BCTF Research Report

October 2019

"Navigating" transformation:

Education 2030, teachers' unions, and spaces of resistance

In May 2019, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) hosted a one-day seminar entitled *Questioning the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Education 2030 Program*. The seminar provided a space to critically explore the Education 2030 program and the general approach to global standards through international tests. Seminar participants then attended the *OECD Education 2030 9th Informal Working Group meeting and B.C. Education Conference*, hosted by the BC Ministry of Education in Vancouver.

This publication is a collection of reflections on these two events by teachers, union leaders and academics. Taken together, the papers disrupt efforts to position BC as an exemplar of the type of reform promoted by the OECD. The strength of BC's education system is incompatible with proscriptive and standardized approaches to *what* is taught within schools and *how* teaching happens. These papers are a call to action to teachers' unions to collectively defend public education and resist neoliberal education policies.

Teri Mooring
President, British Columbia Teachers' Federation
October 2019

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Education 2030, teachers' unions, and spaces of resistance

Foreword,

Joel Westheimer, University of Ottawa

After reading through this timely publication, I am struck by both a sense of urgency and déjà vu. As the analysis by the researchers and practitioners in the pages that follow suggest, the recent efforts of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to reform education globally reflects a turning point in the OECD's approach from an exclusive focus on assessment and accountability to reforming curriculum and classroom practice as well. But while this emphasis may be new for the staff and report writers of the OECD's Directorate of Education, those familiar with the history of education policymaking will recognize echoes of reforms past. As this report from the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) outlines, the launch of the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* as part of the *OECD Education 2030 9th Informal Working Group meeting and B.C. Education Conference* this past May in Vancouver, represents an effort to not only map the destination in the form of "global competencies" but also increase its influence on the curricular pathways used to get there.

While this ambitious effort to make students "Future Ready" is laudable, it reflects a long-standing tradition of policy makers—often far-removed from the classroom—to define the goals of school and then to attempt to develop targets and measures to make those goals, as Sam Sellar observes in the pages that follow, "actionable in school contexts." Certainly, the OECD acknowledges the complexity of these efforts and has framed the construct of "global competency" in broad terms. The difficulty, of course, will come downstream as these definitions and constructs are mobilized as policy imperatives and targets implemented at the national, district, and school level.

What teacher or school leader does not already want students to be competent?

The new direction also exposes a familiar fuzziness about the causes and consequences of educational underperformance and levers for improvement. As I reflect specifically on the OECD Global Competency Framework and the direction it signals in the *OECD Learning Compass 2030*, I wonder "What teacher or school leader does not already want students to be competent?" I intend this question not as sarcasm but as a reminder that the world of policy makers is increasingly distant from the day-to-day realities of classrooms. As the authors of this report from the BCTF suggest, while the conditions of teaching and learning have increasingly made it difficult to meet the growing complexity of education in diverse settings, policy makers seem more concerned

with mobilizing public opinion around ambiguous and ever-changing notions of accountability and efficiency driven by the need for economic austerity.

None of us should be surprised, then, when Canadian educators question the OECD's diagnosis of what ails education (a lack of accountability and direction) and their vision of what new directions for reform will help. I have rarely met a teacher in British Columbia or anywhere who didn't feel accountable to their students, parents, and the community. I have rarely met a teacher who felt empowered by an appeal to accomplish more with less. I know of no school leaders or district personnel who wander school hallways concerned not with the increasing poverty and difficult life circumstances of some of their students but rather with a lack of direction or motivation among teachers that could be corrected if only they had the right compass.

While the conditions of teaching and learning have increasingly made it difficult to meet the growing complexity of education in diverse settings, policy makers seem more concerned with mobilizing public opinion around ambiguous and ever-changing notions of accountability and efficiency driven by the need for economic austerity.

The OECD, as its acronym implies, is an organization that views global challenges through the lens of economics and the market toolbox of incentives, optimizations, and efficiencies. This is a framework well-suited to critically examine rapidly increasing economic inequality, diminishing global democracy, increasingly precarious labour, and the geographic dislocation that results from all that. But educators have too often seen global commissions beyond their reach jauntily vault over those intractable realities of an economic system ill-suited to benefit the vast majority of the world's peoples. Instead, when it comes to schooling, the OECD and corporate partners in the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM, as former World Bank education specialist Pasi Sahlberg calls it) prefer accountability targets, assessment rankings, and now a reform compass as the levers for school improvement efforts. This report goes a long way in explaining the tensions inherent in that vision of school reform.

As the essays enclosed suggest, the efforts to define global competence in the 2018 administration of PISA is fraught with challenges both technical and ethical. And this is but one of many issues that need to be addressed by Education 2030 moving forward:

- Will the directions set out by *Education 2030* and the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* provide orientation or prescription?
- How, if at all, does Education 2030 inform what to teach and how to teach—and who gets to decide?
- Who will measure *what* and *for whom*?

Most importantly, how might all of those interested in the future of education worldwide help local, provincial, federal, and global policymakers keep their eyes on the prize: policies that will best support—rather than "hold accountable"—teachers who enter their classrooms every day hoping to improve the lives of their students and who face enormous obstacles wrought by social, economic, and political forces beyond their control?

Ultimately, threading through this publication, and the questions it invites us to consider, is the broader democratic imperative that we all need to participate in the deliberations around the purposes and problems of education reform and whose vision of the future will be articulated and mobilized in shaping the policies and practices that result. For this reason, I applaud the BCTF for its leadership in preparing this publication and share in their hope that this will mobilize communities to ensure that the integrity of public education remains at the core of any reform program.

