ARE WE READY TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE?

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Since 2015, Wales has been in the process of significant education reform aimed at raising standards and reducing inequality; this has been termed "the national mission" by the Welsh Government. The educational reforms, set out in response to the curriculum review, *Successful Futures*, completed by Graham Donaldson in 2015, include a new and ambitious, purpose-led curriculum and a commitment to greater autonomy for schools. I believe educators in Wales now have a timely opportunity to pause, reflect, and transform the education system in our country. Having recently been introduced to *currere* as a form of research, I—like many others—can see the real potential for this to help teachers to reflect on their role and their readiness to become curriculum designers. Without the proper reflection and deep conversation that processes like *currere* encourage. There is a danger that teachers like me could just adjust the way we already work, no meaningful change will occur, and the new curriculum will not lead to the successful futures we hope to build.

"History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future" (Warren, 1961). Teachers cannot be separated from the personal and collective histories that have shaped them, the present that dictates how they work, or their view of the future that drives not only their own aspirations but their hopes for learners. *Currere* provides a framework within which to deconstruct our intertwined past, present, and future and analyse how this is shaping our approach to curriculum design, for better or worse.

Donaldson noted in *Successful Futures* that, "there is a real desire among the profession for schools and teachers to have more (but not complete) autonomy to make their own decisions within a national curriculum framework" (Donaldson, 2015, p. 15). Enhanced teacher agency has been one of the main concerns for current curriculum reforms in Wales. The system of "Pioneer Schools" (schools selected to help lead the development of the new curriculum) was aimed at "encouraging appropriate ownership and decision making by those closest to the teaching and learning process" (Donaldson, 2015, p. 14). Through the "National Professional Learning Entitlement" (Welsh Government, 2019) for teachers, which focuses on professional learning as being collaborative and enquiry based, the Welsh Government is seeking to reinvigorate the professional standing of teachers and is encouraging them to engage with the wider research community. Furthermore, the *Curriculum for Wales* (Welsh Government, 2020) and the *National Mission* (Welsh Government, 2023), clearly outline schools' and teachers' agency to develop their school level curricula to support all learners.

Priestley et al. (2015) discusses how the move to put teachers at the forefront of curriculum design in many education systems has been frequently undermined by accountability measures and a performance-driven culture that disable teachers from acting autonomously. They explain that teacher agency is only achievable within the systems and circumstances that support it.

Teacher agency is not about acting upon the priorities of others, implementing frameworks or strategies that have been handed down, or picking and choosing from different pedagogies or bodies of knowledge. The education system, as a whole, needs to move beyond the approach where wave after wave of new initiatives are cascaded in a top-down approach, and priorities set by governments seem only to generate more and more words on paper rather than actual change on the ground. Teacher agency is about the power to question the whole system and our way of working—asking the questions that challenge pre-existing assumptions about how education should look and how it is held accountable. True teacher agency can be achieved when "teachers become more than tools of others ... they begin to understand that they have the power within the system to transform rather than simply adjusting" (Kanu & Glor, 2006, p. 113).

Teachers are shaped by their personal experiences of and beliefs about the education system, their cumulative knowledge of educating, and their past successes and failures when working in the system. Priestly et al. (2015) observes that "the achievement of agency is always informed by past experience—and in the particular case of teacher agency this concerns both professional and personal experience" (p. 30).

If we want to achieve true teacher agency in the development of the new curriculum in Wales, teachers not only need to work in a system that allows them the freedom, power, and support to make decisions and take ownership, but they also need to be encouraged to explore their beliefs, values, and aspirations relating to education and reflect on how these have been formed.

> If the focus is to be on developing agents of change and professional developers of the curriculum, then programmes of professional development should focus on interrupting habitual and socially reinforced ways of thinking about schooling and to encourage a reflective mind set. Arguably, this should include a thorough engagement with the question of educational purpose and with the principles of curriculum development and enactment. (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 30)

"Reflective Practitioner" is a well-used term in education, but I would suggest this is widely understood to refer to a practitioner who continually reflects on their lessons and teaching sequences and uses this to improve (Avilés, 2021; Mathew & Peechattu, 2017). Reflection is a core component of teacher training programmes and often takes the form of daily lesson evaluations and weekly mentor meetings to identify what has been learnt from that week's experiences. "Reflection-on-action involves professionals reflecting on an experience, for example what happened, what they did and what they might do differently in the future. Such reflection-on-action is part of professional learning and can contribute to improving professional knowledge and practices" (Campbell & Ceau, 2023, p. 6).

