative and emotional capacities' (Crittenden, 2006, 107). Arguably, such an idea is encapsulated by no one better than William Shakespeare. The case study discussed in what follows explored how we can deliver a liberal agenda of scholarship and how beneficial it can be to the study of Shakespeare's plays to gain a wider knowledge of Renaissance drama. The texts concentrated on were Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, written between 1590 and 1592, and *The Tragedy of Mariam*, *The Fair Queen of Jewry*, written by Elizabeth Cary in 1613.

Origins of Liberal Education

The origins of providing a liberal education are indeed lofty and can be traced as far back as Ancient Greece, where it was known as paideia. O'Hear and Sidwell have stated that paideia described a collection of different skills that were physical, mental and interpersonal in nature and necessary for an emerging democracy in which educated men had to employ rhetoric in order to debate and persuade. This long historical tradition was thus born out of sociological necessity, as a governing elite had to be 'prepared to argue toward the truth with other citizens on great questions of policy as part of the world's first democracy'. So, 'paideia was an education for both personal and political freedom' (O'Hear & Sidwell, 2009, 46).

Perhaps the greatest champion of liberal education in its purest form and most closely aligned to the Greek tradition was Leo Strauss, who in 1959 delivered an impassioned address in which he lionised the approach. Strauss believed that to have been the recipient of a liberal education entailed an exposure to the best of culture that humanity had to offer. To that end, liberal education, which involves 'studying with the proper care the great books which the greatest minds have left behind' (Strauss, 1959), was something to be revered. However, he insisted that a liberal education could not simply be a type of indoctrination, but instead, in order to uphold the inherent freedom of the concept, it had to achieve a holistic exposure to the best that mankind has to offer, regardless of origin and polarisation.

Teaching Sequence and Findings

To be sure, the reasons for comparing *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Tragedy of Mariam* rested in the closeness of their dates of production, their undeniable focus on the presentation of the female voice, as well as their treatment of the long-established institution of marriage. However, there also exist differences that warranted further discussion as these help to illuminate the primary text of study.

The most obvious of these differences are the genders of the authors and the genres within which they can be categorised. *The Taming of the Shrew,* having been written by the most pre-eminent male figure in early modern theatre, had the privilege of being staged, and thus witnessed, by the masses. Shakespeare was undoubtedly in possession of an influential voice and his plays were able to reflect, and perhaps even sway, public opinion on any given matter. *The Tragedy of Mariam*, on the other hand, has the distinction of being the first tragic drama published by a woman but it certainly did not enjoy the same level of popularity as Shakespeare's shrew-taming comedy, owing to the inherently marginalised status of its female playwright and the genre it subscribed to: the closet drama.

In stark contrast to Shakespeare's many farcical elements in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam* contains few, if any, moments of comedy. The very name of the closet drama genre alludes to the private nature of such plays as they were primarily read in aristocratic homes and rarely performed on the commercial stage. If Katherine's character in *The Taming of the Shrew* can be interpreted as a staunch defence of proto-feminist values, then surely Cary's motives for her play were just as disruptive and her choice of the closet drama genre was a key component in foregrounding these revolutionary attitudes. The existence of closet drama afforded Cary authorial freedom in depicting female characters who transgressed from their expected norms. This research sought to introduce the genre to students and assess whether the generic choices made by Shakespeare and Cary had any bearing on the ideas they postulated.

Prior to the initial lesson, the class had already read *The Tragedy of Mariam* as preparatory work, allowing for time to be devoted to the revision of the comedy genre as well as the introduction of the closet drama genre. Of course, a connection had to be made between both plays so it could be demonstrated that providing a liberal education could enhance students' knowledge. This was achieved through the question, 'Based on your reading of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* and Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam*, do you think a playwright's choice of genre impacted what they could say about the treatment of women in the early modern period?' This enabled the class to consider whether a specific choice of genre did indeed affect what playwrights conveyed about Renaissance attitudes to women and it was noted that students were benefitting from the teaching of an additional text as the answers they provided supported a burgeoning appreciation for the analysis of two texts in tandem. For instance, one respondent commented that Cary was 'able to include taboo ideas about women's role in society, due to the fact it was meant to be watched or read in private', while Shakespeare's choice to make his play a publicly-staged comedy allowed him to 'include patriarchal views on women, as this would gain the most laughs and popularity in the time it was written'.

