



EXPLORING THE FOUR CAPACITIES

**“I CAN’T BELIEVE
WE’RE STILL
TALKING
ABOUT
THIS.”**

That was the exclamation from one educator in February 2022, at an early interview session to explore the four capacities of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence. She had a point.

And it’s a point we’ve heard at least implicitly at every step of this journey, as our team listened to the voices of around 150 educators, youth learning specialists and over 600 young people over the first five months of 2022. We also included the voices of another 130 or so educators whose ‘curriculum stories’, told during the height of the pandemic, showed how curriculum purpose and the four capacities perform under pressure. We adopted a trademark empathetic approach, reflecting an appreciation for the work educators do and the incredible achievements of our young people, the vibrancy and dynamic of Scottish education.

We asked them what it means to develop “successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors” in the Scottish education system. What do the “four capacities” mean in practice? How do they add value through curriculum, qualifications or extracurricular activities? Is it still helpful to identify, define, and plan the inclusion of these four capacities when we design learning experiences?

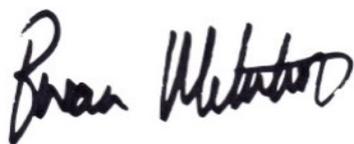
And how do we retain the relevance of the attributes and capabilities we want to build with young people when the world is changing so swiftly? What can different educational stakeholders, children and young people do to support a progression of development in those skills and development as humans?

These questions need to be discussed. The purpose of this thought paper and the qualitative research behind it is to flesh out the key ideas behind those questions and inspire more.

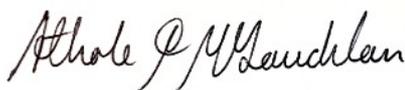
The team at our firm, NoTosh, helps school leaders accelerate positive change by thinking and doing things differently. In our method, employed with this project, we:

- guide leaders from passive thinking to dynamic activity;
- equip leaders with the tools to work through challenges with their school communities;
- create environments where it’s safe to be experimental; and
- develop a shared language for teams within schools.

And we keep asking questions. There are plenty of them in this paper for educators, youth work specialists and young people to keep asking, and for policymakers to consider. So take them further, and with your answers, perhaps you can already make the changes you want to see in your own classroom, school, youth club or programme.



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WHY ASK ABOUT THE CURRICULUM'S FOUR CAPACITIES NOW?

In 2015, the OECD (2015) proclaimed: “This is a watershed moment for Scotland’s Curriculum for Excellence” (p. 16).

But any notion that 2015 might have been a watershed moment was thrown into sharp relief in 2020.

It was the events of 2020 that brought ‘lift off’, “a historical change in direction”, a “monumental event”. Within weeks, 2020 brought many in Scottish education that watershed moment, showing what’s possible where there is a will and need for change.

2022 is perhaps the year we need to decide what to do with this watershed moment we’ve experienced. That’s why we want to explore the four capacities.

It’s 20 years since the last ‘National Debate’ on education led to the launch of Curriculum for Excellence in 2004. The curriculum was conceived to ‘fully prepare today’s children for adult life in the 21st century’ (Scottish Executive, 2004, p. 3). These four capacities articulated the aspirational purpose of Curriculum for Excellence, that ‘each child has an enormous capacity for learning and the potential to achieve in different ways’ (p. 9).

The successful implementation of the four capacities has always rested on a knife-edge between the capacities serving as powerful tools to structure or design learning on the one hand, and on the other hand, being seen to reduce the curriculum to little more than slogans (Humes, 2014). A common expression is that they are ‘embedded across all learning’ (Education Scotland, 2016) - but what that means has remained ambiguous to many (Scottish Government, 2022a).

In September 2019, Education Scotland launched a refreshed version of Curriculum for Excellence, reaffirming the importance of the four capacities (Scottish Government, 2022b). In addition, frequent reports from the OECD (OECD, 2008, 2015, 2021) and a recent report from Professor Ken Muir (Scottish Government, 2022a) have recommended a need to veer away from tokenistic use and re-engage with the holistic value the four capacities can bring to the curriculum.

However, any importance attached to the four capacities in designing curriculum has been diluted, crowded out in a busy policy marketplace by two decades of new initiatives, guidelines and expectations.

WHAT DID WE DISCOVER?