Whilst these traditional forms of reflective practice are very familiar to teachers, *currere* offers new opportunities for teachers to become reflective practitioners in the widest sense; reflecting on how they have arrived at their teacher identity; how their current practice is shaped by their personal beliefs and past experiences, the impact of wider societal views, and the potential futures we need to prepare for.

"Learning by doing or even learning from doing is insufficient, a more advanced meta-cognitive process of reflecting on thoughts, feelings, assumptions, decisions, and actions is needed to inform professional learning, knowledge, and practice" (Campbell & Ceau, 2023, p. 8).

As *currere* is an autobiographical study, I will begin by exploring the educational experiences that I feel have shaped my current practice and consider how this is reflective of the wider system before considering future aspirations and possibilities. I will analyse these explorations to determine what is important within the present educational context in Wales and how *currere* could support deeper teacher reflection to inform curriculum development.

MY EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

When I begin to reflect on my childhood experiences of education, the regressive phase of *currere* approach, one question sticks in my mind: Who decided that the written word was the highest form of communication? Did anyone decide this, or was this just my perception as a learner whose innate skillset did not seem to be as valued as the skills of those who could confidently and neatly express themselves through the written word?

I was never expressly told my skillset was inferior, but this was subtly and perhaps subconsciously displayed to me throughout my education and through the interactions with the adults around me. I was always encouraged to do art activities and praised for my work, but this was very much seen as a hobby, and yes, I could take Art at A level (Advanced Level qualifications - UK)—as long as I took some more serious subjects as well—to balance out the “soft stuff.” I could even consider a Fine Art degree … if I didn’t get the grades to do teaching.

I was told I was good at Art, but I was also told that what I really should be focusing on was my spelling, because that was poor, and my handwriting, which really wasn’t neat enough; this focus on what I couldn’t do only made me more anxious and eroded my enjoyment of creative writing. I don’t have a spelling problem, and I enjoy writing, but I still lack confidence in these areas because I was made very aware at a young age that I wasn’t where the system expected me to be.

In my childhood school reports, a common theme seems to be my propensity for “daydreaming”—this was always seen as a negative. If we rephrase this as “your child spends too much time thinking” would this be perceived the same way? There seemed to be an accepted view of how a productive learner should be spending their time—thinking their own thoughts did not seem to have been one of them! I obviously can’t remember what I spent so much time thinking about, but I know that I am still a very active thinker, whose imagination often runs away, but I view this as a strength and part of my creativity rather than a waste of my time.

Questions of what is valuable, desirable, or of importance are central to questions about curriculum. Discussions of curriculum reform in the late 19th century asked, “What knowledge is of most worth?’ (Butler, 1895), and in recent guidance from the Welsh Government (2020), the specific content of the curriculum is presented as “statements of what matters” (n.p.). For me, it was not just in the choices I was presented with, but in the whole way the curriculum was presented that established my understanding of what was valuable or of most worth. As my education progressed, there was more and more focus on written responses to learning and less and less time and encouragement to respond in other ways—the ultimate expression of this being taking exams for formal qualifications, where the written word was the primary tool for assessing learning in most subject areas.

I believe that the adults that surrounded me had my best interests at heart. They held the widely accepted view of what success looked like, and they wanted that for me, so they guided and supported me to achieve it.

> Assumptions and practices about what the fundamentals of good education should be can become so established over time that they form an almost unchallengeable bedrock of belief. Society—and especially parents and carers—often expects to recognise what children are doing at school in terms of their own past experiences. (Donaldson, 2015, p. 6)

At the time I was in education, the widely accepted view seemed to be that excelling in English, Maths, or the Sciences was preferred, and the main aim of education was to secure a place in a good university so you could achieve a well-paid job.

