

Questions for EdTech Panel – Responses Meena Wood 12-03-21

1) One of the biggest challenges on education is the outdated curriculums used by the schools which will not help children to prepare for how to live their life's in the future, my question is: what do you think of the curriculum design and what can be done to innovate? for example the Astra Nova school and their evolving curriculum/project design

Astronova is a unique Independent Online school established for highly academic students . Their mantra and objective is aspirational and absolutely right on. *'What if students were taken seriously and their time well spent? Astra Nova believes in meaningful student experiences across age levels and domains.'*

Whilst we can applaud this, it is not fully feasible within the state sector in England as we currently operate to age related expectations and in silo subjects. If we wish to create a level playing field within our state curriculum, given the diversity of our student profile; this needs to evolve with a knowledge and skills based approach. Assessment systems should give all students an opportunity to apply not only the knowledge that they have learnt within a relevant context but the skills that they need for life and employment. The skills that are key are the oracy, financial literacy, digital, critical thinking and conceptual thinking skills. In addition, students need to develop reflective self-regulation, collaborative and independent learning skills – all required in life and in work. This can be done very successfully through Project Based Learning across subjects using a concept and ensuring progress is measured against students' starting points and not via their age related expectations. Simply put, for instance, the water cycle can be taught across science, geography and maths and lead to a presentation in English .

2) Can you manage collaborative discussion between pupils building knowledge in the classroom with ed tech?

Yes this is possible with breakout rooms. It depends what we mean by Edtec – if the learning is synchronous (live) then would suggest this. If it is asynchronous with recorded lessons being viewed at home, or in a classroom setting, students can use the chat function or PADLET to record their comments, questions and so on. A good way of using EDTEC pre-recorded lessons is through flip learning with students reviewing the knowledge in the lesson or video clip etc and creating questions that are raised with peers, thus developing peer assessment skills.

3) Has there been any shared information between LEA's towards an centralised knowledge base; with regards the impact of on-line schooling for the future of children who have been impacted by it.

Not that I am aware of as LEAs are mostly working with schools remotely on safeguarding and healthy working conditions.

4) there are lots of opportunities provided using teaching software and the data teachers collect about each student's detailed learning progress (e.g. Khan's Academy's math learning software application with the US schools), what are the opportunities for schools to also collect more data to understand teachers' time management (improve ratio of

student to teacher's time or help teachers to avoid burnout) and teaching performance (e.g. maybe real-time feedback collected from students)?

Good point and this will be happening no doubt with Unions and Ofsted visiting schools from the summer term. Little as yet is known regarding the 'burn out' experienced by teachers who are having to administer Covid tests, plan and teach both face to face and remotely. The other really important issue is how effectively students have learnt during successive lockdowns and teachers' expectations of how they assess the 'gaps in their learning' for those who disengaged, struggled with learning or did not have good access to laptops quiet space etc. How will teachers cater for those who have learnt more than was 'expected of them'? This maybe because their parents /families helped them out, or they have an innate curiosity and desire to learn, or have a special aptitude or skills set that suits them to be more productive working independently, without classroom distractions. Or importantly they are unfettered without the constraints of an assessment system that is constructed around age related expectations ! Children returning to school will have a spikey profile of learning across subjects and will have made differing levels of progress in each. Using ipsative assessment that measures their progress against their starting points in each subject is now key rather than focusing on normative assessment that is used at present. Remote assessment now creates a whole host of opportunities for students to assess their understanding of knowledge, to interact with one another and for teachers to spend quality time with children 1:1 and in small group work and work as facilitators not transmitters of knowledge.

5) Just going back to the question of cultural capital - this is a useful hook by which to subvert the concept and to use it to reflect diversity in the curriculum; the national curriculum requires schools to deliver spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through the curriculum, including the extra-curricular activities - hence there is a legitimate way for schools to make sure the curriculum is reflective of the diversity in Britain today .

