RESEARCH ARTICLE

Curricular justice and contemporary schooling: Towards a rich, common curriculum for all students

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Abstract

Despite the commitment by governments and educational leaders to high-quality and high-equity systems, the defining features of contemporary schooling in Australia and elsewhere are increasing inequality and the uneven distribution of educational opportunities and outcomes. Therefore, it is timely to consider what the concept of curricular justice means for schooling in the twenty-first century. This paper argues for a rich, common curriculum that provides all young people with learning choices that have relevance to their worlds, contribute to the preparation for work or further education, alongside opportunities for engagement with a broader knowledge base connected to critical understandings of culture and society. We contend that a knowledge + plus curriculum is one that is committed to the tripartite social justice principles of redistribution, recognition and representation, which brings together powerful knowledge and young people's community funds of knowledge in a common curriculum. Such a common curriculum is essential for a common schooling, which can deliver on the promise of a high-quality and high-equity education system for all young people.

Keywords Curricular justice · Redistribution · Recognition · Representation

Introduction

In this paper, we develop a set of propositions for a socially just curriculum for schooling in the twenty-first century. In the current Australian curriculum landscape that prioritises neoliberal policy articulations of 'excellence' and 'equity' (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2022; Council of Australian Governments, 2019; Reid, 2019), there is an ambivalence towards social justice, which has instead become a by-product of the provision of 'quality' curriculum to all young people. For example, Brennan and Zipin (2018) have argued that the Australian Curriculum attempts to engage with redistributive notions of curriculum through common curriculum standards and outcomes without engaging with the necessary social justice politics of recognition and representation. As such, the attempt to redistribute

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powerful knowledge (i.e. the official disciplinary curriculum, which is selected from socially and culturally bound knowledge systems) to all students is an impoverished act of social justice when it is presented uncritically without the required recognition and representation of marginalised young people's values, knowledge, and participation in decision-making processes (Reid, 2019). Given that young people are facing a future of enormous uncertainty and crisis in a complex and dangerous world (Riddle, 2022), it is timely to consider how curriculum can work to open up the possibilities for more democratic, sustainable, inclusive, and generative ways of being and learning in schools. In doing so, more authentic formations of educational excellence and equity could be articulated, which place young people at the centre of schooling.

The effects of globalised education policymaking can be observed in the persistent trend to standardise and exert centralised control over curriculum in the name of student achievement and equity and also to ensure the economic competitiveness of young people in the global employment market (Savage & O'Connor, 2015). For example, the most recent agreement on the goals of Australian schooling, the *Mparntwe Declaration* (Council of Australian Governments, 2019) states that 'improving educational outcomes for all young Australians is central to the nation's social and
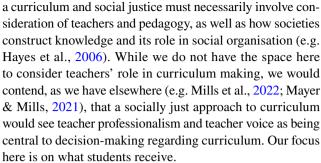
economic prosperity' (p. 4). Indeed, schooling has become 'almost completely integrated into national economic life' (Teese & Polesel, 2013, p. 1). It is unsurprising that the Australian Curriculum (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2022) focuses on neoliberalised articulations of excellence and global competition, alongside the reinforcement of disciplinary knowledge, given its particular expression of globalised education policymaking (Lingard, 2018; Lingard & McGregor, 2014). This effect can be observed in the ways in which curriculum policy has been mobilised globally to achieve social and economic goals within a globalised policy landscape (Priestley & Philippou, 2018), which often come at the expense of engaging young people in meaningful curriculum that links to their lives, hopes, and aspirations.

What sets schools apart from other social institutions is that their primary concern is 'to provide all their students with access to knowledge' (Young, 2014, p. 8). This prompts the questions: *which* knowledge and *whose* knowledge is provided in schools and why? Although there is not enough space in this paper to deeply engage in debates about the epistemological theories of knowledge within curriculum, such questions are absolutely central to the task of educating young people in schools in ways that take a commitment to socially just curriculum as a serious starting point. As such, this paper seeks to open up the conversation by considering possible responses to the question: what types of approaches facilitate the construction and delivery of a rich and meaningful curriculum for all students, which is deeply contextualised and committed to redistributive, recognitive, and representative justice?