As a compliant child, I was easily moulded, and I also came to see that what mattered was a steady job and financial security—these extrinsic motivations became my primary drivers. So, I followed the path set out for me and would probably be seen as a successful product of the system: I graduated from university, something neither of my parents had achieved; I have a steady job and experience success in my career. I enjoy my job, and at times I love it, but I do often wonder where I would be if I was truly given the confidence and freedom to pursue what I loved in a system that showed me all the possibilities and was focused on me achieving personal fulfilment instead of just "getting a good job." Self-determination theory (Ryan et al., 2017) would suggest this lack of personal fulfilment was a result of simply following a path based on the expectations of others, instead of being fully autonomous and setting my own course.

As an educator I have always drawn heavily on my creative skills and I believe these are some of my key strengths—allowing me to effectively problem solve, think flexibly, and present ideas and information in an engaging way. However, I have found that my attitudes towards what really matters in education have not strayed far from those expressed to me as a child. I would say my practice is heavily focused on the development of Literacy and Numeracy, and I use the written word as the primary way for learners to respond across the curriculum. Whilst I recognise the importance of secure basic skills, I also see that the over reliance on a single way to respond does not allow all learners to fully express the depth of their understanding and in some cases actively disengages them from learning. I am creative, I value creativity, yet I have not always reflected this in my practice and have slotted into the same pattern of education through which I was taught. "Teachers' own schooling must be significant in the development of the capacity to question and innovate" (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 5).

Before my children were born, I had very firm ideas about what kind of parent I would be and how I would like to educate my children. However, once they arrived my views completely changed—I, like many parents, became less concerned about their academic achievement and more focused on allowing them to develop as well-rounded individuals who have their unique talents recognised and nurtured. As a family, we spend hardly any time on homework and lots of time on sports clubs. I don't spend time fixating on my children's weaknesses, passing on insecurities, but instead I try to emphasise their strengths. I favour time outdoors, trips to museums, travel, and baking instead of extra tuition and paper-based practice. We love the library and read every night for pleasure. My children achieve well at school, but there is no doubt they could be seen as "more successful" and advance even faster if we spent time pushing the widely accepted "right skills." However, I have chosen to play the long game, hoping that providing a variety of experiences will allow them to flourish in their own time and that the confidence they are developing by doing what they love will help them address any weaker areas later. Their childhood is short—I want them to enjoy it.

As a member of society, I have met many people for whom the traditional model of education was not a good fit—people who left the system at various stages feeling undervalued or even worse, unsuited to learning. Many of these people have gone on to be successful anyway, despite their formal education, not because of it. This has led me to believe that it is not learners who are unsuited to education but methods of education that are unsuited to learners.

In *Curriculum for Wales*, the Welsh Government (2023) has stated that, "Pedagogy is at the heart of curriculum" (n.p.). Wales has introduced 12 "Pedagogical Principles," research-backed concepts that underpin highly effective teaching and learning. The government seeks to make clear that the principles are not a tick list and that effective teachers will move between these approaches in response to learner needs. As an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Mentor, I have regularly observed student teachers, and I am often frustrated that teaching methods do not seem to have changed much despite the introduction of the *Curriculum for Wales*. When I speak to students about creative approaches, learners leading learning and real-life authentic contexts, the theoretical knowledge is there, but they often lack experience of seeing this in practice. Often students are still observing traditional, teacher-led teaching methods in schools, and they end up recreating this in their own practice. The model of teacher education seems to have always been that of an apprenticeship, where new teachers learn their craft by watching existing teachers, and their success is judged by how well they can maintain the status quo in their placement classroom.

> The problem with this has been that, when new entrants trained up in the new pedagogical approaches enter their first posts, new methods are often swamped by the more traditional approaches, entrenched attitudes or requirements for assessment that already exist in these schools. (Braund, 2010, p. 19)

I often wonder how anything new and excellent can really flourish in this way.

As I prepare for the new school year, I am struck by how education has started to feel like a conveyor belt system. At times it feels like school has become a process for children and teachers to go through rather than an experience to be enjoyed—it feels like the education system has lost its soul. So much of my time at the start of the year will be spent in meetings, going through policies and procedures to make sure that everyone does everything in exactly the same way; consistency is key. Education seems to fear the maverick instead of questioning what could be if we did things differently—we seem to stifle creativity at every turn and seek out standardisation.