Joel Westheimer

Joel Westheimer is University Research Chair in Democracy and Education at the University of Ottawa and education columnist for CBC Radio's Ottawa Morning and Ontario Today shows.

The Vancouver Conference: Spaces and places of resistance

In May 2019, the Organization for Economic and Co-operative Development (OECD), in partnership with the British Columbia (BC) Ministry of Education, brought education stakeholders from around the world to Vancouver, BC, for the *OECD Education 2030 9th Informal Working Group meeting and B.C. Education Conference*. At the center of the conference was the launch of the *OECD Learning Compass 2030*, a "future-oriented framework for learning" that aims to create "a common language and understanding about broad education goals" around the world.[1]

Ahead of this conference, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) organized a seminar to critically explore the Education 2030 program and the general approach to global standards through international tests. Through presentations and discussions focused on the OECD program, and looking specifically at the BC curriculum, participants questioned efforts to position BC as an exemplar of the type of reform promoted by the OECD.

The papers in this report were written by academics, union staff, and teachers who participated in both the BCTF seminar and the joint OECD/BC Ministry of Education Conference. By thinking across these spaces, the papers work to question a "global" agenda and ask about the effects of a policy logic whereby the "local" has no choice but to adapt or be left behind in the global race towards well-being. How can we disrupt the narrative being told about *who* students and teachers are, *what* they need to know, and how teaching and learning happen? How can we challenge the assumptions behind this narrative? How can we mobilize and support local knowledges and processes? How can we build solidarity amongst teachers nationally and internationally to speak back to emerging spaces of global governance?

The papers in this collection work to question a "global" agenda and ask about the effects of a policy logic whereby the "local" has no choice but to adapt or be left behind in the global race towards well-being.

The first paper, by Sam Sellers, positions the OECD Education 2030 Project within the broader OECD aim to influence educational policy. The second paper, by Andrée Gacoin, provides an example of this influence in the context of BC. At the same time, it draws on teacher perspectives and experiences to speak back to simplistic narratives of educational reform. Following these introductory papers, the next two papers were written by teachers who are also members of the BCTF's Professional Issues Advisory Committee. In these papers, Tom Kertes

[1] See *www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/*, accessed September 16, 2019

and Jo Atkinson-Cornthwaite engage with the OECD agenda through their experiences in the classroom and the implications that they see for teaching and learning in BC. The fifth paper, by J-C Couture, widens the focus to engage the implications of Education 2030 with a broader Canadian perspective and narratives of the "future" that are at play, concluding with three strategic questions to guide action. Finally, the concluding thoughts by Larry Kuehn, a longstanding observer of BC's reform efforts, are a reminder of the impacts of neoliberal governance policies on teachers around the world, and how the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* is embedded in colonial histories and their ongoing legacies.

Taken together, the papers are an invitation into a conversation about how we can work collectively to resist the standardization of what is taught in the interests of global capital and the attendant de-professionalization of teaching and precarious working conditions that are increasingly a daily reality for teachers in classrooms around the world.

Questioning the OECD agenda

Education 2030: The next chapter in the OECD's education agenda,

Sam Sellar, Manchester Metropolitan University

Introduction

The task of the psychoanalyst, Adam Phillips (2007) tells us, is to attend "to what falls out of… [the patient's] pockets once he starts speaking" (p. xi). This strategy is also applicable to critical policy analysis because policy writers work hard to control their text and its interpretation, but things still escape. The aim of this paper is to examine the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) new Education 2030 initiative, making the OECD a patient of sorts. Education 2030 aims to shape national curricula and it does so at a time when policymakers, researchers and teacher associations are questioning the expansion of the OECD's role in education. The first sentence of the Education 2030 position paper explains that the OECD is producing a new learning framework to "offer a vision and some underlying principles for the future of education systems" (OECD, 2018, p.3). The second sentence immediately provides a caveat: "It is about orientation, not prescription" (OECD 2018, p.3). As we can see, things start falling out very quickly. I will argue that this caveat, particularly the distinction between orientation and prescription, provides an insight into the changing nature of the OECD's education work and the context for this new initiative.

The OECD established its influence in global education policy with its measurement work and its reviews of education systems. The OECD provides comparative data on the operation and outcomes of education systems for policy makers, and this focus has drawn attention away from curricula. In 2010, leading curriculum theorists, Lyn Yates and Michael Young (2010), suggested that the OECD's role in the globalization of education had privileged assessment over curriculum, endorsing Karseth and Sivesind's (2010) claim that "organisations like OECD advocate a new political technology where formalised curriculum-making is ignored or even contested in favour of assessment and accountability systems" (p. 104).

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The OECD is now seeking to increase its influence on curriculum. Education 2030 aims to update the organisations earlier work on competencies, the project Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo), and to make it actionable in school contexts. Reflecting on

DeSeCo, which was completed in 2003, the former project director observed that countries, schools, and teachers had difficulty translating the competencies into classrooms (Rychen, 2016). The OECD has designed the Education 2030 competencies with the intention "that teachers and school leaders can better incorporate them into curricula" (OECD, 2018, p. 6).

This paper will briefly survey the development of the OECD's education work and the mechanisms through which the OECD can influence education policy within nations. I will then discuss the new Education 2030 initiative and raise some critical questions based on previous experiences with DeSeCo and other analyses of the OECD's education work.