Curriculum and social justice

Luke et al. (2013) argued that curriculum involves 'the sum total of resources—intellectual and scientific, cognitive and linguistic, textbook and adjunct resources and materials, official and unofficial—that are brought together' (p. 10) in educational contexts. To this, we might add Teese and Polesel's (2013) claim that 'curriculum is a system of production, consuming physical and symbolic resources and producing outcomes in the form of access to jobs, careers, and further education' (pp. 12–13). As a social practice, curriculum making occurs at multiple levels and sites (e.g. within schools and at district, state, and national levels) and involves the development of curriculum content, theories of student learning and knowledge, policies, practices, resources, and schooling infrastructure (Priestley et al., 2021). It is important to remember that teachers are curriculum workers (Connell, 1985; Reid, 1999), in which the design and implementation of curriculum cannot be separated from the pedagogical and other work of teachers in their daily practices. Therefore, attending to questions about

a curriculum and social justice must necessarily involve consideration of teachers and pedagogy, as well as how societies construct knowledge and its role in social organisation (e.g. Hayes et al., 2006). While we do not have the space here to consider teachers' role in curriculum making, we would contend, as we have elsewhere (e.g. Mills et al., 2022; Mayer & Mills, 2021), that a socially just approach to curriculum would see teacher professionalism and teacher voice as being central to decision-making regarding curriculum. Our focus here is on what students receive.

Curriculum has a long history of being a vehicle for the reproduction of the social order and a means by which ruling groups in society have maintained their privilege and status (Connell, 1993; Kemmis, 1986). However, it needs not be so. Indeed, as Hattam and Smyth (2015) argued in their problematisation of 'reproduction theory', such a perspective can deny the 'critical capacities' of students. So, too, does it ignore the critical capacities of teachers. This is not to suggest that the curriculum is neutral. In spite of evidence of curricula actively working as part of social reproduction, there is a persistence to the myth of curriculum neutrality, in which 'considerations of the *justice* of social life are progressively depoliticised and made into supposedly neutral puzzles that can be solved by the accumulation of neutral empirical facts (Apple, 2004, p. 7). Similarly, schools and teachers are assumed to engage in politically neutral activity. Yet, they are institutions and practices heavily steeped in the reproduction of culture and social norms, values, and behaviours. Indeed, the selective tradition (Williams, 1965) of determining curriculum from the 'best which has been thought and said' (Arnold, 2006, p. 5) has long privileged the traditional culture of elites, working 'to maintain existing social arrangements and their attendant inequalities and injustices' (Whitty, 1985, p. 173). This is why critical interrogations of curriculum are important, because they expose the ways in which social power is accorded through curriculum, questioning how education stratifies and sifts young people in ways that 'give the illusion of democracy' (Arnot, 2006, p. 20).

Structural inequalities in society become embedded within a curriculum, which can serve the function of encouraging young people to accept the status quo of social and economic inequality (Clark, 2006) as being part of the natural order rather than something that is socially and historically constructed. It is well understood that 'curriculum plays into social difference and inequality not just by "who gets what" but by what students learn to understand about themselves and others from the curriculum' (Yates, 2013, p. 48). Thus, the task becomes one of attempting to determine how a socially just curriculum might engage young people in developing a critical understanding of social and economic structures so that they may set about changing them. It is critical that young people understand the ways in which cultural and economic power is dialectically linked to

knowledge (Apple, 2004) to better understand how their own grasp of such knowledge can work to shape new, different, more socially just futures.

Following the massification of secondary schooling in the second half of the twentieth century, the close relationship between schooling and the state has become an important consideration regarding how society organises its institutional, discursive, and cultural fabric. Schooling and society have become mutually constitutive, forming a dialectical relationship (Kemmis, 1986), especially in terms of sustaining existing socioeconomic hierarchies. The dual function of schooling 'to teach or develop young people in particular ways and to select and sort them' (Yates, 2013, p. 39) has become a significant problem in the twenty-first century, given the rapid advances in communications technologies, globalisation, and the effects of climate change and increasing social and economic inequality, which has flow-on effects for schooling. While we are cautious to not simply conflate a curriculum with schooling (Green, 2021), we are cognisant that curriculum is a core aspect of contemporary schooling and cannot be disentangled from questions about how schools operate as public social institutions. As Pinar (2004) explained:

> If public education is the education of the public, then public education is, by definition, a political, psychosocial, fundamentally intellectual reconstruction of self and society, a process in which educators occupy public and private spaces in-between the academic disciplines and the state (and problems) of mass culture, between intellectual development and social engagement, between erudition and everyday life. (p. 15)

In order to create a socially just curriculum, attention has to be paid to 'curricular justice' as a process. Connell (1993, pp. 43–48) outlined three principles of curricular justice: (1) being designed with the interests of the least advantaged in mind; (2) ensuring participation and common schooling; and (3) understanding the historical production of equality.