Reflecting on these experiences leads me to consider how prepared teachers are to be curriculum designers. It seems to me that we are somewhat bound to recreate the systems and processes we have experienced. "Teachers granted autonomy may simply fail to achieve agency as they, for example, habitually reproduce past patterns of behaviour" (Priestley et al., 2015, p. 8).

THE FUTURE OF CURRICULUM DESIGN IN THE AGE OF AI

In the progressive stage of *currere* (Pinar, 1975/1994), we are encouraged to look to the future and understand how this is part of our present. In the next section I will explore how one of the most pressing developments on the horizon could impact teacher readiness to become curriculum designers.

As a society and a profession, we seem to have an accepted view of what education should look like and a vision of the most successful outcomes measured by what has been in the past. But we are now facing a radically different future. A quick flick through any news channel will make it very clear that we are about to enter a rapidly changing phase of existence where our relationship with technology and the world of work is about to change unimaginably as a result of advancements in Artificial Intelligence.

When we consider education in an AI world, naturally there will be much attention on how these new tools will shape the classroom experience, reduce workload, and provide learners more personalised education experiences. Following the move to remote learning as a result of Covid

19, we already have some evidence to suggest further automation of education requires caution—but we will quickly need to prepare learners to work effectively with and alongside AI. The impact and experience of living through a pandemic made it clear that education is essentially a social, human-rooted process. When we tried to replace this with the use of technology and independent study, the outcomes were disastrous, affecting wellbeing, mental and physical health, academic performance and social and emotional skills. "While remote education is better than nothing, it's no substitute for the classroom" (Amanda Spielman, as quoted in Ofsted, 2020, n.p.). The scale of the damage is only just becoming clear as more and more studies are released. This unintentional "experiment" with education gave time for reflection on how we learn and what matters in the development of young learners.

However, whether to use AI to support teaching and learning should not be the most significant consideration for educators; what we really need to begin to understand is how the use of Generative AI in the workplace will cause a significant shift in the skills that are seen as valuable in the future. As many of the mundane roles that humans do now become automated, human skills will need to adapt accordingly, with human cognitive abilities like decision making, critical thinking and analysis, creativity and innovation becoming highly prized. This will obviously have significant implications for what and how we teach in schools and should be one of the leading considerations when we are designing our new curriculum.

Specific human skills, such as human connectivity, emotional intelligence, and social communication, could be essential future skills. I would argue that the development of these already sits firmly at the heart of early education but would question if the development of these remains a priority as learning progresses. The ethical considerations relating to the uses of AI will become paramount for mitigating against harm, promoting the "good" and developing trust in the systems that will become increasingly integrated into our lives.

> As artificial intelligence is increasingly involved in decision-making that affects individuals and society, an AI-enabled workforce needs ethical awareness. Employees must be able to navigate ethical dilemmas and make moral judgments when working with AI—things like privacy and data protection. (Corporate English Solutions, 2023, n.p.)

The development of ethically informed citizens, one of the 4 Core Purposes that are the foundation of the *Curriculum for Wales* (Welsh Government, 2020), will be essential so our learners can recognise and challenge bias within the systems we create and use.

The rise of AI and automation of many tasks could cause an even greater shift than many of us could begin to imagine. In an interview with Rishi Sunak, the UK Prime Minister at the time, Elon Musk (as quoted in Henshall, 2023) stated that "I think we are seeing the most disruptive force in history; we will have something that for the first time is smarter than the smartest human … . There will come a point where no job is needed" (n.p.). Whilst this is only one opinion, it does cause us to ponder what a world with reduced work might look like—one where we have more time to engage with personal passions and hobbies. How will we derive a sense of purpose and achievement when not defined by our employment ,and how will we frame our new ambitions?