The OECD and the Directorate for Education and Skills

The OECD was established in 1961 from the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), which administered Marshall Plan funding for the post-war reconstruction of Europe. The organisation inherited significant features from the OEEC, including the committee structure that brings together representatives from member governments and secretariat staff, and the peer review process that was used to scrutinize ambit claims on funding. The OECD aims to promote economic growth, economic expansion, and world trade. This mission was initially shaped by the politics of the Cold War, but since 1990 it has become increasingly focused on producing evidence to support economic and social policy globally.

There was debate about the organisational structure of the OECD during its establishment. Britain wanted a traditional intergovernmental organization, while France and the US wanted a supranational body that would have more power over members. The British won out, and the OECD's intergovernmental structure has ultimately underpinned its success, particularly the processes through which member nations review each others' policies. Carol and Kellow (2011) argue that "the involvement of peers [other members] in the conduct of a review means that it involves equals, rather than a superior body that will hand down judgement or prescribe punishment" (p.31). The OECD was designed to provide orientation, not prescription, and tensions emerge when members feel that the organization is trying to lead policymakers by the nose.

Education has not always been an important policy area for the OECD. The Directorate for Education was established in 2002 following the

shift in organizational approach after the Cold War and the success of its educational measurement projects in the 1990s. In 2012, the Directorate was rebranded as part of a new organisation-wide skills strategy that reflected the increased importance of education to economic policy and the ubiquity of a human capital framing of education. The Directorate for Education and Skills (DfES) produces reviews of education systems and measures and compares the educational outcomes and skills of people in member and non-member nations.

The data produced by the DfES are widely used by other Directorates and its influence within the organisation has grown. Importantly, the DfES is allocated a relatively small fixed budget and relies on "soft funding" allocated to specific projects. As a result, the DfES has had to be very innovative and responsive to sustain their growth and it has produced successful and influential "products" like PISA. The DfES has to keep expanding its influence in order to sustain its growth, for example by expanding current programmes or developing new ones. The desire to have a greater influence on curriculum should be understood in this organisational context.

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The OECD's role in the global governance of education

The OECD seldom uses legal instruments to bind members to a particular course of action. Rather, the organisation helps to establish and sustain a global policy community and in which it exerts peer-pressure to create converging dispositions among policymakers. It also produces, in cooperation with other agencies, a global testing infrastructure that enables the measurement and comparison of educational performance within nations and systems. The reports of these findings often garner considerable media attention. The OECD thus shapes policy within member and non-member nations through a form of "soft power" by shaping the values and knowledge that inform policy development.

Education policy makers now frequently seek to adopt and adapt policy from "reference societies." Reinhard Bendix (1978) argued that "reference societies" are produced "whenever intellectual leaders and an educated public react to the values and institutions of another country with ideas and actions that pertain to their own country" (p. 292). Policy makers may use examples from other systems to legitimize action that is more closely linked to their own domestic political agendas, rather than faithfully borrowing policy as enacted elsewhere. As Waldow (2017) has noted, debates about the merits of

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policies within reference societies often say more about the "projector" than the "screen." The OECD's work has contributed to the creation of new reference societies in education and has encouraged policy makers to look abroad for ideas and to justify their own agendas.

DeSeCo and Education 2030

The original DeSeCo project was established in 1997 and was designed to complement the OECD's measurement work, particularly the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). DeSeCo identified three main key competencies: interacting in socially heterogeneous groups, acting autonomously, and using tools interactively. Rychen and Salganik (2003) explain that one outcome of DeSeCo was to help "focus and make more productive future initiatives related to key competencies, most significantly the development of a comprehensive strategy for data collection and analysis" (p. 5). While DeSeCo was characterised as providing "valuable input to discussions of policies and programs for enhancing key competencies" (Rychen & Salganik, 2003, p.5), its support for the OECD's measurement work was given precedence.

The OECD describes Education 2030 as "DeSeCo 2.0" and it follows a similar model. Education 2030 is also a response to more recent global challenges that threaten economic growth and social well-being, including environmental crises and the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), which promises to transform production and the skills that people will need. Education 2030 identifies three new key competencies for our current moment: creating new value; reconciling tensions and dilemmas; taking responsibility (OECD, 2018).

A crucial difference between DeSeCo and Education 2030 is the emphasis on "orientation," and the project has produced a "learning compass" that provides a visual representation of the framework. Education 2030 emphasises sharing examples and the OECD aims to encourage "students, teachers, school leaders, and parents to share practices and experiences as concrete examples of using the OECD Learning Compass 2030" (OECD, 2018). While DeSeCo primarily informed the OECD's other education programmes, Education 2030 aims to have a more direct effect on curriculum development and enactment. This shift in focus, coupled with the OECD's anxiety about being perceived as overreaching its mandate, lies behind the claim that the program is about orientation, not prescription.

The similarities between DeSeCo and Education 2030 enable us to learn from experiences with the former. Takayama (2013) has identified two major concerns with school curricula that focus on competencies and the influence of the OECD's competency work. Firstly, people develop competencies like "responsibility" from a young age and in many different social contexts, including interactions with their parents. Focusing on competence rather than performance in school contexts can produce less explicit modes of pedagogy and bias the curriculum towards young people who bring desired competencies to school with them. The competence approach, writes Takayama, can "naturalize the (re)production of educational inequalities, because it constructs them as a result of emotional, psychological and social 'deficiencies' of underperforming children and their families" (p. 78).