Having addressed the issues of genre pertaining to each play, a comparison of the key characters was essential for students to appreciate just how women and the male figures in their lives were portrayed across Renaissance drama. For instance, analysing the traits of Mariam in *The Tragedy of Mariam* would help in demonstrating that forthright women, such as Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*, were not merely token roles but that they did indeed exist across a number of playwrights' works. Similarly, paralleling Petruchio, from *The Taming of the Shrew*, with Constabarus, from *The Tragedy of Mariam*, enabled students to better witness the stranglehold held by patriarchy at the time.

In order to achieve this, students were allocated dialogue from Katherine and Mariam as well as Petruchio and Constabarus. They were then tasked with annotating their allotted speeches with the specific brief to compare them by identifying any differences and similarities in the use of the playwrights' language.

IT IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT LIBERAL EDUCATION BE GIVEN THE SPACE TO FLOURISH

The students' exploration of the lines spoken by Katherine and Mariam revealed a significant resemblance in the language used by Shakespeare and Cary in order to illustrate the struggles faced by their respective heroines. For example, the students pointed out lines that suggested that neither of the women wanted to be betrothed to their partner. These included Katherine's confession to her father, 'To give my hand opposed against my heart' (3.2.9), and Mariam's statement in her opening soliloquy that 'Oft have I wished that I from him were free' (1.1.16). Additionally, it was noted by the students that both Katherine and Mariam cast themselves in the roles of helpless victims and considered themselves to be the mere chattels of their respective male counterpart. They called attention to the fact that Katherine refers to herself in the third person as 'poor Katherine' (3.2.18) and that Mariam contrasts the pastoral ideal of a female servant, a 'milkmaid' (1.1.57), with her present troubled grief while their subjugated positions as vassals is solidified through their self-lamentations as 'Petruchio's wife' (3.2.19) and 'Judaea's queen' (1.1.58).

When contrasting the potential similarities in language between the lines spoken by Petruchio and Constabarus, the students' primary point of comparison lay in the use of zoomorphism by both Shakespeare and Cary. In one of his most infamous speeches, Petruchio brands Katherine to be 'My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything' (3.2.233), while Constabarus labels the entire female sex as 'tigers, lionesses, hungry bears, / Tear-massacring hyenas' (4.6.38-9). The students were quick to point out that 'both male characters have a dehumanising perspective of women and do not see them as actual people', reinforcing the fact that comparisons between women and wild animals were a misogynist convention during the Renaissance. Here, the parallels in language that were established helped to justify the pedagogy of a liberal education. For, not only were the students analysing works of cultural significance, they also explored them with a view to forming a more holistic evaluation of how women in early modern England were treated and just how prevalent anti-feminist views were.

Recommendations

It is important that teachers become confident in widely implementing an undertaking as vast as liberal education. On the basis of the case study outlined above, I argue that there exists a value in pursuing a liberal education as well as an appetite for it from students who appreciate the venture and understand that they are its chief beneficiaries.

First and foremost, teachers of English, if willing to devote a number of lessons to teaching subsidiary texts outside of their prescribed syllabus, would have to locate the time to acquaint themselves with the work, plan the lessons and then deliver them. The choice of subsidiary text is as important as the groundwork. This investigation has sought to illustrate some of the advantages of asking students to read and study a text that has a definitive and identifiable relationship to the set text. This can include similarities in characters, the language used by the writers as well as the themes covered.