In a future where there is the possibility of less work and a reliance on systems such as Universal Basic Income, we may need to consider what schools will be preparing our learners for. An education system founded on achieving employability in a traditional sense may be obsolete. In an AI world, the development of human intelligence that is broad, unique, and adaptable will become the new goal, and we will need to redefine what success looks like and consider how will we "measure" the success of a learner in acquiring social and emotional intelligence, critical thinking, creativity, and ethical awareness. In a world where the written word is perhaps composed more efficiently by AI tools, will we still see this as the highest form of communication? Crucially, such questions call us to consider how well-prepared teachers are to create a curriculum that enables learners to flourish in this new world and if the government is doing enough to support them. Training courses around the implications of an AI future are thin on the ground. Some training around simple AI tools that may reduce workload are starting to make their way through to mainstream education platforms, but deeper theoretical discussion about the profound implications of the technology are not commonplace. Without this deeper understanding and reflection, how can teachers begin to identify what might really matter and build curricula that appropriately prepare our learners? If we want teachers to be curriculum designers of the future, they need to be given the necessary knowledge and understanding.

READY OR NOT: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PRESENT MOMENT

Having explored my past experiences of education and how they have shaped my present and having considered the impact of the potential future on how we act in the here and now, I will move on to exploring the present. Through the analytical phase (Pinar, 1975/1994), I try to capture where we stand in our readiness to become curriculum designers and make connections with the previous steps to see how we have arrived here.

As discussed, we are at a point of rapid change. In Wales, we are at a pivotal moment in education: we are in the early stages of the rollout of a new curriculum when teachers are being actively encouraged to focus on why we teach the way we do and consider what really matters in the lives and potential futures of our learners. At the same moment, AI is propelling us towards a new world we can't imagine, and teachers are being told to create a curriculum that will allow learners to thrive in this ever-changing environment. The timing of the implementation of the *Curriculum for Wales* (Welsh Government, 2020) should create ideal conditions for true curriculum reform—educators and wider society recognise the need for change, and with the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales, we have been given permission to change the system and are encouraged to have agency in building our own curriculum. So why, when faced with the right conditions for change and the opportunity to build our own curriculum, are so many teachers feeling paralysed, unsure of what is expected and seeking clarification from above about what "good" looks like.

> Put simply, policy demands that teachers exercise agency in their working practices, then simultaneously denies them the means to do so, effectively disabling them; such policy overtly focuses on the individual dimensions of what it means to be an effective teacher, while ignoring or subverting the cultural and structural conditions which play an important role in enabling this to happen. (Priestly et al., 2015, p. 2)

Evans (2023) notes that curriculum design has not historically been part of teacher education in Wales and the the use of "Pioneer Schools" to drive curriculum development may have left many teachers behind, feeling "de-skilled" (p. 5). I don't really remember ever having any real training on curriculum design in my early career; there was plenty on planning and creating schemes of work, but I don't remember being given any theoretical understanding of what drives curriculum development or being asked to reflect on how my experiences as a learner may impact what happens in my classroom. There has been more training lately on implementing *Curriculum for Wales*, but this is still focused on coming to grips with the curriculum guidance rather than developing teachers who can transform a curriculum. “Teachers, after all, know only what they know and what their formative training and subsequent professional development have allowed” (Evans, 2023, p. 5).

The supporting guidance accompanying the curriculum is lengthy, and I would suggest poorly understood by many. Evans (2023) highlights that the guidance itself has caused confusion and anxiety by seemingly seeking standardisation in a system that is designed to allow freedom of approach.

The unfortunate timing of the introduction of *Curriculum for Wales* during the pandemic has exacerbated problems. Educators were already grappling with a move to online learning and a raft of new health and safety procedures, meaning there has been insufficient time or energy to fully engage with the theory behind its implementation and construction, and in many cases, it has become a job to get done rather than an invaluable opportunity for reform. Training to help implement the curriculum was in many cases delivered too late and has often seemed more focused on the procedural side of completing the task rather than seeking to truly develop teachers’ understanding of curriculum development: “Teachers are not supported well enough to develop the skills they need to design a curriculum” (Estyn, 2022, p. 20).