Education 2030 is currently exploring a long list of more than 30 potential competencies that could be measured, including constructs like hope and spiritual identity. People develop these traits across their lives and schools are only one, perhaps relatively minor, social space that can shape their development. This is Takayama's (2013) second concern. Following Basil Bernstein, he argues that emphasis on competencies can place schools in the position of compensating for society by requiring them to develop traits that are more properly the domain of lifelong learning.

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Many of the traits being explored by the OECD presuppose a Pollyanna-ish conception of human wellbeing that elides the importance of emotions like anger and sadness (Ahmed, 2010) and is clearly grounded in some cultural worlds and not others. Finally, the expansion of domains that are measured by the OECD can spread resources too thinly and reduce the quality of the assessment (Schneider, 2019). For example, recent efforts to measure "global competence" in PISA 2018 failed to garner support from many nations.

Conclusion

Education 2030 seeks to expand the OECD's education work into curriculum development and enactment. Some will perceive that Education 2030 oversteps the organisation's mandate as an intergovernmental organisation and creates more risks than benefits. The OECD appears to be conscious of these critiques and proactively sought to address them with the claim about orientation versus prescription. The Education 2030 initiative raises a number of critical questions regarding the risks and potential for perverse outcomes from this project. Can the OECD sustain the distinction between

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orientation and prescription? Will examples of "best practice" in actioning the competencies create new reference societies for curriculum development? Can the long list of competencies included in the position paper be clearly defined and measured? What will be the implications for pedagogy, assessment and accountability?

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Navigating the global "transformation" of education, *Andrée Gacoin, British Columbia Teachers' Federation*

Over the course of three days in May 2019, the Ministry of Education showcased British Columbia's education system to a global audience at the *OECD Education 2030 9th Informal Working Group meeting and B.C. Education Conference*. Focusing on quantitative measures of success, such as graduation rates and scores on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), BC was celebrated as a success story of 21st century "transformation" and an exemplar for countries around the world. This included BC's "approach and outcomes," "new curriculum" and focus on "Indigenous learning" (Ministry of Education, 2019).

There is much to celebrate in education in BC. However, the "success" of BC cannot not be captured fully in quantitative measures, any more so than "transformation" can be mapped in a linear narrative of educational progress. Indeed, the exemplar of BC raises crucial questions about, rather than answers to, the landscape of global "transformation" that the OECD is promoting.

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Educational "transformation" in BC

Since 2010, the province of British Columbia has been in a "process to transform education in BC" (BC Ministry of Education, 2013b). While there have been many changes to curriculum in BC over time, this is the first time that the curriculum has been revised at all grade levels and subject areas at the same time. Furthermore, the curricular revision is only one of many educational initiatives that were initiated by then Minister Abbott. These include reviewing and/or changing graduation requirements, the Provincial Student Assessment Program, and reporting regulations; encouraging technology use in classrooms; implementing a new electronic student database system; and heavily promoting particular pedagogical approaches which, while not new, were outside of the ministry's usual scope of responsibilities.

While multiple factors certainly shaped the Ministry's vision for "transformation,"[1] a case study produced by the Global Education Leaders' Program (GELP) points to the importance of discussions that

[1] According to a Ministry email cited in a 2012 news article, "There isn't one moment in time when the research began, or research started with one specific organization—this has been an ongoing process. The ministry is always reviewing new and exemplary practices in B.C. and other jurisdictions across Canada and around the world that support students" (Hyslop, 2012).

began at the 2009 International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI), held in Vancouver. One of the presenters was Valerie Hannon[2], who was also a speaker at the 2019 OECD event and serves as an expert advisor to the Education 2030 project[3]. According to the case study, her presentation "struck a cord with the BC Ministry" and "a series of high level meetings took place which resulted in a radical vision for transforming education in British Columbia" (Global Education Leaders' Program, n.d., p. 1). Another key influence on the vision to "modernize" the curriculum, according to a 2018 interview with Rod Allen, was John Abbott, the director of the 21st Century Learning Initiative[4] (Tucker, 2018). In 2011, this vision solidified in BC's Education Plan as a "more nimble and flexible [education system] that can adapt more quickly to better meet the needs of 21st century learners" (BC Ministry of Education, n.d.-b). Despite sustained critiques by educators and pedagogical experts that the paradigm of 21st century learning has been strongly influenced by corporate interests and may be in tension with the fundamental values and goals of public education (e.g. Ehrcke, 2013; Hyslop, 2012; O'Neill, 2010), this paradigm has served as a rallying call for the vision of educational transformation in BC. As stated in the Ministry's introduction to the revised curriculum, this vision centers on "education for the 21st century," and "one focus for this transformation is a curriculum that enables and supports increasingly personalized learning, through quality teaching and learning, flexibility and choice, and high standards" (BC Ministry of Education, 2015).

When initial curriculum redevelopment work began in 2011–2012 the BCTF, facing government's "net zero" bargaining mandate and restrictive legislation, was in Phase 1 job action.[5] In a letter from November of that year, Susan Lambert, then the president of the BCTF, requested that the Ministry "extend its work timelines to acknowledge the constraints of job action on teacher involvement in the development of, and in response to, drafts and proposals for new directions in education."[6] The Ministry responded that they were "not able to delay the timelines for the completion of this work"[7]

[2] Hannon is a co-founder of the UK-based Innovation Unit (*www.innovationunit.org/*) and a founding member and co-chair of the Global Education Leaders Partnership (gelponline.org/).

[3] See *www.innovationunit.org/people/valeriehannon/*

[4] See: *www.21learn.org/staff/john-abbott/*

[5] The documents presented in this paragraph directly contradict Rod Allen's claim (in Tucker, 2018) that work on the curriculum progressed with union involvement from 2012–2013.