We also asked them what their own 'superpowers' were as a jargon-free way of understanding their capacities, capabilities and attributes. There was more to this than making up an appealing question. The word 'capacity' suggests a limit, the maximum amount something can contain or a person can do. Four capacities, four flavours of skills and attributes cannot be all there is. But education focuses on opening new doors of opportunity, learner pathways and wider achievement. We wanted to reflect that opportunity, and avoid any potential for narrowing the discussion to fixed ideas of 'competence' or what it means to be a 'successful learner'.

'Superpowers' are those unique and essential skills and personal attributes you recognise in yourself. And as young people talk about their superpowers, they also tend to reveal their own definition of the purpose of going to school and why it matters:

School matters because it allows us to gain social skills and make friends.

A school is a safe place for many people.

School matters to me because it is setting you up for life.

I go to school to be active and have a better understanding of things.

School matters to people around the world so they can learn, achieve their dream, work hard for the job they want, and get the stuff they need.

So I can live a good life.

If everybody gets a good education, they can do great things and change the world.

I think school matters to my parents because they want me to try my hardest to achieve my future dreams and be happy.

Learners identified a broad and potentially infinite range of superpowers. These superpowers are developed inside and outside school and in the exciting cracks between formal and informal education. And they are not found in boxes on policy papers.

Learners identified their need for successful learning habits such as critical thinking, communication skills, curiosity, creativity and teamwork. Leadership featured highly across all age groups. But they also recognised their ability to game the classroom, understanding the

hidden rules of achieving success at school, with superpowers such as ‘a big brain’, common sense, being a quick learner and working on developing a good memory. They emphasised the importance of socialisation through personality traits such as empathy, kindness, and simply being a good friend. A plethora of big-ticket responses dominated the answers. Art, PE, English, Maths, Science, Woodwork and Home Economics were underscored by endless examples of unique variations on those themes. Highland dancing, mountain biking, practical electronics, hill walking and juggling are a small sample of the richness and diversity of their superpowers. These are the same areas that, in recent years, have seen a curricular squeeze when practitioners have felt the weight of accountability (Shapira et al., 2021).

<p>Confident individuals with</p>	<p>Successful learners with</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self respect • a sense of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing • secure values and beliefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enthusiasm and motivation for learning • determination to reach high standards of achievement • openness to new thinking and ideas
<p>and able to</p>	<p>and able to</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relate to others and manage themselves • pursue a healthy and active lifestyle • be self aware • develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world • live as independently as they can • assess risk and make informed decisions • achieve success in different areas of activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use literacy, communication and numeracy skills • use technology for learning • think creatively and independently • learn independently and as part of a group • make reasoned evaluations • link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations
	
<p>Effective contributors with</p>	<p>Responsible citizens with</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an enterprising attitude • resilience • self-reliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respect for others • commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life
<p>and able to</p>	<p>and able to</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate in different ways and different settings • work in partnership and in teams • take the initiative and lead • apply critical thinking in new concepts • create and develop • solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it • understand different beliefs and cultures • make informed choices and decisions • evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues • develop informed, ethical views of complex issues
	

The Four Capacities, alongside their attributes, drawn from the Refreshed Narrative for Scotland’s Curriculum, 2019

We can recognise achievement in far more sophisticated ways than exams

We asked the learners, 'In what ways does your school recognise, develop and celebrate your superpowers?' Out of over 600 learners, none suggested exams or formal qualifications. Therefore, if we are serious about measuring what we value in our experience of school, we need to be bold and cast the net of opportunity and resources far and wide. Learners offered this list of possibilities to define different ways to celebrate and mark successful learning:

Skills certificates	Dragons Den	Inter-house competitions
Values assemblies, Skills assemblies, Rights assemblies	Teachers who know what you are good at and what you struggle with	Strong individual support and mentoring networks
After school clubs and sports	Sharing news from your weekend	Teacher feedback and positive language
Creative and interesting learning	School sports day	Treats like baking, free time and extra playtime
Trying and experiencing new things	Sports tournaments (football, netball, basketball etc.)	People who are good at maths are 'doing harder stuff'
Verbal awards - compliments	Star of the week and Class Dojo points	Talent Shows
Giving rewards	Residentials and school trips	Bake-offs
Not giving rewards	John Muir Award	Maths Bee
Duke of Edinburgh Award	Prize Giving	
Columba 1400		

IT'S ABOUT MORE THAN JUST 'PREPARING'

“Let’s shape educational thinking towards being in the moment and present. Seeing young people as citizens now - not seeing education as simply turning out widgets and workers - but focussing on individuals, family, and the globe.”

