

EXPLORING TEACHER MEDIATION IN CURRICULUM MAKING: SCOTLAND AND WALES

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Introduction

New forms of curriculum, which demand greater input from teachers, are emerging internationally (Priestley & Biesta, 2013). Teachers are seen as agents of change in many contexts and are expected to engage with curriculum making more actively than previously to shape their practices. Scotland and Wales are good examples of this new approach. Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence gives an explicitly strong emphasis on the teacher's role as an active curriculum maker, by stating that the intention is to create teacher-led system (Scottish Government, 2017) where teachers and schools are empowered to make their own school-based curriculum. In Wales, where the current curriculum development process is still ongoing, direct engagement of teachers to generate ideas for the new curriculum is one of the main aspirations (Welsh Government, 2017).

This new approach to curriculum making may bring new challenges for teachers in a continually changing contexts. For instance, they may not be able to understand core concepts and policy intentions, unless there is a clear vision within a clear and grounded guidance (Pietarinen, Pyhältö & Soini, 2017; Wallace & Priestley, 2017). This may lead them to continue with their old habits and understandings regarding curriculum making (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015). Contextual cultural and structural factors may also act as constraints or enablers, shaping how and what extent curricular flexibility is applied (Bascia et. al. 2014). When teachers find themselves in a situation characterised by reform turmoil, they differ in the extent to which they are able and willing to manoeuvre their practices and responses by means of these factors. As such, various intertwined factors may mediate the ways in which teachers approach their curriculum making practices. The literature illustrates a gap in this respect, which we aim to address by using reflexivity as a theoretical lens.

This paper explores teacher mediation in curriculum making practices, drawing upon empirical research conducted in 2018. We first provide insights from two different country contexts (Scotland and Wales), before offering a brief discussion on current literature and the research methods. We then present the key themes emerging from the research, focusing on three aspects. The first aspect is the ways in which teachers conceptualise curriculum and curriculum making. This is followed by an analysis of the factors which shape curriculum making practices. The final aspect, which is the key issue for this research, is to better understand how reflexivity mediates the ways in which teachers view curriculum and shape their curriculum making practices. Reflexivity is an important factor, helping us to understand what individuals concern and value most, and how they interpret their current conditions to project their actions. The paper concludes with discussion and inferences about the role of reflexivity in curriculum making.

Contexts: Scotland and Wales

Before undertaking our analysis, we first provide an overview of the background of two contexts. The historical background and current curriculum reforms manifest both similar and different characteristics in Scotland and Wales.

Scotland – The Curriculum for Excellence

The new Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) was formally implemented in 2010 after a period of discussion, guidance, reflection and developments, following the publication of the initial paper in 2004 (Scottish Executive, 2004). CfE is notable for its structure, which is organised around four capacities: successful learners; confident individuals; responsible citizens' and effective contributors. A second emphasis lies in the importance given to the role of teachers, presented as being the agents of change (Scottish Executive, 2006). Previously, Scotland's 5-14 curriculum was based on a more prescribed culture, where teachers were seen more as implementers of the curriculum. While whether teachers are still seen in this way or not is a contentious issue, this is not the main argument of this paper; however, it is our intention to show that there is a potential shift in teachers' role in curriculum making.

As for the structure of the curriculum, there are eight curricular areas of study that give the emphasis on learning across the curriculum, with additional attention to literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. These eight curricular areas are structured as a large number of experiences and outcomes (Es and Os) set out in sequential levels, which are less prescriptive and specific in content than the previous curriculum (Priestley and Minty, 2013), thus offering some spaces for manoeuvre to teachers. However, accountability practices potentially affected teachers' experiences of curriculum making, as the new curriculum was developed in schools (Priestley, 2014; Wallace & Priestley, 2017).

Wales- The Curriculum for Wales

The new Curriculum of Wales is still under development, to be implemented in 2022 after a pilot phase in 'pioneer schools' (Education Wales, 2017). A big ideas design within the pioneer approach has been the main feature of the new curriculum in Wales. Big ideas are expressed as 'What Matters' statements, which encompass six Areas of Learning and Experiences (AoLEs) (Welsh Government, 2017) The overall rationale is presented in relation with the four main purposes recommended by Donaldson (2015): ambitious, capable learners; enterprising, creative contributors; ethical, informed citizens; and healthy, confident individuals. These curricular features mean that the Curriculum for Wales is an explicitly purposes-led curriculum. During different stages of the development work, teachers are provided with more freedom to use their professionalism and knowledge (Education Wales, 2017). Previously, the National Curriculum inhibited their freedom due to prescribed syllabuses, centralized control and accountability systems (McCulloch, 2000).