[6] BCTF Records: Letter from Susan Lambert to George Abbott, November 21, 2011.

[7] BCTF Records: Letter from George Abbott to Susan Lambert, December 2, 2011.

and proceeded to form a Curriculum and Assessment Framework Advisory Group to consider curriculum structure, design and delivery as well as assessment and reporting.[8] Other work during this time, that proceeded without BCTF involvement, included "research to gather current thinking from around the world about: global trends in curriculum design [and] how students learn and develop generally and in specific discipline areas," consulting with "provincial educators, academic experts, and subject-area specialists" (BC Ministry of Education, n.d.-c), and working with researchers to develop "draft working definitions of the cross-curricular competencies [now called "core competencies"]" (BC Ministry of Education, 2013a). Consultation also included a series of 12 regional working sessions that were organized through the BC School Superintendents' Association (BC Ministry of Education, 2012). The overall result were "guiding principles for the future development of provincial curriculum" as well as a "curriculum prototype with five design elements" (BC Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 3). The Ministry summarized this phase of curriculum development in a document entitled "Enabling Innovation: Transforming Curriculum and Assessment" (BC Ministry of Education, 2012).

With the BCTF still in job action, the Ministry's next step was, in the summer and fall of 2012, to convene "teams of educators and academics" to "provide advice to the Ministry of Education on the proposed structure of the new provincial curriculum in a number of subject areas" (BC Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 5). These subject areas were titled: Arts Education, English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Health and Career Education and Physical Education. These teams "discussed a conceptualisation for each area of learning and identified goals, rationale, and skills and competencies for the subject" (p. 7). They also "identified potential areas of focus and topics for each grade level" (p. 7). The resulting "draft prototypes had features that were written and interpreted differently from subject to subject" (p. 7). While the Ministry recognized these differences as part of the "unique nature of each area of learning," the differences were also a "potential barrier for planning cross curricular units and activities" and necessitated "a common approach that applies to all curricula" (p. 7). The Ministry identified this approach as what is now called the *know-do-understand* model of curriculum.[9]

[8] BCTF Records: Letter from Rod Allen to Susan Lambert, "Curriculum and Assessment Framework Advisory Group," November 15, 2011.

[9] See *curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/Know-Do-Understand.pdf*

In 2013, with the BCTF no longer in job action, the Ministry began to convene teams of teachers to revise the curriculum. These teams were set up by learning area and grade grouping (mainly K–9 and 10–12 levels).[10] Broadly, teams met through May 2018. The K–9 curriculum was implemented in the 2016–17 school year. Grade 10 was implemented in 2018–19 and Grades 11 and 12 are being implemented in 2019–20. To date, the K–9 reporting order (which is being revised by the Ministry, not curriculum teams) is still in a pilot phase and there are no planned changes to the 10–12 reporting order.

The BCTF is conducting a five-year research project, *Living Curriculum Change*, that aims to develop a unique, in-depth and contextualized exploration of contemporary curriculum change from the perspectives of teachers.

The teacher perspectives and experiences that have been shared to date can be used to question the Education 2030 project as it seeks to influence *what* is taught, and *how*, at a national and/or provincial level.

Navigating "transformation": Teacher perspectives on curriculum change

In 2017, the BCTF began a five-year research project, *Living Curriculum Change*, that aims to develop a unique, in-depth and contextualized exploration of contemporary curriculum change from the perspectives of teachers. This includes deepening our understanding of the state of curriculum change around the province; positioning this moment of curriculum change within the broader political and historical contexts; engaging members in a conversation on curriculum change as an ongoing process; and building our understanding of key elements of a flexible, adaptable and fully resourced implementation process. The project is based on the view that curriculum is a contested, relational and situational practice (Chambers, 2012; Kanu, 2012; Pinar, 2015). Curriculum change, in turn, refers to both explicit and implicit shifts within a historical moment as to *what* is taught as well as *how* teaching happens. Methods have included surveys,[11] semi-structured interviews,[12] and historical and policy analysis.[13] The teacher perspectives and experiences that have been shared to date can be used to question the Education 2030 project as it seeks to influence

[10] In 2013, the Ministry convened teams in English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Arts Education, Math, Health and Physical Education for K–10. In November 2014, teams were convened for K–9 and 10–12 across most subject areas. In 2015, the Ministry convened Applied Skills, Design and Technology (ADST) and Career Education teams. Sources from BCTF records: Letter from Rod Allen to Susan Lambert, "Provincial Curriculum Development," February 8, 2013; Letter from Rod Allen to Jim Iker, "Provincial Curriculum Development," November 13, 2014.

[11] See: 2017 BCTF Curriculum Change and Implementation Survey (*www.bctf.ca/CurriculumSurvey/*); Digital Reporting Tools: A survey of members (*bctf.ca/publications/ResearchReports.aspx?id=47062*); Working on the frontline of education: Full-day kindergarten working and learning survey (*bctf.ca/frontline/*).

[12] See: The politics of curriculum making: Understanding the possibilities for and limitations to a "teacher-led" curriculum in British Columbia (*bctf.ca/publications/ResearchReports.aspx?id=50685*)

[13] See: BC's New Curriculum (*www.bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/HistoryMuseum/Collections/HistoryArticles/CurriculumTimeline.pdf*); Educational technologies and teacher autonomy (*bctf.ca/publications/ResearchReports.aspx?id=50534*)

what is taught, and *how*, at a national and/or provincial level. This can be seen in four key areas: (1) a shift to curriculum and pedagogy, (2) engaging with Indigenous knowledges, (3) the "core competencies," and (4) curricular implementation.