Trade Union representative

School is no longer just about preparing learners for an unpredictable future. Since the four capacities were baptised, a combination of global trends has tested the old idea that schools are merely a preparation ground for life beyond school. The four capacities talk about learners *becoming* confident, successful, effective, and responsible, now and in the future. In reality, educators see evidence that they *are* capable today of being and doing all those things, arguably more so now than at any time in the past twenty years.

- Technological trends: most learners have a more powerful communication and creative device in their pocket than any school could offer them twenty years ago.
- Environmental trends: children and young people in Scotland are significantly concerned about the dangers of climate change (Scottish Government, 2022a).
- Political trends: schoolgoers aged 16 can now vote. Whatever age they are, they are active citizens with a unique voice - for example, in debates around examinations, LGBTQ+ rights and race equality.
- Health trends: the COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning have challenged preconceptions about the predictability of future school and work scenarios. They have exposed existing global and local inequalities in education and created questions on the value of examinations and qualifications.

These global trends contribute to a greater sense of urgency and unpredictability and contest the old norms that a curriculum's purpose is only to help young people become these things in the future.

Similarly, there was a broad consensus from participants that the current picture of Scottish education, using the four capacities as a critical lens, undoubtedly favours a bent towards developing the 'successful learner'.

The overemphasis on developing the successful learner and accountability measures in the Senior Phase influences design choices in the Broad General Education (BGE) Phase, with evidence that it limits the breadth and options for young people (Shapira & Priestley, 2020).

There is an unresolved dilemma about whether the purpose of school should be about the rights of education for the sake of learning itself or the economics of employability and development of the young workforce.

Employers believe there needs to be a clearer route, earlier, for some learners: "If the academic path isn't the right path, then you need to tool them to be work-ready. It's a huge void between leaving school at 16 and being work-ready at 19... If a young person has a career goal... not everything has to fit into an academic timetable... It might take them three or four extra steps than their mate, but they can still achieve that call. We need to appreciate the importance of flexible choice."

Meanwhile, across participants there's some resistance against the idea that any schooling should be solely in service to the world of work:

"We've lost sight of what education is about. The depth and breadth of education have been lost because the balance has been tipped over. Teachers and classrooms have been thrown to the periphery. We are not a factory for industry."

Secondary Educator

Bearing this in mind, there was nonetheless universal consensus across all the research participants that the four capacities should not be allowed to become another tool of teacher accountability or reduced to a bank of tickable statements.

Academic Gert Biesta (2009) warns of the danger of 'valuing what we measure' rather than 'measuring what we value' (p. 33). Our interviews revealed many suggestions about better ways to develop and measure the value of skills and attributes in learners.

"The 'Successful Learner' is quite often the only capacity - pressure from parents and politicians has completely dominated an obsessive focus on exams and qualifications in the secondary sector."

Secondary Educator

Youth work educators pointed out that their awards are not the purpose of the experience. Rather it's about equipping young people to tell stories about what they've achieved.

Early Years educators felt that the principles of the four capacities underpin everything they do, and that "certificates have no value to the children" - it's the celebration of achievement, not attainment that they value.

In Primary, there's a plea to "trust the professionalism of teachers" when it comes to designing curriculum.

Secondary educators want to see learners at the centre of the process.

"We need to support learners to profile and reflect on their learning and include skills and capacities," they say.

A Local Authority Officer asked that we "keep numbers out of it, keep it qualitative."

"Tracking and accountability lose the quality of the learning - too much time measuring - not enough time nurturing and growing our children."

Primary Educator

A CURRICULUM IN SEARCH OF A “BIG IDEA”

“Students might remember them from primary school. They appear to have been pulled from thin air. Where did this pairing of words come from?”