In summary, therefore, the discourses in curriculum documents about the teachers' role seem to resonate in both contexts. Teachers are seen as a vital part of these reforms and have more freedom and flexibility than previously in curriculum making. Another similarity is that both Scotland and Wales have been under relatively more rigid and prescribed curricula in the years leading up to these reforms.

As for differences in these contexts, different starting points are taken in curriculum making. Wales is promising to develop the curriculum based on purposes enshrined in the big ideas approach, and therefore not focusing primarily on outcomes; whereas Scotland has effectively created multiple starting points, including a great number of learning outcomes, which have been criticised for creating ambiguity in the system (Priestley & Humes, 2010). Hence, Wales is indicating a process-model curriculum while Scotland has a mixture of process and mastery curriculum models (Kelly, 2004).

There is also another difference in terms of sense-making processes in two countries, which can play a key role in meaningful curriculum reform (Soini et al, 2017; Pyhälto et al, 2018). There has been a great emphasis from the early stages on professional collaboration and sense-making in Wales, through pioneer school model (Welsh Government, 2015) as well as internal and external reviews and evaluations. This model has been criticised for excluding non-pioneer school teachers (e.g. Arad Research & ICF Consulting, 2018). Whereas in Scotland the uncertainty and the pace of the change has tended to eschew shared sense-making processes undertaken by teachers (Wallace & Priestley, 2017).

All of the considerations above point to the central importance of teachers in curriculum making, especially how they mediate curriculum making processes.

Teachers and curriculum making

Curriculum making, as a process of interaction between different actors within the education system, occurs at different layers in interaction and intersection with one another (Priestley & Philippou, 2018). In line with this description, the new trend in curriculum making is towards more flexible designs such as broad and bold design and a big ideas approach. Much literature suggests that these new forms offer great flexibility to teachers, and therefore schools and teachers have more space for manoeuvre (Edwards, Miller and Priestley, 2009) in curriculum making.

This flexibility is tempered by a perceived need to balance the policy framework with local needs in schools. Teacher agency is therefore important concept here, as it influences this process. Existing research illustrates that teacher agency is achieved in different practices, which are sometimes far from what is intended initially; sometimes termed the implementation gap (Supowitz & Weinbaum 2008). There are different factors which affect this gap, such as teachers' beliefs relating to the reform, their capacities (professional knowledge and skills), existing school cultures, school catchment area, and the nature and extent of teachers' networks, etc. These factors (and potentially more) are the objects to be mediated by teachers whilst curriculum making.

Theoretical Framework

Reflexivity as a key construct is chosen from Archer's (2003) work to explore how teachers view curriculum and mediate different factors. Reflexivity is defined as 'the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their social contexts and vice versa' (Archer, 2007, p.4). It is mainly considering 'what matters' and 'what to do next' (Willis et al., 2017, p. 795). It is underlined as an important element of teaching, because of the complexity of ongoing reforms, accountability, diversity and community expectations (Ryan and Bourke, 2013), and

because different modes of reflexivity (Archer, 2007) shape engagement with social issues in different ways.

Archer (2007) identified four modes of reflexivity: communicative reflexivity; autonomous reflexivity; meta-reflexivity and fractured reflexivity. People who exhibit communicative reflexivity need to be confirmed through an external dialogue prior to action. Autonomous reflexivity manifests in those who have self-contained internal conversations, which lead them to taking action. Meta-reflexivity is depicted as being critical upon one's own actions and constantly engaging in self-evaluation. People who demonstrate fractured reflexivity tend to intensify their personal distress and social orientation through their own internal conversation.