In an educational landscape where competing pedagogical approaches are constantly jostling for the attention of teachers, where syllabuses have become increasingly prescriptive and where time has always been a limiting factor, it is of utmost importance that liberal education be given the space to flourish. This can yield better-informed students who can talk confidently and widely, not only on the texts they are required to study, but also those that have made their mark on literature elsewhere.

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EMOTIONALITY AND TEACHING, FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE: TIME FOR EMOTION AND FEELING, TIME TO CONNECT, AND TIME FOR TEACHING WITH HEART

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This article is a primary teacher's reflections on harnessing emotion and feeling in the classroom to support excellence in teaching and learning. 'Teaching with heart' connects what we might call the 'person' in the professional (Temple, 2016) to the 'child or young person' in the pupil. I have chosen the word 'emotionality' as an umbrella term to explore contemporary policy and practice using a social-emotional lens, which uses the nuance of emotion and feeling as a tool in a collective teaching toolbox.

Teaching with Heart

So, along these lines, in what follows I set out five themes that I believe are fundamental to harnessing feeling and emotion for excellent teaching and learning. They explore policy implementation through collaboration and social interaction. The focus is upon the 'who' (Palmer, 2007) of teaching and learning (in addition to the what, how and why), and on pleasant and unpleasant emotions (Pekrun, 2014). I believe that through this approach, we better acknowledge the full self, and teachers and pupils will identify feeling and emotion with authentic connection, worthiness and achievement (Brown, 2012). It is possible this will create 'an appreciation of emotions in teaching and learning to confront professional norms that may be barriers to effective practice' (Meyer and Turner, 2007, 247).

1) Emotional Health in Classrooms

In emotionally healthy classrooms, self-confidence and self-respect are nurtured. Teachers and pupils have many positive connections within the class and wider school community. This evolves through a culture of care, which values individual expression, uniqueness, difference and being oneself. This has been called 'school bonding' and it encourages feelings of belonging, autonomy, emotional safety and emotional stability (Bergin and Bergin, 2009). It creates a secure attachment for students with teachers and the wider learning environment, strengthening a student's capacity to learn. Bowlby (1988), a child psychiatrist, psychotherapist and psychologist, reflects on his work and numerous other studies with primary care givers, young infants and adults receiving psychological support and proposes children in the home grow up with a greater willingness to explore and engage when anger, sadness and fear are met with sensitivity and direct attuned support. Bergin and Bergin (2009) argue that this can be equally applied to the school environment.

2) Essential Emotional Knowledge

Essential emotional knowledge is information on the ways in which students show their emotions in lessons, an awareness of which can support effective communication in teaching and learning. Palmer (2007) puts forward an approach called the 'community of truth', which encourages thoughtful communication. This includes communication of diverse views; sensitivity to ambiguity; creative conflict between those engaged in discussion, rather than competition; honesty; humility; and the development of intrapersonal skills.

Brown (2012) believes emotion can be weaponised for the purpose of self-preservation. A culture of criticism occurs in schools which directs hostility at others to deflect inner feelings of failure, of not being good enough and being rejected. Brown's (2012) findings show emotional exposure reduces shame and blame and fosters honest interaction. This is done through a culture of courage and vulnerability. This emotional freedom leads to a greater commitment to learn, meet challenging goals, respond and give feedback, embrace learning as a process and weather uncertain outcomes. Pekrun's (2014) review shows that positive emotions can be nurtured in the classroom by using mastery, problem solving and talking about feelings of failure and success.

Other emotional knowledge includes: the role that adults play in the emotional development of children (Crehan, 2016; Gerhardt, 2004); the impact of emotions on the brain and learning (Hawks and Hawks, 2018); attachment theory and learning (Bergen and Bergin, 2009); the importance of positive and negative emotions to motivation and learning (Pekrun, 2014); empathy (Gerhardt, 2004; Palmer 2007); and the power of kindness and emotion in school policy and practice (Unwin, 2018).