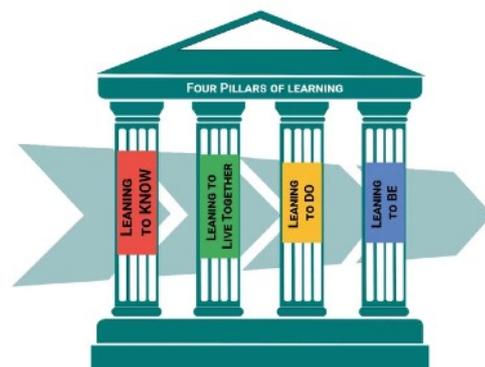
Secondary Educator

It is vital to show where ideas come from. Educational policy is strengthened by having a clear map of the philosophical journey, and the various sources of ideas and tributaries of thought that help steer it towards its final destination. Put another way, proving provenance helps curriculum-makers and policy-makers understand when certain ingredients may be outdated and worth changing or eliminating.

For example, the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IB) publishes a history of the educators and curriculum designers that have influenced the evolution of its curriculum (International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2019).

Drawing upon the evidence submitted in the 2002 National Debate on Education, the Curriculum Review Group proposed and oversaw the development of the four capacities and broad principles of curriculum design. In 2019, the capacities were restated in the refresh of the narrative for Scotland’s Curriculum and endorsed by the Curriculum and Assessment Board. Some participants in our process wanted to know more about what educational ideas and theories informed the thinking and choice of words in the capacities. Why four, and why double the number of attributes to capabilities?

One participant highlighted the close resemblance between the structure and language of the four capacities and UNESCO’s ‘four pillars of education’ (Delors et al., 1996). The four pillars were principles for lifelong learning published in 1996 by a UNESCO commission chaired by Jaques Delors (pictured).



Peace Experiment (2018), The Four Pillars of Learning

How crucial is the 'particular combinations of adjectives and nouns' (Priestley & Humes, 2010, p.351)? Why were they written like this? If we were to mix them up, would it matter?

Also, is 'capacity' the most appropriate word to use?

Some research participants were unaware of the close similarities between the design of Curriculum for Excellence and other national curriculums that have also incorporated 21st-century educational priorities (Priestley & Biesta, 2014). Scotland's broad framing of curriculum purpose around the four capacities exists in the parallel universes of New Zealand, Australia, Singapore and Wales. The language used is strikingly similar, particularly in Wales where there's a direct influence of Scottish curriculum design on its framework.

New Zealand's curriculum vision is for 'young people who will be confident, connected, actively involved and lifelong learners' (Ministry of Education, 2022). The Australian Curriculum is 'designed to help all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' (Australian Curriculum, 2022). In Singapore, the curriculum design is based on a set of 21st Century Competencies (21CC) 'that are essential for your child to develop to prepare them for the future' (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2022a). At the core of the 21CC are the 'Desired Outcomes of Education', which include 'Confident Persons, Self-Directed Learners, Active Contributors and Concerned Citizens' (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2022b).

The new Curriculum for Wales is the closest in curriculum orbit to Curriculum for Excellence. The 'Four Purposes' are the aim of the curriculum, supporting learners to become: 'ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives; enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work; ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society' (Education Wales, 2022).

Other nations like Japan and Finland review their curriculum every ten years. The Scottish Government has now accepted the OECD's recommendation that Scotland should have its own planned schedule of review. But what the format of that review looks like is also interesting to consider. Should we be more open to change and new ideas? Does everything have to stay and be built upon? Or is there permission to do things differently, change, and start over in some areas? If not, why not?

There is the possibility that language deemed groundbreaking twenty years ago is now considered by educators as 'business as usual' for any curriculum in any location. One way to create a different kind of

curricular purpose might be the involvement of curriculum-makers beyond the walls of education settings - many of those working in the youth and third sectors point out that their business-as-usual has always been the work of developing those four capacities (and many more besides).

What unique capabilities, skills, and attributes do we want to develop in Scotland? What's uniquely Scottish about the challenge and opportunity of our curriculum design?

For example, every group of stakeholders in our panel was firmly committed to social justice and inclusion. Socialisation through sports, clubs or being together in class is, unsurprisingly, what young people say they primarily come to school for. Should our curriculum purpose be adapted to what feels uniquely Scottish or customised for the incredible breadth and variety of contexts across the country? Should we weigh the purpose of a curriculum towards context-dependent rather than country-dependent?