However, we approach this classification with a caveat as reflexivity is contextual and multifaceted activity (Archer, 2007). For instance, the literature illustrates some examples where participants practice provisional reflexive modes besides their dominant mode of reflexivity (Brew et al., 2017; Kahn et al., 2016; Wimalasena, 2017). This means people can practise different modes of reflexivity in different contexts and times. Hence, the mode of reflexivity is not deterministic and fixed, but is a nuanced way of understanding individuals' actions (Wimalasena, 2017). We therefore prefer to use 'exhibit/demonstrate/practise a mode of reflexivity', rather than labelling individuals as if they are solely one mode of reflexive.

Research Design

This case study was designed as an online focus group, including participants from Scotland and Wales in 2018. Participants are recruited through social media and the professional networks. Three teachers from Wales and six teachers from Scotland participated actively in the discussion forum for five weeks. A WordPress page was set as an interface, allowing both synchronous and asynchronous discussions. Teachers were from a range of different backgrounds. For example, two teachers had more than 20 years of experience and one teacher had six years. Some of them were leading curriculum development processes in their schools. Teachers from both primary and secondary levels participated in the focus group.

The study is a collective case study in nature (Stake, 2005), as there is less interest in one particular participant. The primary aim was to better understand the social phenomena investigated in terms of emerging concepts, themes and processes. Therefore, the research was designed to generate data exploring perceptions of curriculum and curriculum making and investigating the role of reflexivity on the mediation of curriculum making practices. Key research questions were:

1. In what ways do participants conceptualise curriculum and curriculum making?
2. What are personal, structural and cultural factors in curriculum making?
3. How do teachers mediate these factors in curriculum making practices with respect to reflexivity?

These questions and reflexivity as a sensitizing concept are used as starting points. At the final week of the research, participants were asked to complete an Internal Conversation Indicator schedule (ICONI) (Archer, 2008). This was used to identify their dominant mode of reflexivity, which in turn

assisted the final stage of data analysis. Attribution of dominant mode of reflexivity was finalised after obtaining the results of ICONI and interpreting the transcripts.

The data from Wordpress page were organised and transferred to the software Nvivo. For the purpose of this paper, analysis of data has followed three phases. The first phase is thematic analysis to explore teachers' understandings of curriculum and curriculum making inductively using open coding. The second phase of analysis is completed using 'personal, cultural and structural factors' codes. Data were coded under these themes and organised in two groups: enablers and constraints. For instance, if a cultural factor was enabling teacher to actively mediate curriculum making practices, it is coded under enabler cultural factor. In the final phase, we looked at how reflexivity plays role in teachers' responses.

Ethics

Ethical approval was obtained from the General University Ethics Panel at the University of Stirling. Non-traceability was facilitated by assigning pseudonyms at two stages; for the online discussion and for this paper. In order to further minimise the potential risk of harm, 'Netiquette' protocols were agreed by all participants, regarding sharing respectfully and protecting privacy. The online discussion forum was set as private, and only invited participants could access it, after sending their signed informed consent forms. The data were protected in compliance with the data management system of the University of Stirling.

Findings

Conceptualisation of curriculum and curriculum making

The concept of curriculum and curriculum making are understood in different ways and levels by teachers. Based on the transcriptions, curriculum was conceptualised focusing on the content, the product and the process. This is also in line with Kelly's (2004) distinction for different starting points for curriculum planning, even though there are also some overlaps. Some of the common themes in curriculum as content were 'group of subjects to teach'; 'resources that are used to facilitate learning'; and 'mechanical framework for ensuring that learners develop skills and knowledge to connect their society'. In the process focused conceptualisation of curriculum, it was more evident that teachers are focused on the nature of the learner and principles of the educational aims. For example, it is demonstrated in this quotation:

Curriculum to me is a pupil centred curriculum that is broad and balanced. With literacy and numeracy at the forefront. It has to be engaging and fluid, letting the pupils take it to where they want to go – with teachers, who then create activities which are skills based linked to the pupils' ideas and plans. Being Welsh, I would also like it to be linked as much as possible to Welsh culture, history and geography and how Wales is linked to the wider world (Oscar, Wales).

The focus on the product revealed a more technicist approach, and it is illustrated in some of the comments such as 'curriculum should be the outline of the learning goals' and 'curriculum is an imposition of workload from distant and unaccountable figures'. However, it is interesting to note that one teacher defined curriculum based on his reactions to the new curriculum reform in his contexts. For instance, he defined curriculum based on the product approach previously in the forum, whereas

at some point he commented that curriculum should be based on broad aims, principles and pedagogical approaches proven to work. Hence, personal opinions on curriculum seemed to be mediated by the contextual conditions, which will be further explored in the final section.

