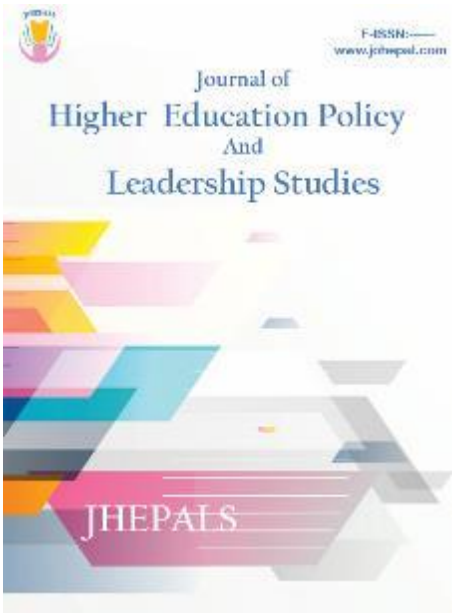
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Rethinking Higher Education Policy and Leadership for the 21st Century: Enhancing Strategies for Global Citizenship and Justice

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"Opinion Piece"

"Schooling is living, not preparation for living. And living is a constant messing with problems that seem to resist solution"
Martin Haberman, The Pedagogy of Poverty versus Good Teaching (2010, p. 85)

Christine Challen *

Keywords: Social mobility; Cultural Capital/mobility Creative Curriculum

Over the last ten years the gap between "social classes" has become ever wider. The government's unsuccessful, unrealistic strategies to enhance *true* **"social mobility"** coupled with schools having become more like "exam factories" and behaviour gurus suggesting 'punishments' that start with exclusion, has pushed the idea of an inclusive fair education even further out of reach. Moreover, instead of our education system creating and preparing pupils towards citizenship, by enabling them to make contributions to society, making confident opinions and choices - the opposite has happened.

Pupils are entering society, further education colleges (FE) and particularly University (HE) lacking rich experiences of their own cultural capital. Ultimately this affects "cultural equality" and the ability to successfully participate in discussions with a healthy respect for different ideas/opinions that evolve from and through experiencing different environments and cultures. This is an important attribute for successfully engaging and participating at HE and should be a component of HE Policy and leadership. Another concern is that the exam culture of schools has in many ways increased poor mental health with stressed students experiencing low self-esteem and confidence impacting on academic performance at FE and HE levels. The staff then experience additional workload and have to develop and extend policies to factor in such difficulties.

Forms of Capital were first introduced by Bourdieu in 1986 consisting of economic, cultural and social. Recently Ofsted planned to inspect **"cultural capital"** alone as a means to extend its framework on not just test and exam results which was almost reminiscent of the "British values initiative," and caused much confusion and dismay. Apart from the impossibility of trying to *evidence*

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cultural capital, this *perse* within the present curriculum and thinking is not going to work towards providing an inclusive enduring education towards global citizenship and justice.

The idea that you can isolate "cultural capital" from the other two forms is to deviate widely from Bourdieu and his theory that all three forms are necessary a "transubstantiation" between them to form a circle and account for the function and structure of the social world. Further it also importantly allows for progression from being to becoming to thriving through questioning and self-actualisation key to leadership and policy at HE.

We need to break the idea as Robinson says that "learning is simply storing knowledge" that it is about getting the grades needed. I am not saying that learning is not about subject knowledge but we also need to encourage pupils to apply that knowledge in a "subjective" respectful way within diverse cultural groups in society. This allows opinions to be discussed in a safe conducive environment, and supports pupils finding out who they are and how to apply and conceptualise their different experiences. As Robinson says bring back the "human" into learning; by doing this it not only creates deeper thinking and application, but allows for a student voice. This in turn enables self regulation of emotions and could potentially result in a decrease in exclusion due to behaviour issues. In an ever changing world we need to evolve education around children's needs, and make it fit for purpose so that we create a happier future generation of people who are less disruptive both in class and society.

The foundations for change lie in developing rich creative curriculum that embed all aspects of learning subject, emotive and enable students to use their own experiences within the classroom. Professor Donaldson (2015) was on sound footing when he published his report on the Welsh curriculum, this was based on developing critical thinking, creative and innovative, planning and organisational as well as personal effectiveness skills all covering the circle of forms of capital. This is further supported and extended by Kidd 2020 who states that a curriculum should have five elements, the five Cs built in which include; coherence, credibility, creativity, compassion and community.

True education requires the embedding of real interdisciplinary 'cultural capital' based skills between and within different subjects resulting in pupils that could relate and "think outside the box" and enhancing global citizenship skills. This is what Kidd (2020, p. 6) calls "coherence" she states that *"curriculum should be planned and plaited so that it connects in sensible and logical ways, allowing children to build an understanding of ideas, concepts chronology and themes, and better understand them because they are encountered in a way that makes connections explicit and relevant."* Such curriculum evidence informed judgments made to specifically develop skills within the different forms of capital, also allow positive effective behaviour judgments to be planned.

Time invested in laying properly laid social foundations is pivotal to providing an inclusive education for all as well as ensuring all children regardless of their socio-economic background are exposed to cultural capital.