Curriculum design is not a one size fits all approach. Educators implement and adapt curriculum design principles differently at a local level. So what would change if the process of curriculum making begins with the four capacities as design principles that shape the big ideas we want to teach? Rather than tagging them on at the end or not at all.

“Curriculum for Excellence [is made up of] technical documents... writing everything in child language is counterproductive. Attempts to make children own them are misconceived because CfE is about professional practice. A teacher's job is to produce a structure informed by the participation and co-design of their learners.”

University Educator

THE LANGUAGE OF THE CAPACITIES ISN'T THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNERS

The language around the four capacities is a significant barrier to using them effectively. There is a wide range of opinions about the language of the four capacities. Suppose the four capacities were used predominantly as a design tool by educators planning learning. In that case, we might consider any language barrier a limited one - a problem we can train ourselves out of. But as educators increasingly seek to co-design learning with students and community partners, the intention and accessibility of the word 'capacity', and the pairings of nouns and adjectives, become important considerations.

The simplicity of the four capacities is helpful for some to bridge dialogue and understanding about the curriculum with parents and partners.

But Early Years and Additional Support Needs (ASN) educators do not think the language is practical or meaningful for their learners. The terms are too advanced or simply too abstract for their learners.

From a children's rights perspective, there is a concern that children cannot take ownership of the four capacities because of the language.

There is also concern about learners simply parroting back the phrases or gaining a certificate to celebrate their achievement with them without a deeper understanding of what they really mean.

Most educators make implicit, indirect use of the four capacities in their professional practice. In the Early Years, for example, the way a teacher builds experiences and curriculum would naturally encompass the four capacities, but they are not explicitly referred to. Elsewhere, in Primary and Secondary, the titles of the capacities have remained in use, "a piece of paper on the wall", but the detail of attributes,

"A capacity is an ability or potential to do something - however, it's also a constraint - better words might be attributes, capabilities, behaviours or dispositions."

University Educator

"Responsible citizen: it's a motto, not a tool."

Primary Educator

capabilities and skills have been lost. "I think we have lost sight of them a bit in favour of the multitude of Expectations," said one Primary teacher.

Even amongst educators, there is a common consensus that not enough time and attention has been paid to unpacking and interrogating the four capacities. They were adopted quickly, without critical interrogation. "Kids could rhyme off the four capacities easily - they were everywhere at the beginning."

The implementation gap (Priestley & Minty, 2013) between policy intention and classroom practice is attributed to a systemic inability to see beyond the four capacities as slogans. This was compounded by a lack of knowledge about their provenance and the accountability of a crowded policy marketplace where many other initiatives grabbed the headlines and limelight.

"At the start, it was mostly tokenistic. What does it mean to be an effective contributor if you're non-verbal?"

ASN Educator

There has been considerable interrogation of the ideas informing the four capacities in academic articles (Biesta, 2008; Gillies, 2006; Hedge & MacKenzie, 2016; Humes, 2014; Priestley, 2011a, 2011b; Priestley & Biesta, 2014; Priestley & Humes, 2010; Priestley & Minty, 2013; Priestley et al., 2014). But anecdotally, there's far less of that interrogation in schools.

Many educational settings did engage enthusiastically with the four capacities at the very beginning. They were 'ingrained in the everyday language' (OECD, 2015, p. 40) of professional practice. However, there was a sprint to embed them as an audit of existing practice rather than as a curriculum design tool for informing practice. This hurt most in Secondary, where there was insufficient time to engage with the implementation, particularly the qualifications. "The secondary sector has never recovered from that," said one Trade Union Representative.

The successful implementation of the four capacities was also disrupted by questions about their meaning and inclusivity.

The concept of 'responsible citizen' was a particularly contested term with the research participants, especially concerning the global trends of active citizenship highlighted earlier. There is a sense that one experiences citizenship, rather than being taught it, that it is a collective

concept, rather than an individualised one. And the reasons for including it aren't clear: some asked whether it is to make society more fair, to bring conformity and obedience, or to ask hard questions of politicians and society?

'Effective contributor' was similarly queried by educators working with learners outside the educational mainstream.