A shift to curriculum and pedagogy

Within BC, the Ministry has the mandate to set curriculum, but teachers have autonomy over their pedagogical decisions in the classroom. While it is not new that the Ministry would promote particular pedagogical approaches, there has been a conflation between "curriculum change" and "pedagogical change" that has led to substantial confusion among teachers and the broader public. While some of this confusion can be linked to substantial change-over between different ministers of education and deputy ministers since 2010, each of whom have had a different approach and understanding of the curriculum change process, the conflation can also be understood as an effect of the curricular model that the Ministry has mandated.

When BC teachers began work within curriculum teams, they were told they were able to "start from nothing" (teacher interview in Gacoin, 2018). However, in subsequent meetings it became clear across the teams that the Ministry had already decided on a curricular framework. While some teachers on these teams felt they never really knew where the framework came from, a teacher on the Core French team said they were told it was at least partly based on *Transitioning to concept-based curriculum and instruction: How to bring together content and process together* by US-based educational consultants H. Lynn Erickson and Lois A. Lanning (2014). Team members were told that this framework was "in place" and their work had to "fit within that particular frame" (teacher interviews in Gacoin, 2018). Crucially, the model of "concept-based curriculum" is predicated on a teacher taking up "concept-based instruction" (Erickson & Fanning, 2014, p. 59), and teachers working on the curriculum recognized that for the curriculum "to work well there needs to be a shift in pedagogy" (teacher interview in Gacoin, 2018). While many teachers may find that this approach meets the needs of their students, the key point here is that any model of curriculum change that is reliant on a particular pedagogical approach is in direct tension with a teacher's right to professional autonomy.[14] Furthermore, the coupling of curriculum and pedagogy means that "successfully" implementing curriculum necessitates teaching in a particular way.

[14] The BCTF defines professional autonomy as a teacher's right to exercise their judgment and act on it. See: *bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation.aspx?id=29583*

How might curricular change may function to restrict teacher autonomy and ultimately tie teacher evaluation to teaching in the "right" way?

This raises questions as to how curricular change may function to restrict teacher autonomy and ultimately tie teacher evaluation to teaching in the "right" way.

Engaging with Indigenous Knowledges

While teachers on the curriculum development teams were broadly supportive of engaging with Indigenous knowledges, they also expressed strong concerns that the work within the teams was uneven and tokenistic at times.

Another area of tension within the BC experience is how curriculum change has engaged with Indigenous knowledges. While much of the curriculum is not "new," the focus on integrating Indigenous knowledges and perspectives in a "meaningful and authentic manner" is (BC Ministry of Education, n.d.-a). As stated by the Ministry, this is a shift from curriculum "*about* Aboriginal *people*" to engaging with "how Aboriginal *perspectives and understandings* help us learn about the world and how they have contributed to a stronger society" (p. 1, emphasis original). The BCTF strongly supports the infusion of Indigenous content and perspectives throughout the K–12 curriculum.[15] However there are substantial concerns as to how this work has unfolded. For one, while teachers on the curriculum development teams were broadly supportive of engaging with Indigenous knowledges, they also expressed strong concerns that the work within the teams was uneven and tokenistic at times. For instance, while a teacher on the English Language Arts and Science teams described in-depth and sustained discussions on what it meant to bring Indigenous knowledges into the curriculum, a member on the Applied Design, Skills, and Technology team was concerned that " we didn't do anything with it" (teacher interviews in Gacoin, 2018). These experiences speak back to any claim that Indigenous knowledges have been infused into all subject areas and grades. This is ongoing and contested work.

Secondly, even when the curriculum has created spaces to engage with Indigenous knowledges, teachers need ongoing support for what is often new and difficult knowledge for many settler teachers. However, to date, there are inadequate resources and supports for teachers in this area. For instance, the 2019 BCTF Curriculum Change and Implementation Survey[16] found that less than half of teachers (47%) have sufficient access to localized instructional materials that they need to integrate Indigenous perspectives into the classroom (BCTF, 2019). Furthermore, only 56% of teachers are aware of local protocols

[15] See *bctf.ca/AboriginalEducation.aspx* for more about the BCTF's work in the area of Aboriginal Education.

[16] In May 2019, the BCTF conducted a random sample survey that invited members to share their experiences implementing BC's redesigned curriculum in their classrooms and schools. The survey had a response rate of 33%, giving an overall confidence of 95% +/- 7%.

for accessing, using, and interpreting Aboriginal knowledge, and only two out of five teachers (39%) feel ready and prepared to integrate Aboriginal perspectives as a part of curriculum implementation. This has raised substantial concerns as to how this work is being engaged. As one respondent to the first Curriculum Change and Implementation Survey in 2017 stated, "If we are serious about reconciliation then we have to be serious in our approach to implementation" (BCTF, 2017).

"If we are serious about reconciliation then we have to be serious in our approach to implementation."

- teacher

The "core competencies"

Globally, there has been increasing attention to psycho-social skills in education, as seen in the OECD's concept of "global competence"[17] as well as the broader paradigm of 21st century skills (e.g. C21 Canada, 2015; Global Education Leaders' Program, n.d.; O'Neill, 2010). These skills are framed as "factors that make a student better prepared for adult life as a student and/or member of the workforce and an active citizen" (Bertling, Borgonovi, & Almonte, 2016, p. 352).