Instead of viewing an individual through *"kulturbrille"* culture glasses where acquired cultural associations shape individuals' perceptions of their encounters or experiences, these are applied within the classroom in a creative way such that they build on cultural capital/diversity through their own individual socio-economic backgrounds. A completely different take on education and learning and one that shapes individualism and questioning attributes through a carefully designed curriculum. As Robinson (2019, p. 140) says *"cultural capital allows one to put the past behind them cultural mobility does not alienate me from my origins."*

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While Pullman and Shepherd may not immediately classify as pedagogy doctrine, nonetheless their ideas through different messages support creative curriculum. Pullman believed in the importance of exposing children to a wide range of literature, philosophers and religious voices to enhance rich deep vibrant experiences through story writing and imaginative self-questioning. In The Writing of Stories (Daemon Voices) Pullman found in discussions with film directors that they had great insight into the "practical hands-on stuff" of writing stories. The film director David Mamet asks *"Where do I put the camera?"* and Pullman, believes this to be, *"the basic storytelling question".* He builds on this further to determine in his mind *"where do you set the scene from, what do you tell the reader about it and what's your stance towards the characters."* (p. 28). This approach used as a writing tool illustrates the importance of questioning and critical analysis.

Robinson (similarly) talks about "seeing things from different lenses" such is key to how we all relate our experiences to the world around us. It is also important in how we grow not just academically but personally, as well as building confidence in our opinions and how we conceptualise these within life long learning, leadership and policy within FE and HE and communities/society.

In Shepherd's book she reminds us of the importance of *"immersing ourselves"* not only in mind and body but using all our senses to truly experience nature (in her case in the Cairngorm mountains). This, Shepherd (2011, p. XXII) says, enables us to see *"the world not just as we see it but as the world sees us."* Such actions allow us to assess and reassess our circumstances, our "being" but more importantly can move us transiently towards "becoming."

Both Kidd and Robinson support the need for supporting through experiences empathy and compassion within a full enriching curriculum. This not only supports the developing mental health of the child but it also indirectly creates an ability to regulate emotions and could impact on behavioural challenges that schools face.

The recent challenges faced by schools and Universities supporting through online learning again bring to the fore that learning is a social interaction between the pupil and the institution. Some Universities are worrying about the consequences of lockdown and how this will affect contact hour courses.

Perhaps for both FE and HE the move to only online learning is going to create more problems than solve. The consistent lack of autonomy in schools and ability to enable pupils to question and take ownership of knowledge means that they struggle with online learning. Again policy and leadership is going to be tested and the answers not easy to find.

The importance of human growth and maturity is not dependent on a bundle of facts learnt off by heart it is a journey a transition from being to becoming to thriving. This requires not just feeding the mind but also the soul the senses. It means being fully immersed in the moment self-actualisation, reflection and questioning. These are the skills or attributes we need to develop and if we do so well at school, the transition for those moving onto FE/HE will be easier. It will make for groups of students with the ability to argue logically respectively and contribute to their courses. Further it will allow them to apply their knowledge and ideas within different environments and to diverse groups of people from a wide range of socio/cultural and economic backgrounds.

The future leaders and policy makers at HE and in society will have to ensure a continued education for global citizenship. Therefore, the need to rethink and adapt education is essential-particularly so because it should not only be the elite who have a monopoly on full circle capital. Those for whom it appears to be more pertinent to acquire and retain this capital together with all its' accompanying sense of entitlement, arrogance and egotism.

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Rethinking HE Policy and Leadership for the 21st Century

As we move into the 21st century, society is evolving at a rate of knots even before the outbreak of Covid-19! The pandemic lockdown has highlighted the urgent need to rethink education and the role of teaching and learning in schools. In FE and HE there are challenges arising about how we move forward, which will undoubtedly affect HE policy and leadership. Our schools are now more than ever comprised of diverse multicultural groups of students from multifaceted social backgrounds. Such communities and environments have impacts on behaviour where a lack of understanding on all sides causes educational disadvantage.

Education must go beyond learning facts *by rota*. It needs to explore the world through developing physical spiritual and sensory methods that enable emotionally engaging experiences. *This should be done regardless of socio-economic background if we want to educate for future generations of questioning, creative and innovative problem solvers.* We have to accept that "social mobility" is not due to schooling, but as Robinson (2019, p. 19) explains, *"down to economics, commerce and Globalisation factors out of control of education."* "Social class is not an educational or pedagogical phenomenon" and "foisting social mobility onto educational policy and debate is lazy and superficial, thinking" which should be abandoned.

What are the key areas to focus on to ensure a rich education towards "true" wisdom, self-questioning and reflection? How can we enable effective transition to HE and improve policies and leadership?

The "real" questions at the heart of any future policy changes in my view are around whether our current fashionable views on the value of "social mobility" are actually misplaced. Perhaps it is time to declare that materialism has in fact little to do with education, whereas by comparison "cultural capital and diversity" can offer so much more towards a happy and useful life. The latter would definitely have a greater, more beneficial impact in providing all pupils with the opportunity to achieve self-actualisation as we educate them towards a meaningful journey of being becoming and thriving.

Finally, we should ask ourselves how we might prepare students better for HE so that they are ready to make the most of our improved HE policies and leadership and so enable them to be more effective citizens and contributors to society.

As Robinson (2019, p. 167) sums it up so well, *"we teach dialectically to open up a dialogue as to how we have lived and how we might live and to explore the why, the meanings, values and judgments that help make us who we are"*

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Dr. Christine Challen has over 23 years research experience in the field of cancer research. She has taught at Higher Education, Further Education and more recently as a Supply Teacher in Secondary Schools. My areas of research interests include using case studies and the use of art, literature and film in science teaching as a means of enhancing cognitive and deep critical thinking skills. Rethinking Education and teaching through Creative curriculum as a journey for being to becoming to thriving towards global and innovative questioning citizenship. Dr. Challen has successfully published several blogs in Bera and Tes on different educational topics. She would like the opportunity to return to HE to pursue and develop her pedagogy interests, continue and expand her writing to include books. Additionally to enable her to have the opportunity to build more networks that will benefit teaching and academic practice across educational settings as well as her own personal leadership.

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