As for curriculum making, different levels were highlighted as is also suggested in the literature (e.g. Van den Akker, 2003). Macro (national), meso (school) and micro (classroom) level of curriculum making were illustrated throughout the discussion. Even though there were different ways of conceptualising curriculum, agreement about having both the national and the local dimensions of curriculum making were explicitly cited in many responses. Interestingly, the participant who focused on the content and product domains of the curriculum previously, also stated that *'Curriculum making from my perspective is taking the agreed 'what' in relation to content (as dictated by government etc) and developing it into meaningful, relevant, linked and enjoyable sequences of learning. I think this is where the real artistry of teaching comes into play.'* Scotland's curriculum was presented as an example of this kind of attempt, which was closely related to the flexibility and the role of teachers. This issue will be explored more in the later sections, yet, some teachers think that this flexibility in curriculum making in secondary level is not yet possible due to accountability systems and assessments.

Factors mediate curriculum making

In this section, we discuss three sets of factors that mediate curriculum making practices: individual, structural and cultural factors. These factors will be further discussed with respect to reflexivity, which is the key aim of this research.

Individual factors in curriculum making

Stating that there are some overlaps between different sets of factors, there are some specific attributions for each set. For example, 'willingness to cooperate, having previous experience in curriculum making, having job satisfaction and beliefs towards being able to achieve agency' could function as enabling factors, whereas 'feeling mistrustful to the government, lack of motivation and believing that their agency is constrained by several reasons' could constrain their curriculum making practices. Not surprisingly, teacher agency has been cited as both enabler and constraint. For instance, one teacher emphasised how achieving agency enabled curriculum making practices, by emphasizing the emerging phenomena aspect of teacher agency (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015)

'I have had great teaching and learning experiences in the past when I have had the freedom to develop cross curricular units of work, starting from the interests of the children within the context of a broad curriculum framework. That is where my artistry has come into play – developing interesting, meaningful context for learning which engage the learners.' (Henry, Wales)

On the contrary, some of teachers stated that if teacher has 'lack of agency', they want to be told exactly what, when and how to do it, which in turn constrains the curriculum making practices. This reflects, the capacity aspect of teacher agency (ibid.). Besides, there are other factors which inhibits agency even though teachers have the capacity and would like to achieve agency. These factors, such as accountability and assessment systems, are explored more in the structural factors section.

Teachers with an interest in reading educational research, who follow the current discussions around new reforms, seem to nurture their curriculum making practices. For example, one teacher stated that *'I have a particular interest in looking at Research in Education and how it can be utilised in the classroom.'* Whereas another said that *'teachers need to engage with research and academic reading more, and with ideas rather than forms and tables and grids.'* Therefore, engaging with research can be also seen as a way of fostering agency in curriculum making.

How teachers feel about their job and pupils was another individual factor, which could hinder or activate curriculum making practices. For instance, when teacher enjoys what they do, they tend to put more time and energy on doing things. This is illustrated in this statement by a teacher:

'I thoroughly enjoy my job, and get an enormous amount of job satisfaction from getting students through an exam or a topic that they originally struggled with. I find that a large number of students find maths "boring" and I try to make maths a little bit magical.' (Beth, Scotland)

Structural factors in curriculum making

Structural factors were addressed throughout the research period in different discussion topics. As it was the case for the individual factors, enablers and constraints are also explored here. The data suggested that 'accountability and examination systems, political agendas, lack of time, poor collaboration, hierarchy, poor leadership and the catchment area of schools' tended to constrain curriculum making practices. Particularly, accountability was observed to be one of the prominent factors throughout the research, among all participants. This was interrogated from different perspectives, which in turn point potential tensions. For instance, tensions between 'flexibility and accountability, disbelief towards the necessity of paperwork and accountability, policy compliance and accountability and time-related issues and accountability'. Some of them seem to be intertwined with cultural factors in curriculum making. For example, disbelief towards the necessity of paperwork as an accountability practice is illustrated here:

'The least favourite things about my job is when I am asked to supply data or fill in forms and then find this information is only a process and not used for any meaningful improvements.' (Arthur, Scotland)

One teacher, with a background of working in England for years with the National Curriculum (known for its prescriptive structure) offered a different perspective on accountability. He said that:

'The accountability was not a problem, as the school I was working at during that period had been given the 'power to innovate' which gave us the official nod to explore possibilities, yet we still developed a very clear and accountable curriculum structure, planning structure and assessment mapping with enough flexible to start each unit of work with pupil voice.' (Henry, Wales)

Hence, accountability itself may not be an inhibitor, but is needed to be activated through other factors hindering the agency of teachers.

As for enabler structural factors, 'leadership and professional dialogue' are often mentioned as the strongest factors to mediate curriculum making practices. There seems to be consensus about the significance of head teachers' leadership skills which might strengthen teachers' experience in curriculum making. For instance, one participant from Wales stated that:

'At this moment we have pioneer schools working on the 'what' statements for our new curriculum and if those pioneer schools have inspiration leadership it will produce something inspirational but if not then those what statements could be stifling.' (Oscar, Wales)

How some of these factors (e.g. leadership) have also cultural elements and reinforce each other will be discussed in the next section.

Cultural factors in curriculum making

Cultural factors are mainly related to ideational components (Archer, 2003). For instance, 'shared beliefs and values, reciprocity and vision' are stated as enablers to mediate curriculum making practices whereas 'attitudes to change, non-generative dialogue, policy compliance and disbelief towards the necessity of paperwork' are indicated as constraints.

As an example of vision and reciprocity, Beth from Scotland commented on the transition issues:

'I have suggested that the Maths teachers go into the primary schools and teach some areas. There is a numeracy programme being used in primary schools, but the current s1s (the first group who have followed CfE all the way through) have not seem the benefit...We know where the students should be in s1, and it makes more sense for us to go them, rather than to dictate where the students should be.' (Beth, Scotland)

Another enabler factor, that is shared beliefs and values, is mentioned regarding to the leadership, yet is approached from ideational aspects. It is stated that school leaders sometimes need to have difficult conversations with external agencies to stand up what they all believe is right for their school. However, some teachers agreed that this kind of leadership is 'sadly' rare nowadays due to dramatic changes in bureaucracy, or in other cases some of them have their own curriculum agenda which leave limited room for teachers. Nevertheless, participants from Wales seem to be relatively more optimistic about the near future developments because they agree that creating a schools' leadership programme alongside creating the curriculum was the right idea. The problematic issue for them seemed to be the external collaborations whilst making the curriculum. The pioneer school approach has been questioned throughout the discussions in terms of the dissemination of the information, fully inclusive approach and opportunities of collaboration.

In summary, these aforementioned factors potentially influence how teachers engage with the curriculum. In the later section, we provide a discussion on how teachers mediate these factors in curriculum making practices with respect to their dominant mode of reflexivity.

Mediation of these factors and reflexivity

It should be noted that these factors (and potentially more) mediate curriculum making practices, but do not entirely determine these (Mouzelis, 2007). These factors are important to foregrounding the

key issue in this research, but incomplete as they are not embedded with reflexivity. Reflexivity enables a person to navigate these factors. As indicated previously, investigating reflexivity is multifaceted and complicated activity and therefore the results of the ICONI and the transcriptions are used as a starting point to make sense of the data.

In order to portray this complex process, we present four cases which strongly illustrate the characteristics of different modes of reflexivity based on the ICONI result and the interpretations of the transcripts. We suggest that teachers' responses are mediated by the dominant mode of reflexivity they exhibit.

Communicative Reflexivity

Based on the results of ICONI, there are three participants who exhibit communicative reflexivity, and one of them practise both communicative and autonomous modalities. Among from these, one case is presented here to provide insights into individual's responses to curriculum making. This case is selected because it reflects relatively strong aspects of this particular mode based both on the ICONI score and on qualitative grounds.

Henry has been working both as a primary teacher and a deputy head in Wales for 20 years, with 15 of these in different leadership roles. He also worked in England around 15 years ago, but decided to move because he believed that professional freedom is lost there. He now thoroughly enjoys working in both roles, which he believes gives credibility to his decisions. As appears to be the case for all participants, evidence gathering is the least favourite part of his job, as he thinks these activities can often distract teachers from focusing on teaching and learning.