3) Emotional Management

Emotional management involves the modelling of emotion by teachers to develop individual and collective resilience in learning. I believe this is just as important for teachers to practise with colleagues as well as model to their students. Temple (2016) invites teachers to reflect upon the messages they convey in their practice to identify their strengths and areas to develop. Key emotions include happiness, anger, fear and sadness. She writes that teachers can show 'efficiency and effectiveness', 'competence and talent' and 'motivation and ambition' (Temple, 2016, 47). By modelling healthy ways to express emotion, children learn how to better self-regulate and to support their peers.

Furthermore, research shows that 'every school has its own emotional rules that guide what kinds of emotions are legitimised to display, and which teachers ought to suppress' (Zempylas 2018, 13). I believe this demonstrates the importance of courageous teachers, strategic thinking, awkwardness (Brown 2020) and transparent review.

4) Emotional Scaffolding

Emotional scaffolding meets learning goals by championing independence, achievement and success. It consists of meaningful emotional dialogue between teachers and pupils. Teachers work closely with pupils, creating a supportive and caring class community (Meyer and Turner, 2007) and reinforcing that it is normal to experience a wide range of emotions whilst engaged in learning (Burns, 2016). The teacher can discuss the emotions that may be experienced; for example, anxiety, sadness, boredom, guilt and shame. They share strategies for responding to emotion to complete goals. Teachers move pupils from healthy negative emotions to healthy positive emotions (Pekrun, 2014).

5) Empathy for Pupils (and Teachers)

Empathetic feedback is the art of listening to understand, which can facilitate meaningful dialogue which in turn can bring about positive behavioural change (Brown, 2012). It can be used to target pupil learning outcomes and to develop teaching. It invites diverse ideas, collaborative problem solving and a personable approach to achieving goals. Teaching and learning works best in a culture which recognises, reinforces and refines what works well within individuals (Harvard Business Review, 2019). Brown's (2012) 'engaged feedback checklist' model informs this practice.

Gerhardt (2004) writes that empathy is problematic, since it is common to experience discomfort at the emotions of others and respond with fear, thinking the other is at fault, or to go blank or withdraw. Brown (2012) and Gehardt (2004) write that adults can develop empathy to cultivate more fluent communication and stronger connection.

Palmer (2007) believes that teachers benefit from self-empathy by listening to their inner voice, so their 'identity and integrity' thrives. He writes that teachers can provide greater care for their feelings and those of their pupils. After all, he says, teaching cannot be reduced to technique alone as it equally comes from the individuality and identity of the teacher. Some argue that policy is pivotal for empathy in practice. Connell (2009) believes professional competency models should include the emotional labour of teachers. She writes that this moves the understanding of a good teacher from purely an 'audit culture' (measuring the effectiveness of a teacher against set criteria) to include 'field-specific expertise'. Ball (2003) suggests that schools foster a collective ethical identity to care for teachers. He argues that this helps to develop interconnected relationships built on service, love, beliefs, commitment and well-being. Unwin (2018) argues that the best way of ensuring emotion and human connection is to develop policy that balances the relational and rational lexicons.

Concluding Reflections on this Framework

The policy agenda driving change indicates that emotion and feeling is at the heart of teaching and learning in schools. Oswald (2019), a leading economist, states that one day 'feelings data' (gross national happiness) will 'dominate' measures of societal progress. Will the consideration of indicators of well-being when setting educational priorities and determining the effectiveness of these in schools lead to a paradigm shift in teaching and learning? Will emotional capital become a key government concern impacting upon teaching and learning in schools? In the next few years, the reality of change will emerge, hopefully providing answers to these questions.