"It suggests a direct link between education and work - but if education is only about employment, then an effective contributor is only about the economy. What does that mean for the child whose biggest achievement that day is being able to smile at you? How does that leave society?"

ASN Educator

THE NEW NORMAL

The COVID-19 pandemic was the watershed that no one predicted or proclaimed. The pandemic experience 'shone a harsh light on the vulnerabilities and challenges' (UNESCO: Education Sector, 2020) school communities faced in Scotland and globally. Rethinking education in the 'new normal' (Cahapay, 2020) poses sensitive and complex challenges to any next steps of the entire education system.

On the one hand, there's a case for change, or at least rethinking how we teach and how learners learn. On the other hand, there's a fatigued profession wary of significant change:

"This is a tired, stressed profession who are hunkering down. The tension around the reorganisation of the curriculum is coming at the wrong time. And when the chips are down, people resort to the accountability issues, rather than the 'value added' elements that can be seen as extras."

Local Authority Officer

"Stop launching new initiatives - give people some space and time - there's not enough curriculum making."

Secondary Educator

"We are concerned that post-COVID families are more disengaged from the life of the school. Families are prioritising working - not coming to face-to-face meetings. I'm worried about the trauma of lockdown on high-risk kids."

Primary Educator

"'Everything is possible, even the impossible', said Mary Poppins. But even Mary Poppins would struggle to do it all as a teacher in Scotland."

Primary Educator

WHAT CHOICES ARE THERE ON THE FOUR CAPACITIES?

LOSE THEM

Perhaps the most straightforward choice would be just to ditch the four capacities. However, our research shows that all educators appreciate and acknowledge the original intention and purpose of the four capacities. So no one is saying get rid of the concept.

“Lots of discussion at the world education summit about the importance of character, attributes and skills - so it's an essential conversation to continue.”

University Educator

But learners are unaware of their existence, few educators use them explicitly to inform their professional practice, and they seem to belong to a very different pre-COVID educational landscape.

There are those who use them in their planning and value them greatly. But some schools have ‘moved on’ and are already developing their own skills progression frameworks. If we are serious about decluttering and streamlining the curriculum, something has to give. This could be one choice.

USE THEM

The refreshed narrative of Curriculum for Excellence introduced the concept of ‘curriculum making’. If the decision is to keep the four capacities, are we happy to allow the capacities to sit quietly in the corner? Or should we focus deliberately on the process of explicitly unpacking and perhaps adapting the original curriculum design intentions of the capacities?

Educators could develop a renewed shared vision of the four capacities and link them more explicitly to curriculum design, achievement and skills for life.

However, there's always a risk of a return to tokenism. Whatever happens, flexibility is critical. The four capacities will vary in different

contexts. Schools must be offered the agency to develop the concepts and language in diverse and authentic ways.

“We build curriculum around the child. We can maybe get away with that in our setting in a way that’s impossible in a mainstream setting.”

Early Years Educator

TRANSFORM THEM

There is a third way: a transformative model (Kennedy, 2005) of curriculum making that embraces the tensions and conflicting agendas amongst the various stakeholders in education.

It wouldn’t be about reinventing the four capacities but reimagining how we think about the purpose of Scottish education in a post-COVID society.

Any process exploring curriculum and the four capacities must consider the ingrained policy dilemma and balance between learning, personal development, employability and children's rights.

A suggestion might be to rejuvenate the ambition of the curriculum through a broad, expansive human capabilities approach (Robeyns, 2006) which focuses on incrementally and expansively building potential rather than the current ‘boxed’ four capacities approach, which sets limits. The floor needs to be made concrete, but no ceiling - or box - should be placed on human capacity.

“How can an educator help young people unless they show young people they have potential?”

CLD Educator

We shouldn’t be embarrassed talking about creative ideas. A new national debate might focus on a renewed set of purposes for the curriculum, updating the four capacities and pulling them further into the 21st century. We don’t need to ask young people, “why do you go to school?” - educators and learners are remarkably aligned on this already. Instead, we might ask learners and educators what they need and want from their learning settings. Above all, though, they have creative ideas of their own that they believe work for their context. The process of ‘making’ a curriculum document sits in the hands of educators, learners, and those working with young people in the third

sector. But they need the time and space to experiment with fresh ideas and the platforms to share their ideas with each other.