He seems to be concerned about the direction of the current curriculum reform in Wales, due to what he sees as the unclear guidance and only partially inclusive approach. Even though he appreciates the intentions of Welsh Government at this stage, he thinks that there is a potentially widening gap between pioneer schools and the rest of the school population. For instance, he seeks tangible examples from pioneer schools and more guidance from local authorities and/or Welsh Government to move on their own curriculum making practices. This seems to be one of the common attributes among people who practise communicative reflexivity. Henry was expecting affirmation as to whether his school was keeping on the right track or not. Archer explains this pattern as 'a need to share thoughts with others in order to conclude their deliberations' (Archer, 2007, p. 102). This pattern may also come into play in his work as a both teacher and head teacher in this specific time period. Archer adds here that it does not mean those who exercise communicative reflexivity are not capable 'to initiate a train of reflexive thought when alone' (ibid., p.102). This also appears in this case; that even though Henry was seeking to be affirmed and assured by others, he initiated his school to move on in line with the national mission statements, after waiting to obtain tangible examples.

He emphasizes the significance of 'shared expertise, encouraging inter-school working and empowering all school staff to have an input into the direction of the curriculum'. Parallel to his thoughts, he participated in a number of conferences where Welsh Government updates and reports were presented, in order to make better sense of the current reforms. The prominent enabler in curriculum making for him is having teachers involved actively and coherently in the development of curriculum.

At the same time, he was criticizing the Regional Consortia by promoting their own approaches to curriculum, as he thinks it could stifle creativity. Hence, inner deliberations appear to be open to selective scrutiny (Archer, 2007).

Viewing reflexivity as context dependent, it could be further argued that Henry was practising meta-reflexivity alongside the dominant modality of communicative reflexivity. He was challenging the status quo and was deeply concerned for equity. He was also supporting the idea that one of the greatest enablers in the curriculum making process is having strong leaders who are willing to stand up for what they believe is important for their schools, even though it may elicit difficulties with external agencies.

'If you happen to live near a school where they have been involved in the Pioneer Programme or if the school has a Head teacher who has contacts in the LA and other institutions then you may get a more innovative curriculum, than those schools left on the fringes of the curriculum reform and who appear to constantly be playing catch-up with those schools who are deemed 'excellent'.' (Henry, Wales)

We argue that, since schools in Wales are still in the construction phase for the new curriculum, teachers tend to seek clear guidance and support through internal and external collaborations to navigate their way through complexity, as it is the case with Henry. Communicative reflexivity here enables them to share their expertise and encourages getting the most benefits from the available support mechanisms. However, the future steps in the current reform should be taken with adequate caution, in terms of providing thorough guidance as well as opportunities for fully inclusive and constructive debate. Nevertheless, the pioneer approach in Wales is promising a teacher-led and inclusive approach; it thus appears to be that, since teachers tend to be action oriented, it would take time to get used to more nuanced approach (Drew, Priestley & Micheal, 2016).

Autonomous Reflexivity

The only individual who exhibits autonomous reflexivity is presented here to provide insights on how this mode of reflexivity may mediate curriculum making practices. Edward has been teaching for 17 years at different positions, including working with Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), and now he is working in a provincial rural school. He indicates that he is genuinely interested in curriculum.

He concerned mainly about the decision making process at macro and micro level and the benchmarks¹ of CfE. He claims that decisions are often made with considerably little input from teachers in secondary level, without considering their values, concerns and thoughts about the students' journey. The decisions at micro level are also 'indefensible decisions' such as prioritising Advanced Higher classes² over small National 4² classes, due to the lack of time, limited resources and staff. As a person, who exhibits autonomous reflexivity as a dominant mode, he seems to have a clear sense of what he can control and influence. Hence, he mostly emphasized that his feelings and

¹ Benchmarks were designed to clarify the assessment expectations regarding what students need to know and be able to do at each level in all curriculum areas.

² Advanced Higher qualifications sit at level 7 on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). At National 4 qualification are at level 4 of the SCQF. For more information about qualifications, refer to <http://scqf.org.uk/>

opinions are his own, which shows sustainment of self-contained internal conversations. He takes his personal responsibility to navigate his way through the curriculum.