In practice, professionals can together create social emotional cultures built upon knowledge, collegiality, civility, reflection, spontaneity, ethical codes of practice (Turner, 2019) and a congruence between a person's 'inner' mental life and their 'outward' projection of emotions. Teaching and learning can harness feelings and emotion such that healthy relationships are developed and life-long learning is successful. This requires courage, vulnerability, empathy, and a safe space to express uncomfortable emotions. I believe that educational policy and practice can achieve greater connection with teachers' personal experiences in schools. There are many highly complex human factors at play. Teaching and learning in harmony with emotion is an extremely difficult balance to strike, yet well worth making time to research and practise.

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COMBINING NEUROLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY TO REINVENT ENGLISH ESSAY WRITING

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Teaching English can often feel like teaching several other subjects at once: history; linguistics; psychology; law; and philosophy. Much of my own teaching practice, and that of the teachers and educators I have most admired, has understood that the subject's interdisciplinary nature is its greatest value. It is therefore especially frustrating that some of our writing models seem to limit our pupils' thinking; especially when our subject is discursive, exploratory and often centred on meaning.

As Lucinda McKnight (2020) concisely explains in her piece on paragraphing, we have a 'contentious, binary history' of over-relying on formulaic and reductive structures. Across the world, schools deliver a variety of methods such as 'PEE', 'PEEL' and 'PETAL' (to name but a few) that primarily centre on finding a quotation, having a 'point', and explaining it. If you want to be ambitious you may stretch that explanation into analysis. Much of English teachers' CPD is focussed on delivering creative curricula and, recently and more excitingly, much needed diversity in these curricula and exam specifications. The recent surge of BLM and BAME curriculum developments have been long-awaited and need to be sustained; yet how can we encourage our pupils to think more inclusively and ambitiously with the restrictive structures often over-relied on to get them writing? Ask a pupil to make a 'point' about a text and they'll often struggle to have one – what is a point even?

The Pathos, Logos, Ethos approach to teaching

I will not be the first, nor the last, to turn to philosophy and neurology for guidance in how to better teach writing and thinking. In aiming to develop our pupils' abilities to think critically and write persuasively I have implemented Aristotelian ideas in a literary discourse: essentially using pathos, logos and ethos ('PLE') as a discussion and writing guide. We need our pupils to be more compassionate, more able to understand and utilise their own (and others') cognitive functions; we need our young people to be able to express themselves and think critically and creatively about the world around them. Drawing together Aristotle's rhetoric, the research of neurologists Anton Spanne and Henrik Jörntell and the educational models of neuropsychologist Dr Caroline Leaf, I began to wonder about the power of not simply delivering a standard writing structure but changing the very nature of my teaching to focus on working with the coding in our brains – independently and collaboratively. What I am doing in my classroom has moved me beyond just teaching English and into teaching thought – I am able to springboard from Shakespeare's soliloquies, contextual details about the Age of Explorers, dive into literary craft and, more excitingly, use these elements to increase the brain functions, and the social skills, of my pupils.

Pathos

With my PLE approach, we move beyond simply explaining the skills of rhetoric and instead use it as a method for debate and discussion, for developing brain function and independent thought and as a writing guideline. To avoid what Simon Gibbons (2019) calls 'a consequential marginalisation of pupil choice, voice and personal response', we always start with pathos and allow pupils to think about and discuss their emotional response to a text. Here, I looked to avoid what Spanne and Jörntell (2015) call 'sparse coding' – how quickly we generalise and how limiting this is – and focused on open-ended questions such as, 'how do you feel?'; 'what emotions are you noticing as you engage with this text?'; 'what might the authorial intention be?'; and, 'are you being provoked or manipulated?'.

When applying this to studying *Othello* we have discussed how we may feel we are complicit in Iago's sadistic plotting; we may feel guilty at what Hume would call the perverse pleasure of enjoying his sadism; pupils have debated if Shakespeare was intending to make his audience feel discomforted by his antagonist's brilliant deviance, or if we as modern readers are more upset by his racism. The idea here is to give each pupil a chance to express themselves and allow the mood of the text to move them, as well as understand how it may impact others differently. This does not have to be verbal for each pupil, nor does every pupil need to contribute each time – mini whiteboards with emoticons drawn on work well for pacier lessons; small group discussions bond pupils well and even charting Venn diagrams to understand emotional overlaps have been excellent for the range of pupils I teach.