Drawing on Rawls' theory of justice, Connell argued that, for a curriculum to be just, it needs to be developed in ways that contribute most to the needs and interests of the least advantaged in society (see, also, Apple, 2004). Such a curriculum requires a deliberate response to issues of marginalisation, exploitation, powerlessness, colonialism, and violence within schooling institutions, their policies and practices to contribute more fully to the project of social justice (Gewirtz, 1998). Questions of distribution (i.e. who gets what kind of curriculum), recognition (i.e. the valuing of different peoples, cultures, histories, and knowledge systems within the curriculum), and representation (i.e. listening and responding to the voices of those affected by curriculum decisions) are intimately bound up with questions about fairness, advantage, access, equity, and inclusion

in schooling (McLeod & Yates, 2006). Thus, for Connell, curricular justice means taking the standpoint of the least advantaged:

> The 'standpoint of the least advantaged' means, concretely, that we think though economic issues from the standpoint of the poor, not of the rich. We think through gender arrangements from the standpoint of women. We think through race relations and land questions from the standpoint of Indigenous people. We think through the questions of sexuality from the standpoint of gay people. And so on. (Connell, 1993, p. 43)

We are concerned with how curricular justice is influenced by competing equity discourses (see, for example, Edgar, 2022) and the problem that not all school students engage with high-quality curriculum despite the claims made in policy documents by education departments and schools. As one example of how competing social justice discourses in curriculum come into play, differentiated curriculum can be argued as undermining equity (e.g. vocational and low-stakes curriculum offerings) or as achieving equity through targeted curriculum options for different students' interests and capacities (Collins & Yates, 2011). Is it enough to create separate vocational pathways for some students while continuing to base the structures, policies, and practices of schooling on the production of particular academic outcomes that are geared towards university entrance? We would suggest not and agree with Connell (193, p. 44) that 'social justice is not satisfied by curriculum ghettos'. We contend that curricular justice requires attention to the following sociopolitical goals outlined by Nieto and Bode (2017):

> Tackling inequality and promoting access to an equal education
> Raising the achievement of all students through meaningful learning that provides with an equitable and high-quality education
> Providing students with an apprenticeship in the opportunity to become critical and productive members of a democratic society. (p. 6)

These goals align with Connell's notion of participation and common schooling as a key principle of curricular justice.

Pursuing common schooling as a matter of social justice is, however, hindered by differing understandings of social justice. In their analyses of historical curriculum reform across Australia between 1975 and 2005, Collins and Yates (2011) identified three differing approaches to social justice and a curriculum. In the first instance, New South Wales adopted an 'equality of opportunity approach' that saw schools retain academic subjects for all students (albeit with

differing levels of difficulty) and vocational subjects being the prerogative of Technical and Further Education colleges. In the second approach to social justice, Queensland along with the Australian Capital Territory was identified as taking a progressive perspective, which sought to disrupt hierarchical forms of knowledge, giving equal value to academic and vocational forms of knowledge. The third approach, evident at times in South Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania, had a focus on minority group outcomes, their representation in the curriculum, and ensuring that students had a common curriculum (sometimes referred to as 'essential learnings'). These different curriculum approaches to equity concerns demonstrate that social justice and curriculum are complex matters, and that there are a multitude of possible curriculum responses to the question of how to provide all young people with high-quality and high-equity educational opportunities.

Many young people who become disengaged from school are forced to occupy lower-streamed classrooms, delivering less-challenging curricula and/or purely vocational subjects or are required to attend off-site education sites specifically constructed for low-achieving or 'misbehaving' students. Haberman (1991) referred to this as being a 'pedagogy of poverty', which is characterised by low expectations and a low-stakes, directive curriculum. We have confronted these issues of curricular justice and equity in our work on alternative forms of schooling (e.g. McGregor et al., 2017; Mills & McGregor, 2014; Mills et al., 2016; Riddle & Cleaver, 2017). In particular, we have argued that students are best served by a rich, common curriculum (Mills et al., 2022) rather than being segregated or siphoned off to other alternative learning programmes and schools. When an impoverished curriculum based on low expectations is provided to students in place of meaningful, high-quality opportunities for connecting young people to their learning, 'there is a serious injustice in making education central to life chances without making access and outcomes available to all' (Brennan & Zipin, 2018, p. 180).