Most of the participants from Scotland argue that there is less appetite for flexibility, for several reasons. Edward proposed that this could be reworked to create potential success using the curriculum or by other capacity building means. He sees CfE as giving permission to be creative to the ones who would like to foster their agency or as prescriptive enough for the ones who have less desire to engage with it. This approach can also be seen as a typical of autonomous reflexivity. Archer (2007) mentions such circumstances as 'instrumental rationality' where people's orientation is towards a specified end, that is reaching the potential of CfE in this case.

Exhibiting autonomous reflexivity does not mean that they do not consider other people's opinions (Archer, 2007). Even though Edward seems to prioritise his own mental resources, he was suggesting the involvement of subject experts for informed debate in macro level curriculum making. This resonates with the characteristics of autonomous reflexivity, which is to prefer expert advice if supplementing required. Nevertheless, we argue that some of the characteristics of meta-reflexivity could be observed in his transcripts as well through his evaluations of internal deliberations.

'I'm still not sure how I would know if I am successfully engaged. I try to negotiate a difficult line between school curricular structure, time constraints, the needs of the pupils and assessment and tracking demands. It's a contested area and extremely difficult to service all stake holders.'
(Edward, Scotland)

Edward appears to feel responsible for his personal choices and actions; while he thinks the key to potential success in curriculum making is providing opportunities to reach the potential of CfE and being listened and trusted, he tends to be more task-oriented.

Meta-reflexivity

There are four participants who exhibit meta-reflexivity in this research. Deciding one to be able to illustrate the common characteristics of this modality has been difficult, as they all show strong features. Nevertheless, one case is selected, as it has the potential to reflect the most of the common attributes.

Amy is a senior leader of a secondary school in rural Scotland, with 21 years of experience including in English schools, as with Henry. She underlines right from the beginning that she loves her job, because she has the chance to potentially 'change the world for the better'. This key mantra of meta-reflexivity will be explored more.

Macro level decision making was one of her concerns related to curriculum, as she thinks they are often based on political ideas, rather than on teachers or other experts planning strategically. She constantly stated that her decisions are 'absolutely driven by values and students' needs'. This is a typical characteristic of those who practise meta-reflexivity, as they tend to be values-oriented (Archer, 2007). However, this does not mean that they are always successful achieving their goals. For instance, Lisa mentioned how staffing and continuous change from the SQA and government inhibits her from living up to ideal. This is where the phenomenon of being 'embattle[d] with structural limitations' arose (Archer, 2007, p.302).

In the flexibility discussion, where everybody contributed to the forum from various perspectives, she underlined the importance of 'equity', while supporting the idea of having a voice on 'how' and 'when' questions in the curriculum. She also mentioned about adding 'equity' to 'Curriculum for Excellence', while questioning whether the first 10 years of CfE have managed to foster equity. It could be observed that Lisa's aspirations on the curriculum making focused predominantly on equity.

She also emphasized the significance of access to good research and giving time for teachers to enable them to make the curriculum. As an individual who practises meta-reflexivity, she showed some insights about self-examination (Archer, 2007), especially on how score tests/exams are not adequate, and therefore she proposed something else:

'Assessment of wellbeing, assessments which take account of added value rather than just standardised exam-measurable success, assessments of soft skills like co-operation and listening skills, empathy. Skills for learning, life and work which we say we value but then struggle to assess so give up on again.'

Fractured Reflexivity

There is only one person who exhibits fractured reflexivity in this research, whilst being also one of the most (inter)active participants.

Kevin is a teacher with 30 years of experience in Science, Chemistry and Biology. He is very interested in integrating research within his own practice and he reads quite widely (journal articles, social media, blogs, etc.) to help students' learn. Therefore, he does not like being told to use methodologies (i.e. learning styles) with no basis in research. He explained his feeling about CfE as:

'My experience of CFE is one of bewilderment, fog, loss and a feeling of abandonment by leaders... They thought up a "brilliant education experience", but thought that vision trumped pragmatism, resources, planning and capacity to deliver.'