It is clear that previous approaches to curricular reform have eroded teacher agency (Donaldson, 2015; Evans, 2023; Priestly et al., 2015). Previous curricula have been handed down from above as a ready-made product to be delivered to learners. Many teachers in the system, me included, have never known any other way. Never before have we been given the freedom that we have now to create and offer a bespoke curriculum that meets the needs of our individual learners and prepares them for a rapidly changing future.

> The high degree of prescription and detail in the national curriculum, allied to increasingly powerful accountability mechanisms, has tended to create a culture within which the creative role of the school has become diminished, and the professional contribution of the workforce underdeveloped. (Donaldson, 2015, p. 10)

As Donaldson alludes to, the impact of the school inspection system on the innovative potential of schools is huge and, in many cases, could be seen as having a highly restrictive effect in the past. School inspections create a high stakes situation, which is the enemy of creative experimentation. When you know a public judgement will be made about how your school is led, it is far safer to fit in with tried and tested practices than encourage staff to be experimental in their pedagogical approaches. Again, Wales has taken steps in the right direction with a move away from one-word judgements, data-driven accountability, and unnecessary comparisons of schools and towards a system based on securing improvement through the sharing of effective practice. However, it will be some time before all new inspection measures are implemented, and in the meantime, schools are still bound to err on the side of caution when it comes to curriculum development.

REFLECTING ON THE PAST TO FACILITATE TEACHER AGENCY

In the synthetical stage of my *currere* (Pinar, 1975/1994), I hope to pull together what has been learnt from reflecting on the past and from considering the future and from analysing the current position. I will draw out what I see as important when considering teacher readiness for curriculum design and try to identify possible ways forward.

What has become clear to me is that teacher agency will be key to realising the change needed and for *Curriculum for Wales* to be a success. Teacher agency cannot be achieved by just telling teachers to create a curriculum, as many lack the experience and understanding needed to do this as a result of years of working in a system that dictated every aspect of their work. Teachers will need to be supported and empowered in a system that genuinely respects their professionalism and provides a clear blueprint of what needs to be achieved. Teacher agency is reliant on a strong teacher identity formed from reflection of how your beliefs, values and aspirations have been formed: "We know that each of us has a past, a present, and a future not yet lived" (Pinar, 1975, p. 14)—teachers need opportunity and encouragement to explore these stages of their development and become aware of what is driving their practice and how they can develop their capacity to build a new curriculum.

Deep reflection will take time and will require space away from the day-to-day distractions of school life. "Current theorisations of reflective practice stress that it should be unsettling and include critical inquiry and questioning of the status quo, of established norms and routines, of power structures, and of the consequences of biases and assumptions" (Campbell & Ceau, 2023, p. 9). Teachers are successful products of the existing system, and without this reflection, we will recreate what we have experienced. Processes like *currere* offer a way to engage with the experiences that shaped us and identify what matters going forward.

If we accept that teachers are products of their previous experiences, values, and beliefs relating to education and are likely in some respects to recreate the image of the education system they have experienced, then we need to consider how we could begin to counteract this by opening the system to wider perspectives. Schools are constantly told to look outwards, but we tend to do this within our own education bubble—working as a local consortium, perhaps seeking advice from a private educational consultancy business or working with a university partner. Everyone has a vested interest in education—it impacts the whole of society, but how often do teachers really engage with the wider community to identify how we can make the system work for everyone? The education system has become so "busy" that there is little time for people on the ground to reflect. Teachers are successful products of the existing system, many have never worked outside the current system—they may not have the experiences, knowledge, and skills to build an innovative bespoke model that is not built in their own likeness and is not founded on existing presumptions of what matters. We could learn so much if we had time to engage with outside views on education—a conversation with a failed school leader or the leader of a future tech company, conversations with our community about how we would like to see our schools move forward over the next year, or sharing our memories from the best lessons at school. "As educators we need to understand that stories are the essence of what our art is about" (Kanu & Glor, 2006, p. 109).

In addition to broadening access to perspectives from outside the system, the Welsh Government needs to recognise that previous experiences of curriculum reform have left many teachers feeling "de-skilled" (Evans, 2023, p. 5), and current professional learning opportunities are not sufficient to give them the confidence needed to develop something radically different to that which has gone before.