A big question – we need to think whose cultural capital are we teaching ? SMSC plays a role but developing a global citizenship model is now essential given the vast changes in the role of knowledge dissemination across social media etc that children are subject to. broadening students' horizons through a curriculum that fully embeds 'diverse cultural capital', helps ensure that our young people become informed global citizens. Our students live in a multicultural pluralistic society, and deserve to experience a thought -provoking and relevant curriculum. By this, we mean a curriculum that contextualises rich cultures and stimulates students' curiosity for learning; whilst ensuring that students have critical literacy and thinking skills. This gives them the tools to challenge the familiar world and prepare for the unknown. They will learn not to accept unquestioningly what is taught.

**Extract from Secondary Curriculum Transformed: Enabling All to Achieve. Routledge 2020
M Wood and N Haddon <https://lnkd.in/gDfqdEc>**

We contend that the 'mosaic of knowledge' students learn must have sufficient breadth, depth and diversity. This cannot be divorced from structured opportunities for learning about global citizenship, through students appreciating their own cultures and those of others. This is especially important at a point where the UK has reached a historic watershed, post departure from the European Union. Forging new relations and understanding with countries world- wide

is now an economic imperative. The students of today will potentially seek employment in these countries, or work for foreign employers investing in the UK.

Cultural appropriateness

Ofsted's understanding of '*knowledge and cultural capital*'¹, echoes the National Curriculum's aspiration (Department for Education, 2018²) as we saw in Chapter 11 '*...the best that has been thought and said.....to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.*'

What this 'essential knowledge' is; how it is selected and by whom, is key. The appreciation of 'cultural knowledge' presents schools with a challenge. The ideology of cultural literacy was drawn up by E. D. Hirsch the American educationalist³ who argued that reading comprehension requires not just formal decoding skills, but in addition, wide-ranging background knowledge. His 'Core Knowledge Foundation' and theories influenced the National Curriculum design and the EBacc suite of subjects in 2012. Rather than critical thinking skills, he proposed that a "*well-rounded, knowledge-specific curriculum can impart needed knowledge to all children and overcome inequality of opportunity.*"

History needs to refocus on providing different perspectives and not just from an English perspective and importantly needs to develop the critical and analytical thinking skills. World history taught should not be viewed uniquely through the selective lens of the British. For a balanced perspective, resources and historians should include Black, Asian and Jewish writers and others and students need to be taught to be critical of information they access. Black Caribbean, African, South Asian students sitting in the history lessons, must be given opportunities to learn the history of their own heritage or culture. White British students need to know the contributions made by other nations to the UK economy and society. How cultural capital and GCSE History is taught will currently depend on the vagaries of examinations board and the choices made by subject leaders.

6) Systemic and structural barriers need to be torn down. Still far too many based on class, gender and race and the intersectional across the three....

A very pertinent and valid observation . Schools are generally a microcosm of the general society and children will be deeply influenced by parents families local communities friends and social media. We have along way to go within our education system if we wish to move towards a less polarised society that is more reflective of the diversity of our children's heritages. Firstly we need more role models in schools who are senior leaders and who transcend the current White Middle Class Male and Female profile. Secondly we need a more diverse range of aspiring young leaders to break the glass ceiling and to reach senior leadership positions.

¹ OFSTED (2019) *The education inspection framework*, 1st edn.,

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework>: OFSTED.

² Department for Education (2018) *The national curriculum*, Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/key-stage-3-and-4> (Accessed: 5th November 2019).

³ Hirsch, E. D. (2017) *The Making of Americans: Democracy and Our Schools*, 1st edn., : Yale University Press.

7) So are beauticians paid less because of the job or because this is a role occupied by women?

Beauticians are classified generally as lower skilled workers, although they can be accredited. The point made at the Panel by me was regarding the stereotyping of workers into a profession or role . Beauticians, nurses, care workers and primary school teachers are predominately female, until men and women enter these professions in equal numbers, we will not break down race and gender stereotypes and that begins within the home and at school with CEIAG. Even in education, there are far less female senior leaders, especially in secondary school, than male.