It appears that his internal conversations served to intensify his personal distress, which often left him unable to direct purposeful actions to solve his problems (Archer, 2007). One exception where he felt able to direct his actions was adjusting assessments in Broad General Education, but he can not do the same for high stakes material, as it could be moderated. This shows the influence of structural factors.

He seemed to be very knowledgeable about the policy and curriculum documents, which he thinks lacks coherence. As such, he quoted from different sources (for example the self-evaluation framework *How Good Is Our School?*³) to illustrate how 'policy compliance' educational decisions weaken teachers and give them a sense of powerlessness.

'One could also argue that '3.1.4 Have high expectations of all learners' seems uncontested yet it leads on to a professional action of 'ensure learning tasks are varied, differentiated and devised to build confidence and promote progress of all learners, providing effective support and challenge' which extols differentiation and the use of a myriad of tasks that are impossible to plan for in a working week.'

³ Supplementary information is available here

(https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/frameworks_selfevaluation/frwk2_nihedithgios/frwk2_hgios4.pdf)

It was observed that his deliberations can go round in circles, and this often leads to anger and negativity, which renders him unable to mediate his ideas to develop consistent actions. He concluded that teachers have lost the artistry of curriculum development.

Discussion and Implications

The data illustrate the significance of context and the specific time period where teachers act, when looking at teacher mediation in curriculum making. We suggest that Archer's (2007; 2012) modes of reflexivity provide a useful lens to explore how teachers navigate their ways through curriculum, while emphasizing their context dependent, non-deterministic and multi-faceted nature. Nevertheless, it gives opportunity to explore insights on how teachers make sense of and take decisions about the curriculum, even partially.

Those who practise communicative reflexivity tend to create opportunities to get support and clear guidance from internal and external sources; interestingly, all such participants were from Wales. This potentially shows the tendency for these teachers to fulfil their needs for more clear and tangible guidance to navigate their ways. It is also perhaps linked to the contextual factors in Wales, as the co-construction phase of the curriculum is still on-going. This process could be further improved by providing fully inclusive support and clear expectations to prevent potential tendency to protect the status quo.

One individual, who tended to exhibit autonomous reflexivity, illustrates that having a clear sense of what he can control, being task oriented and finding opportunities to create potential success appear to be key characteristics of this modality. We do not deny other factors which may contribute his way of mediating curriculum making practices, such as his previous experiences in SQA where he actively constructed the curriculum. On the contrary, we would argue that these experiences may be influential on the development of his current dominant mode of reflexivity, as he takes responsibility for his own actions. In such cases, people may need more incentives to continue for further development (Brew et. al., 2017).

Our data suggest that the meta-reflexivity as a dominant mode and relational mode was the most common among the participants. Most of the participants state that they would make their decisions based on their values, yet the structural and cultural factors (e.g. lack of time and resources) inhibit this process. Nevertheless, establishing equity for all and emphasizing value-oriented decisions have been the prominent features as these teachers navigate their way through the curriculum. Brew et. al. (2017) suggest that these people could be the most helpful ones in terms of policy implementation. We would argue that this may require adequate support mechanisms and constructive environments, which appear to be missing in most of the participants' cases. Viewed in this way, the smooth transition from policy intentions to engaging with practical implementation could be further elaborated providing constructive support mechanisms.

Fractured reflexivity presents other ways of mediating (or not) curriculum making practices. Our one case suggests that overcomplicating things and constant critique may lead to negativity and often to non-purposeful actions. We are clear that he has a great deal of knowledge on the relevant areas of research and policy, but this seems to intensify his distress, which in turn affects his way of navigation.

Conclusion

We posit that the reflexivity theory of Archer (2007; 2012) provides a useful lens to explore what drives particular responses, in terms of different ways of mediating curriculum making practices. This is significant, because teachers' own sense making and decision making processes, linked to curriculum, still require further research.

This research makes an original contribution to the field of curriculum studies, by illustrating how a more nuanced exploration can be achieved by applying the modes of reflexivity. At this point, we consider the need more further elaboration of these modes as they are complex matters. We concur with a picture of curriculum making as an interconnected web (Priestley & Philppou, 2018) of various factors, which influence each other in specific contexts at specific times. We therefore suggest that curriculum making practices can be understood, at least partially, in relation to different modes of reflexivity. Further research is needed to substantiate these arguments and provide richer picture of this complex web.

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