The provision of a rich, common curriculum for all students is, thus, an act of social justice (Connell, 1992). When we refer to a 'rich, common curriculum', we do not mean an identical curriculum delivery for all students at all times but rather that there are common elements to curriculum, in which 'young people engage with important disciplinary concepts, are intellectually challenged, and enabled to critically frame knowledge, which is connected to their lives and experiences while also drawing on broader cultural and social meaning-making practices' (Mills et al., 2022, p. 350). A rich, common curriculum is committed to both enriching individuals and their lives, as well as developing the skills, knowledge, and critical capacities to enrich communities and society more broadly. If the aim is truly to provide young people with a high-quality, high-equity school system, there must be 'parity of participation' (Fraser, 2010, p. 16) for all young people in the economic, cultural, and political life of

society, and by extension, the life of schools and curriculum experiences.

A rich, common curriculum based on the tripartite principles of social justice—redistribution, recognition, and representation (Fraser, 2004)—would combine 'key canonical knowledge *and* the vernacular culture of the learners' communities' (Wrigley, 2018, p. 4). In doing so, the problem of finding the time and space to address issues of concern to young people, their lives, and communities can be embedded into the curriculum (Brennan et al., 2022). A socially just curriculum would also engage with 'racial, ethnic, and economic justice; political empowerment; respect for gender fluidity and queer rights; inclusion of neurodiversity; and the workings of power in society' (Gibson et al., 2022, p. 10). Within such an approach, the arguments over knowledge in the curriculum become largely redundant, as the curriculum becomes a knowledge-rich also knowledge + plus approach to engaging young people in rich knowledge-making practices together in classrooms.

Before we move on to elaborate on our understandings of a rich, common curriculum, we want to briefly address Connell's third principle. Connell notes a tension between the principle of a common curriculum and pursuing the interests of specific groups. As Connell argues, 'we must find a way to think these criteria *together*' (original emphasis) (p. 47). This thinking of these two criteria together requires an understanding of the historical production of equality and how 'equality' and 'inequality' shift according to the times. One can think here of the rise of 'Islamophobia' in many countries in the Global North since the events in New York in September 2021 and how differing understandings of social justice have been influenced by an increasing attention on issues of 'intersectionality' (see, for example, Crenshaw, 1991). While we do not explore this principle in greater depth here, it is clear that following this principle means curricular justice is never a completed project, but that one requires constant reflection on and adaptation of the curriculum.

Knowledge and the curriculum

Within a rich, common curriculum, all young people engage with important disciplinary concepts, are intellectually challenged, and produce critically framed knowledge that can be applied to multiple contexts. Importantly, a rich, common curriculum does not mean an identical curriculum. A rich, common curriculum needs to be redistributive (i.e. providing all with access to powerful knowledge), recognitive (i.e. reflecting and valuing the lives of learners), and representational (i.e. incorporating opportunities for co-construction by all involved in the teaching–learning transaction) to be just (Fraser, 1997). As such, centrally produced curricular resources that provide scripted lessons and 'heat-and-serve'

resources are unlikely to effectively meet social justice outcomes for learners. Despite this fact, there is a perennial urge by politicians and neoliberal think tanks to propose the development of centralised curriculum, including lesson banks, as the solution to addressing teachers' work intensification and to provide all young people with the 'same' curriculum. We argue that this misses the central point of a rich, common curriculum, which is deeply embedded in the local contexts of schools and classrooms, which teachers are able to connect to the lives and communities of the young people whom they teach. There needs to be curriculum adaptability at the school and class levels and even at the level of the individual student for teachers to contextualise learning for young people. This is especially important for young people who have traditionally been marginalised and excluded from the mainstream curriculum.

Shalem and Allais (2019) argued that the polarisation of debates about knowledge-based curriculum and pluralised, locally contextualised curriculum can be unhelpful in the binary treatment of knowledge within curriculum. They suggested that 'the point of social justice is about recognising contestations and pluralism in knowledge' (Shalem & Allais, 2019, p. 145). We agree that there does not need to be a polarity between proponents of powerful knowledge and those who subscribe to pluralities of knowledge and understanding. Instead, a socially just curriculum can attend both to epistemological questions of truth and knowledge while also addressing ontological dilemmas within a curriculum that is simultaneously common, while also deeply contextualised. This is what we refer to as a knowledge + plus curriculum. A focus on 'bringing knowledge back in' (Young, 2008) should not come at the expense of foregrounding young people, their lifeworlds, and experiences as being the central concern of schooling (Wrigley, 2018). There is room for both.