Logos

We then move into logos: I challenge pupils to find a reason for their feelings – is there a quotation that can help them develop their reasoning for their reactions? Can they analyse the text to develop that limbic region's response into something cerebral? Pupils start to recognise that picking quotations isn't just useful for an essay – it develops a life skill of understanding our and others' emotional reactions and how to manage and express them. This can be an independent task, but I have found a fun way to introduce this as a concept is to give them a few quotations to choose between and split the class into groups, creating collaborative analysis and debates on the 'best' quote for evidence. This has developed extremely thorough literary and linguistic terminology knowledge (is an abstract noun more powerful than a superlative adjective?) and balanced, critical thinking. Once we can shift our reactions into reason – our feelings into expression – we can start to consider the purpose of our articulations and consider the texts' (and our own) ethos.

Ethos

Here, we question why such a piece may have been produced: what social wisdom could be interpreted from the text? Is the ethos capable of evolving out of context or must we merely cast a historicist eye over it? Having recently applied this to studying *Dr Faustus*, my pupils have wondered whether Marlowe's supposed heresy and his 'Live Fast, Die Young' motto (note: not a real Marlowe quotation!) is reflected in the play and if so, why? Debating morality of a text, in and out of our own context, has allowed us to timeline political shifts and given my pupils a much better grasp of historical change.

More important than this, though, is that by discussing an ethos or coda, we have a chance to discuss and explore what morality is – how it may be changeable depending on context, and this makes them much more open-minded. We have been able to move our debates into future projections on occasion. What has been most incredible about utilising ethos as a discussion prompt and as part of developing contextual and personal thought is that it creates hope for the future and compassion for others' experiences and ideas.

Moving pupils through PLE in its entirety has enabled them to write considerably more sophisticated essays; they are able to mine the psychological responses of their own brains and monitor them – they have become more mature and considerate as humans because they understand how to process information and emotions and ultimately respond more thoughtfully. I can give them an exam question and within 15 minutes (which in an exam can be their planning time) they are now able to produce a mini PLE response, which then forms the basis of a thorough and sophisticated essay they can expand on that meets A level Assessment Objectives (AOs).

Wider benefits of the pathos, logos, ethos approach

By using PLE in this manner, I have attempted a mimicry of Leaf's model of moving through the brain's coding and levelling: we start with pathos to match our first level of non-conscious metacognition and allow logos to move us into the conscious cognitive level. Following the pattern of synaptic functions takes us automatically to ethos – the symbolic output level – and to writing. Leaf argues that 'it is very important to write, because writing reinforces changes of the brain synapses' (Leaf, 2020). I implore you to consider PLE as therefore more than a mere replacement for Point-Evidence-Explain (PEE) – it is a reinvention and development.

Introducing PLE to your pupils, explaining how this ancient approach is connected to the way our brain codes information, and continuously using it as a method will aid not just your pupils' ability to think critically and still be individual, it will develop your questioning and own academic strengths and, perhaps more importantly, change your relationships with them. My experience with PLE is seeing my pupils become more honest; more creative and more emotively and intellectually in tune with their texts, each another, and me, than ever before.

I cannot think of many educational aims more important than this – the ability, and fulfilment derived from it, to be able to better engage with others and capably express themselves in response to any emotion, circumstance, or evidence. In a rapidly changing world (and the somewhat apocalyptic experience of 2020/21 especially) this is a skill and an ethos that will endlessly aid them in continuing their personal and academic growth. Ultimately, isn't that the point of teaching, to give our future leaders the opportunities and skills to be better than we have been before?

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