

Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools AEO
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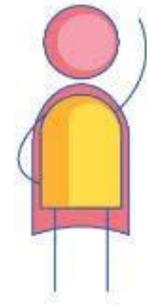
Children's Agency and the Curriculum

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Years)* (HHCP)
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Outline of talk

- Conceptualising children's agency
- Children's agency and the curriculum: a research project
- Next steps for children's agency

Conceptualising Children's Agency



- Agency - the capacity to act independently and to make one's own choices
- Two key dimensions of agency:

sense of agency – perception of oneself as an active agent

exercise of agency – actual display of agentic behaviour

- Why talk about agency?

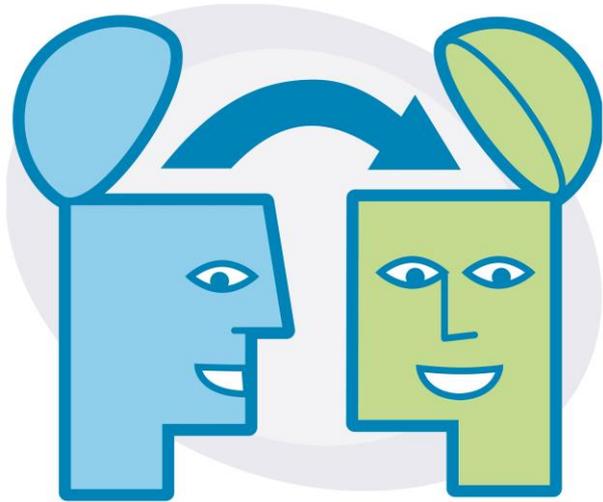
Learner agency plays a key role in shaping educational environments, processes, and outcomes

Agency represents a critical resource for success in the 21st century world?

Learner Agency and the Curriculum

Agency: “the socially situated capacity to act”. Sense of agency; exercise of agency; affordances for agency.

Children: passive recipients of knowledge or self-directed learners?





At NCCA, we work with learners, teachers, practitioners and parents to develop research-based curriculum and assessment.

[About NCCA](#)

Defining knowledge

Knowledge: Understanding of something acquired through learning, guidance, and practice. (Wyse & Manyukhina 2018, for Ireland Project)

“In all fields of enquiry, there is better knowledge, more reliable knowledge, knowledge nearer to truth about the world we live in and to what it is to be human. At the same time, this knowledge is not fixed or given; it is always fallible and open to challenge.” (Young, 2013, p. 107)

Knowledge in the Curriculum: Comparing Curriculum Models

English language dominant, including national curriculum texts available digitally in English;

Jurisdictions that include significant numbers of pupils using languages other than English, and significant levels of ethnic diversity;

High scoring in PISA outcomes (OECD, 2018)

Australia (AC): The Australian Curriculum: Learning Areas; The Australian Curriculum: General Capabilities; The Australian Curriculum: Cross-Curriculum Priorities.

Canada (Ontario) (OC): The Ontario curriculum subject guides.

Hong-Kong (BECG): The Basic Education Curriculum Guide.

England (NCE): The National Curriculum in England: Framework Document.

The Content and Discourse Analysis

- Keyword search: 'know' and 'knowledge'
- Statements: intent; guidance; context; learning process; outcome; experience and outcome
- Types of knowledge: disciplinary and non-disciplinary
- Value of knowledge: intrinsic (as an end in itself); instrumental (as a means to further ends)
- Relation of knowledge to other elements: understanding; skills; competences; values etc

Study Findings: Three Curriculum Types

- **Knowledge-based (e.g. England):** Knowledge is the dominant organisational emphasis across the curriculum as a whole.
- **Skills-oriented (e.g. Australia and Ontario):** skills are an important consideration, particularly in relation to applying knowledge, which remains an important element.
- **Learner-oriented (e.g. Hong Kong):** the dominant organising emphasis is on the learner, including whole-person development and lifelong learning. This was accompanied by an explicit recognition that a bias towards an emphasis on knowledge is undesirable.

Emphasising Disciplinary Knowledge

Pupils should be taught to: solve problems involving multiplication and division including using their knowledge of factors and multiples, squares and cubes (NCE, p. 129)

The application of phonemic awareness and phonic knowledge to the development of reading, especially from Foundation to Year 2, is of critical importance (AC: English - How the Subject Works)

The science and technology curriculum expectations are organized in four strands, which are the major areas of knowledge and skills in the science and technology curriculum (OC: Science and Technology, p.11)

Emphasising Everyday/Non-Disciplinary Knowledge

“... opportunities and space should be provided for students to explore and co-construct knowledge with peers to encourage them to actively participate in developing independent and self-directed learning skills”
(BECG, Ch.1.5.2, p.8)

Disciplinary vs non-disciplinary knowledge

	England (NCE)	Ontario (OC)	Australia (AC)	Hong Kong (BECG)
Disciplinary	133 (91.1%)	397 (81.5%)	182 (75.8%)	30 (21.1%)
Non-disciplinary	2 (1.4%)	42 (8.6%)	26 (10.8%)	10 (7.0%)
Unspecified	11 (7.5%)	48 (9.9%)	32 (13.3%)	102 (71.8%)
Total	146	487	240	142

Implications for Learner Agency

Constructing learners as:

Passive recipients: “pupils should be taught” (NCE)

versus

Active participants: “for students...to actively participate in developing independent and self-directed learning skills” (BECG)

Users of knowledge: “using their knowledge of factors and multiples...” (NCE)

versus

Creators of knowledge: “...for students to explore and co-construct knowledge with peers” (BECG)

Comparing research with Ofsted's curriculum models

National Curricula Manyukhina and Wyse		School Curricula Amanda Spielman: Ofsted
Knowledge-based		Knowledge-led approach
Skills-oriented	 	Knowledge-engaged
		Skills-led
Learner-centred		Absent from Spielman classification

Blog and link to research paper:
<https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/what-next-for-curriculum>

Conclusions and Future Work

- Schools have considerable latitude to innovate?
- Agency – an essential consideration in curriculum design? The CHANT project;