When considering the role of knowledge within a rich, common curriculum, we are reminded of Connell's (1992) claim that 'education is a social process in which the "how much" cannot be separated from the "what". There is an inescapable link between distribution and content' (p. 136). In other words, the knowledge-building work of curriculum is a central part of the social justice work of curriculum. The social realist view (see Moore, 2014) considers the provision of powerful knowledge to young people to be unproblematic because such essential knowledge transcends the social and historical conditions of its production. This contrasts with approaches that draw on students' lifeworlds, 'funds of knowledge' (Moll, 2019), or other forms of social knowledge building in the curriculum, which are dismissed as being too relativist. To address the tensions between knowledge essentialism and relativism, Scott (2014) proposed a set of principles from which curriculum could be developed: acknowledging the social dimension of knowledge

construction; understanding the development of knowledge as a historical process; recognising that curriculum is not simple representation of facts; avoiding the essentialisation of knowledge; and understanding the discourses and conceptual frameworks that contextualise knowledge claims. Each of these principles could inform a knowledge + plus curriculum for social justice, which positions young people at the centre of their own learning.

While we agree with Kelly's (2004) argument that, 'if justice and fairness are to be attained and the ideal of education for all achieved, all pupils should have access to the same areas or bodies of knowledge and learning—a common curriculum' (p. 196), we also hold as absolutely essential to the commitment of social justice that teachers have the freedom to work with their students and communities on shaping curriculum that is contextualised, meaningful, and transformative (Reid, 1999). Therein lies the fundamental tension that must be balanced between enabling a rich diversity of experiences and opportunities, as well as providing access to particular forms of knowledge in the classroom. The following comments from Zipin and Brennan (2021) come to mind in this situation:

> No knowledge is simply 'best for all', un-vexed by valuations that are partial, not universal. Thus, the question of what knowledge should be selected for curriculum always should raise further questions of whose knowledge, and how decided, calling for dialogic response-ability, as a crucial capacity of ethical responsibility to hear and care what others value as curriculum purposes. Can we do justice in deciding what knowledge students and teachers work with, unless attending seriously to questions of whose valued knowledge and purposes are included? And since groups affected by curriculum knowledge activity— who therefore deserve inclusion in such decisions—are multiple, with diverse cultural histories, questions of how curriculum decisions should be reached across diverse groups loom large. (p. 174)

These are important considerations. In a knowledge + plus curriculum for social justice, how are student lifeworlds, community funds of knowledge, and pluralistic forms of cultural and social capital recognised and represented in the knowledge-building community of the school? At the same time, how are young people provided with the linguistic, discursive, and cultural repertoires of powerful knowledge to enable them to fully participate in the democratic, social, and economic life of society, without setting particular forms of knowledge against others? Kelly (2004) considered these issues in terms of the social injustice in limiting young people's curriculum experiences to their own cultural knowledge while also recognising the social injustice in a pluralistic curriculum that acquiesces to the unequal opportunities

for young elites versus an 'education in obedience' (White, 1968) for others, which is a 'curriculum of inequality' (Shipman, 1971). We contend that a knowledge + plus curriculum deliberately seeks to avoid the exclusionary act of segregated curricula through the provision of a rich, common curriculum that is able to be enacted in a plurality of ways, which are meaningful and connected to the lives and contexts of particular communities, schools, classrooms, and students.

Towards a rich and meaningful curriculum for all

There are several premises that underpin the social justice implications of a rich, common curriculum. These include the assumptions that we need an education system with broad purposes—committed to benefiting society and individual well-being beyond academic outcomes—and that a rich socially just curriculum is central to that. The work of Fraser (2010) can help to suggest what this curriculum might look like. For Fraser (2010), 'justice requires social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life. Overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalised obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others as full partners in social interaction' (p. 16). Inhibiting this parity of participation is economic, cultural, and political injustices. Such injustices are brought about through an unequal distribution or resources and social goods by various forms of discrimination and through the denial of a voice in key decisions impacting upon one's life. Their remedies require redistributive, recognitive, and representational approaches to social justice.