Any future discussion or research should be sensitive to the current accountability demands of teachers and avoid reducing the conversation to 'an elaborate public relations exercise' (Munn et al., 2004, p. 450). The process requires careful thought, framing concrete and open questions about education for the common good. It has to bring different groups together in partnership to share perspectives and challenge assumptions. Curriculum-making is not solely the job of educators in mainstream school settings - too often, we forget that the remit and reach of Curriculum for Excellence encompass the expertise and experience of educators in Early Years, ASN, third sector and youth work settings. And they are incredibly successful and innovative at developing models of curriculum-making.

Policy debates and policy-making have, until now, primarily been based on adult elites facilitating, advising, consulting and filling in the gaps. As one Youth Work educator puts it: "What do very clever adults think young people need to do?" Learner voices take time and skill to gather. However, rarely do processes give enough time for practitioners to collect them, submit them, and make sense of them in a transparent manner. For example, one young P7 learner was worried about whether the adults would take any of his comments about the problem of littering seriously. Who will step forward as a responsible citizen to make sure that happens? A new set of purposes for the curriculum must be owned and enacted by everyone in education.

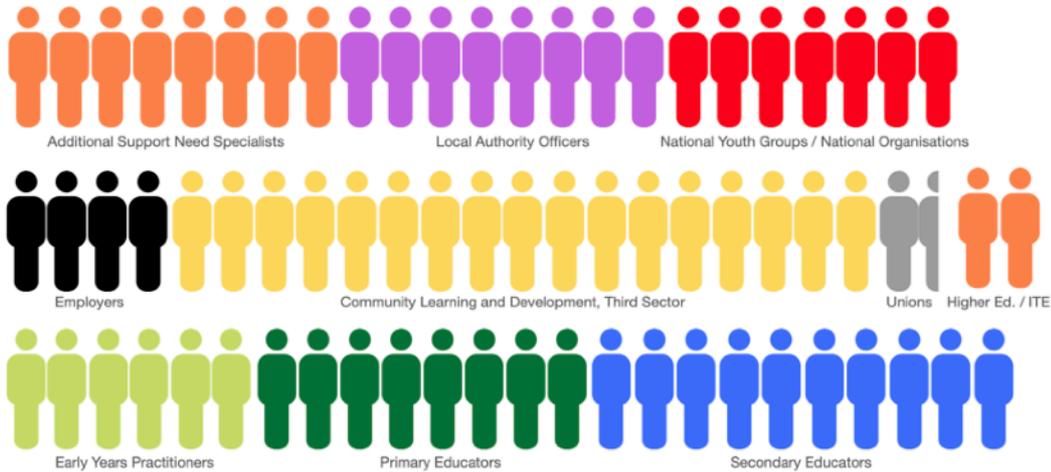
"The most important gift that we can give to our young ...not just preparing them for a job, but learning to live a life, learning to deal with the world, learning to be a full person. In Chinese, they say, "xue zhuo ren" ['learn to be a person'] and in schools, there are plenty of opportunities to learn to be a person..." (Center for Curriculum Redesign, 2012)

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WHO DID WE INTERVIEW AND WHAT DID WE ASK THEM?



We are grateful to all those practitioners and young people who gave us their time. We undertook 25 hours of interviews with over 100 educators working in education, and in the youth and third sectors. Educational sectors of participants included: Additional Support Needs Educators; Local Authority Officers; Third Sector and Charities; Employers; Community Learning and Development; Early Years Educators; Primary Educators; Secondary Educators; Trade Unions; University Researchers and Lecturers.

We undertook qualitative 1:1 interviews, focus group interviews, and two large online events. We heard, captured and wrote up some of the 'curriculum stories' of nearly 200 more educators in 2021-22.

In addition, we surveyed and undertook small events with over 600 young people from Primary 5 through to the end of the Senior Phase. The responses included learners from upper primary (P5-7), S1-S3, and the Senior Phase (S4-S6).

We asked learners the following questions:

- Why do you go to school?
- Why does school matter to you, the people around you, and to people around the world?
- What are your Superpowers as a learner?
- How are your Superpowers recognised, developed and celebrated by your school?
- Have you heard of the four capacities?
- What are your needs and wants for your education?

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