BC has engaged psycho-social skills through the "core competencies" which are grouped into three areas: Communication; Thinking; and Personal and Social.[18] Many teachers have a long history of engaging these areas with children through their pedagogical practice and decisions. However, the redesigned curriculum has explicitly focused on these areas as skills that can (and should) be taught and assessed, despite ongoing debate as to how these skills are defined (e.g. Beghetto & Kaufman, 2017; Bertling et al., 2016). Furthermore, while students are expected to self-assess their core competencies, there has been an overall lack of support for teachers in implementing and supporting student self-assessment (BCTF, 2017).

A key risk for the "core competencies" is that social and emotional learning (SEL) is reduced to transmitting a set of skills centered on maintaining the status quo, rather than skills that support students to critically engage with structures of power and privilege.

A key risk for the "core competencies" is that social and emotional learning (SEL) is reduced to transmitting a set of skills centered on maintaining the status quo, rather than skills that support students to critically engage with structures of power and privilege. This is already playing out in critiques of social and emotional learning that have questioned the extent to which skills, such as self-regulation to be "calm," is about the needs of the child or about easier classroom management (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2018). Furthermore, these skills potentially mobilize power-laden definitions of who children are. For instance, a recent analysis of "grit" as a universal "skill" argues that framing grit as an object to teach transforms students' "inner thoughts"

[17] See www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2018-global-competence.htm

[18] See *curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies*

into something to be managed according to an implicit "cultural thesis about the 'right' kind of child" (Kirchgasler, 2018, p. 710). This object is given the appearance of being "neutral" as it is transformed into quantifiable global measures, such as those assessed by the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).[19] Problematically, measuring and assessing "well-being," an increasing focus for SEL both in Canada and globally (e.g. Blad, 2018; Krachman, LaRocca, & Gabrieli, 2018; Shanker, 2014), may further contribute to the "ill-being" that high-stakes testing has on teachers and students (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2018).

Curricular implementation

Since "transformation" began, the BCTF has been advocating for adequate time, resources and money to support curriculum change.

Since "transformation" began, the BCTF has been advocating for adequate time, resources and money to support curriculum change. For instance, in 2013, the then president of the BCTF, Jim Iker, sent a letter to the Ministry to raise "issues of concern" that arose during the initial curriculum team meetings:

> Our members report that when the subject of implementation has come up in the curriculum meetings, members have been told that it is not their mandate, rather it is only to write the curriculum. There is concern among members that there will be no funding available to support implementation.[20]

Implementation was consistently framed as separate from curriculum development in multiple domains, including assessment and reporting, professional development, and resources.

Interviews with curriculum team members reinforced these concerns and illustrated how implementation was consistently framed as separate from curriculum development in multiple domains, including assessment and reporting, professional development, and resources (Gacoin, 2018). In 2019, the mandate is to implement the full K–12 curriculum but there is still completely insufficient funding for curriculum change. Furthermore, assessment and reporting have been framed as a separate "phase" of education transformation, which has led to substantial frustration and confusion around the province (BCTF, 2017). More broadly, the curriculum is being implemented in educational systems and structures that do not necessarily supports its demands. For example, does the time-tabling within secondary schools support "inquiry" projects that are interdisciplinary? How do personalization and flexibility fit with graduation requirements that have changed very little and must be responsive to the expectations of post-secondary institutions?

[19] See: *www.oecd.org/pisa/*

[20] BCTF records: Letter from Jim Iker to Peter Fassbender, July 3, 2013.

Rather than engage with these questions, the "transformation" of education in BC has treated curriculum development as something separate from the incredibly complex landscape of public education within the province. The risk is then that "teacher-led" can become "blame the teacher," as one member of the English Language Arts team said:

> I mean, the paranoid conspiracy theorist in me is that we just—you know, this is, like, they gave it to us, like, when it doesn't work, we're gonna go back to an IRP, because we needed "experts" to tell us how to teach. *We* are the experts, we do know this. So, I hope that it doesn't *fail* (teacher interview in Gacoin, 2018).

The "transformation" of education in BC has treated curriculum development as something separate from the incredibly complex landscape of public education within the province.

Getting lost on the journey to "well-being" 2030

Alongside celebrating BC's education system, the OECD event in Vancouver launched a "learning compass."[21] This compass "defines the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that learners need to fulfil their potential and contribute to the well-being of their communities and planet" (OECD, n.d.). Re-deploying colonial tropes of discovery and conquest, the "learning compass" charts what the OECD believes education should be around the world. This is a global "common-sense" of what (and who) counts in education.

Re-deploying colonial tropes of discovery and conquest, the "learning compass" charts what the OECD believes education should be around the world. This is a global "common-sense" of what (and who) counts in education.

Rather than an exemplar of a journey that has been charted and completed, the BC example raises multiple questions as to whether this linear and supposedly uncomplicated journey to "well-being 2030" is even possible. What happens to pedagogical autonomy when a curricular model is premised on a particular pedagogical approach? How might the "infusion" of Indigenous knowledges be a colonizing, rather than a de-colonizing, move? How might psycho-social skills become "new spaces of global governance" (Kirchgasler, 2018) for students and teachers? Who is held responsible for the failures of "transformation" when the funding for public education is woefully inadequate?