Curricular justice has a redistributive element, in which powerful knowledge and knowledge of the powerful (Young, 2008) are meaningfully rendered as part of the knowledge-building community of the school. Additionally, curricular justice is premised on a principle of recognition of young people's cultural and social experiences, community funds of knowledge, and individual lifeworlds. Further, curricular justice depends on representation of young people in the curriculum through negotiated encounters of learning in rich, experiential ways. Green (2021) referred to the dynamic process of curriculum unfolding in educational encounters as a powerful negotiation of curriculum. Such a curriculum belongs to the kind of common school described by Fielding and Moss (2011), which they argued would be built on plurality and diversity, the creation of new knowledge and a profound respect for others. A common high-quality curriculum that is meaningful to young people then would regard 'redistribution', 'recognition', and 'representation' as central concerns of curricular justice. In so doing, it would draw on and build upon the background knowledges of the students and their communities; it would acknowledge the ways in which culture shapes worldviews, and it would make connections to the world beyond the classroom—often through

the use of problem-based assessment and real-world, authentic learning experiences.

Elsewhere, we have argued that young people, regardless of their behaviour, perceived abilities, and life circumstances, would be better served by remaining in the mainstream schooling sector rather than being filtered off into flexi-schools or other forms of alternative, second-chance schooling, which conveniently allow mainstream schooling to abrogate its responsibilities to marginalised and disenfranchised students (McGregor & Mills, 2012; Moffatt & Riddle, 2021). A similar logic can be applied to curriculum, in which all students would be better served by engaging with a rich, common curriculum rather than being directed towards low-level, low-demand curriculum options that serve little purpose beyond keeping young people busy during school time (Kelly, 2004; Pinar, 2004).

By bringing together the work of education scholars such as Connell (1993), Young (2008), Fielding and Moss (2011), and Brennan and Zipin (2018), alongside social justice theorists such as Fraser (2004, 2010), it is possible to envisage a curriculum for young people that connects to their worlds, provides them with access to 'big ideas' and critical thinking, and assists them in determining their own life pathways. These scholars recognise the inequality that currently exists among and within schools that perpetuates a general inequality in society as a whole. They agree that the answer lies in finding ways to connect young people to many forms of knowledge without imposing artificial limitations upon segments of the school population. Brennan (2022) cautioned about the inadequacy and danger of a static view of knowledge that is unable to engage with contemporary crises, arguing that curriculum needs to 'ask new questions, produce new knowledge, and make new connections across different kinds of knowledge relevant to problems for social and planetary futures. Curriculum must become reoriented and repurposed for a present-into-futures focus rather than tied only to past knowledge' (p. 86). This is a strength of a rich, common curriculum, which builds upon the critical and creative capacities of young people to imagine how things might be otherwise. Therefore, a socially just curriculum must necessarily be counter-hegemonic in its ethic and its construction.

Connell's (1992, 1993) proposed three principles for a counter-hegemonic curricular justice will work to reconstruct the mainstream: through universal participation and common schooling; by serving the interests of the least advantaged; and through a commitment to the radical production of equality. An equal, common, and public curriculum is also a democratic curriculum (Ashenden et al., 1984). Indeed, as Reid and Thomson (2003) explained, 'curriculum is both constructed by and helps to construct the form, nature, and extent of Australian democracy. This tangled relationship between curriculum and democracy means that curriculum cannot be understood in isolation from the political, economic, social, and cultural conditions in which it is produced and practised' (p. xiv). Importantly, democracy in the curriculum needs to move beyond the simple reduction

to representative forms of parliamentary democracy, which is the usual treatment in curriculum texts produced by government departments (Green, 2021). A democratic curriculum is inherently equal and common in its purposes and treatment of young people and their rich set of diverse capacities and experiences.

Given the complexities of the twenty-first century and the complex set of crises facing young people as they move through the world (Riddle, 2022), it is imperative that we develop new concepts of curriculum, which are committed to providing young people with the best chance of success, especially for those who have been most marginalised by society's economic, social, and cultural structures. We contend that a knowledge + plus approach to curriculum is essential, in which the knowledge of powerful groups and discourses are matched with the embracing of diverse and plural ways of being and knowing, drawing on the lifeworlds of young people and their communities, to engage in careful critique of how language, practices, and systems work in the world. We are mindful of Connell's (1992) argument that curriculum should always aim to open up possibilities to help young people's capacities to remake the world. As such, a common curriculum is essential for common schooling, which then supports the commitment to a social commons, in which the world can be remade in collectively sustainable ways. Further, as Connell (1993) argued, equality is not 'static', it is in constant state of change and being produced in response to differing contexts and events, globally, nationally, and locally. As such a knowledge + plus curriculum is not one that can remain static, but one that requires teachers to have the professional freedom to pursue a curriculum that responds to both the local and the global from the perspective of the least advantaged.

Declarations

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Ethics Approval This paper does not draw on research conducted with humans or animals.

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