> The lack of a detailed implementation plan specifically linked to professional learning, setting out roles and responsibilities, and how the different "tiers" of Wales' education system should interact to support schools, appears in hindsight to have impacted negatively on teachers' capacity to meaningfully engage with CfW. (Evans, 2023, p. 6)

Teachers need to be supported to develop a deeper theoretical understanding of curriculum design and the threats to true curriculum reform—including their own perceptions of a "good education" based on their past experiences. They need time for deep reflective thinking and discussion on what matters in education and opportunity to work with experts from different fields—particularly future technologies—to expand their thinking and foster new perspectives. Furthermore, teachers need to find their voices again, to fully recognise that we are the professionals within the system and, with the right social and political support in place, are best placed to create a transformative system from the child up. "It is widely accepted that professional learning should be about having the confidence and time to experiment, take risks, make mistakes, reflect, evaluate and modify behaviour" (Egan & Grigg, 2017, p. 8).

It will not just be experienced teachers who will need support. Initial Teacher Education (ITE) needs to foster the development of strong teacher identity by encouraging student teachers to reflect on their own experiences of education and how these have shaped their current ideas. ITE providers must ensure in-school mentors are open and supportive of new practices and guide with experience whilst being mindful about how the past has shaped the present and what is important for the future. We need to encourage school-based partners to take part in joint research projects with student teachers that allow us to explore new approaches together and learn from each other.

Today's learners need an education system that develops them holistically and prepares them for a dramatically different future. A tweaking of existing practices or surface level reform will not be sufficient. "Greater freedom will offer opportunities for creative decision making about the kind of curriculum that will best meet the needs of the children and young people in the school" (Donaldson, 2015, p. 97). In the past, employment has been the successful outcome of education and national economic and technical needs one of the main drivers for various reforms (Greene, 1995, p. 9). The future requires us to reimagine the aims and successful outcomes of education. The true success of a future curriculum should be observed in the personal fulfilment of individuals within society. Wherever the learner wants to go, whatever they envisage for their future, they should have confidence that their choice is recognised and respected and that education will support them in striving to achieve their goals.

> Our children and young people only have a relatively short time at school. We must use that time judiciously and productively to help each one of them to grow as a capable, healthy, well-rounded individual who can thrive in the face of unknown future challenges. (Donaldson, 2015, p. 5)

This redesign will require creativity and innovation from practitioners, who recognise the unique circumstances and opportunities presented by their own cohorts in their own communities. Practitioners need to be encouraged to experiment and take risks with new approaches to curriculum design and seeking out a standard approach should be avoided. "Creativity is possible wherever human intelligence is actively engaged and is a vital part of an effective education: it includes all areas of understanding and all children, teachers and others working in primary education" (Cremin & Barnes, 2015, p. 359). The way we judge the success of any new curriculum will also need to change. If the aim is to develop lifelong learners who are confident and adaptable in the face of rapid change, we need to recognise that this is a long-term goal and cannot easily be measured. If we want to see success, we may have to have courage in our convictions and stop measuring everything on academic outcomes at set points in the short term—surely this will only lead to constant curriculum replacement and disengagement from the teaching profession.

Education affects us all—how we feel about ourselves and our achievements, how we value others, and how successful we are as a society. We all hold beliefs, values, and aspirations regarding education and what the successful outcomes should look like, but it is unlikely these are all still relevant in our ever-changing world. Education has a past, a present, and a future that continually intertwine to create the teachers and learners of today. "The future is present in the same sense that the past is present. It influences, in complicated ways, the present; It forms the present" (Pinar, 1975/1994, p. 9). To enact change, we need to be mindful of where we have been and where we are so we can go forward with clarity and conviction. Processes like *currere*, which support deep reflection, may hold the key to empowering teachers to achieve this kind of agency. Teachers who are empowered within a system that allows them to be creative and innovative without fear of failure will be able to deliver the transformative education system needed for the rapidly changing future.

> In moving to a higher-performing education system, the message for Wales is for the Welsh government to set the direction and place trust in the vast majority of schools and teachers to follow that lead in ways that will serve their children and young people well. (Donaldson, 2015, p. 99)

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