Proponents of Education 2030, and the OECD agenda more broadly, often answer these questions with reference to the "local context." They grapple with questions such as how to translate curricular guidance and assessment measures, or how to make concepts culturally relevant. What is left out in these discussions is whether

[21] See *www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/*

What is left out in these discussions is whether there should even be a global mandate on *what* is taught and *how* in the first place.

there should even be a global mandate on *what* is taught and *how* in the first place. What values are erased when education is rationalized by the demands of global knowledge economies? Whose interests are served by the de-professionalization of the teaching profession? What knowledges are privileged through the underlying imperialist cultural assumptions and expectations?

To engage these questions, we may need to get lost on the journey to "well-being 2030." Rather than frame our work through charts that have been made for us, we should work in solidarity with teachers around the world who are already navigating the complex spaces between local lives, national policies, and global agendas.

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Why the OECD's education agenda matters to students, communities, and teachers in British Columbia, *Tom Kertes, Teacher in Prince Rupert, BC*

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a transnational organization comprised mostly of the richest countries in the world, recently came to British Columbia to hold a conference on educational policy and to unveil its model of a "learning compass" for the world's students. The conference brought together hundreds of delegates from across the globe, including many local delegates, for a bird's eye view into the organization's agenda for public education. Attended by Premier Horgan and Minister Fleming, along with other policy makers at all levels of public education, the conference provided a rare chance to view a side-by-side comparison of the government's vision and the OECD's vision.

The OECD, known for ranking countries by educational performance using its Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test, has its own global agenda for education. This agenda includes standardizing educational outcomes, a vision clearly reflected by how the OECD attempts to measure and compare educational systems of different countries. Standardized measurements promote standardized approaches, which can result in damaging consequences for local schools and their communities. No matter how well-intentioned (or utopian) of a vision that the OECD may have for the world's children, standards at the global level must be stripped of cultural contexts—simply because that is the only way for any set of standards to function at this level.

No matter how well-intentioned (or utopian) of a vision that the OECD may have for the world's children, standards at the global level must be stripped of cultural contexts—simply because that is the only way for any set of standards to function at this level.

That's a shame, especially given the actual diversity of the world's cultures. This diversity is far more valuable than any stripped-down approximation of education. Educational measurements, at the global scale, can either be stripped down to the most rudimentary of outcomes or they must narrowly privilege one set of cultural norms above all others. Either way, such measurements will miss most of what's really happening in the world's schools. Stripped back measurements result in a lessoning of standards, to the lowest common denominator. Privileging certain cultural values over all others devalues most of the world's cultures and is oppressive.

It should be no wonder then, given the OECD's interest in influencing educational policy, that part of the British Columbia conference included the launching of a new "compass" framework to guide how teaching and learning are understood. The new framework, launched

to an audience that included superintendents and principals from across the province, follows the OECD pattern of both de-contextualizing educational policy and imposing a single global agenda onto all children. In British Columbia, this framework makes little sense, especially for education that must be grounded in the Indigenous knowledges and experiences of each First Nation for it to be relevant to—and respectful of—our shared histories. As we strive to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students, and to enhance the teachings of traditional and contemporary Indigenous perspectives for all students, a global compass is of no good. Not only is the OECD's "compass" framework metaphorically colonial, especially when it was launched with reference to explorers who used the compass to guide their ships to new lands, but it is also incompatible with reconciliation.

Reconciling the contradiction between colonial violence with liberal idealism requires ending colonialism.

Reconciliation requires more than looking back at the past or apologizing for the wrong doings of the Indian Residential School System. It also requires more than closing the graduation gap for First Nations and other Indigenous students. Reconciling the contradiction between colonial violence with liberal idealism requires ending colonialism. We must therefore go to the roots of the problem. This means that beyond providing equitable access to public education and supporting each student with the resources required to achieve the high standards that they can exceed, reconciliation requires transforming our schools to reflect the teachings of the land itself, as known by the keepers of this knowledge—the cultural legacies of the First Nations and other Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia. A "learning compass" framework, built somewhere else by the OECD for some other purpose, cannot contain this knowledge. We have nothing to gain by adopting the approaches contained in the OECD's "learning compass" framework.

The OECD model has already taken root in the minds of many of our province's educational leaders.

But despite communities and students in British Columbia having nothing to gain from the OECD's "compass" framework, the Ministry is heavily invested in what it has to offer. Unfortunately, the Ministry has already internalized the OECD's vision of a standardized approach to education, an approach that is centred more on corporate values and ideas (such as flexibility or adaptability) than on core values of public education.[1] There's a good chance that your school district's superintendent or other administrators are already familiar with the language, ideas, and implications embedded within the OECD's vision for education. That's because the OECD model has already taken root in the minds of many of our province's educational leaders.

[1] See, for example, the BC Charter for Public Education: *bctf.ca/history/rooms/BuildingOurProfession2003.aspx*

Much of the OECD's vision is grounded in the language it uses to describe teaching, learning, and education. For example, rather than call education "education," the OECD model relies instead on the notion of a "learning system." Far from a mere semantic distinction, the difference between an education system and a learning system is actually quite a lot. That's because, paradoxically, a learning system is an idea that is both much bigger and much smaller than is the idea of an education system. Education includes lots of learning, but its aims are much more than just learning. At its heart, education is about relationships. Relationships between people, within communities, amongst ideas, and with ourselves and the land itself. The aim of education is to know, through the production of knowledge, and to be human.

The way that the OECD presents the "learning system" of its compass model is quite expansive at the same time as it is instrumental. That's because the model expands the notion of learning from cognitive learning to include social emotional learning as well. This way of thinking about education, as a system of learning made up of different kinds of learning components, opens up the possibility to spilt up these learning domains into different instructional modalities. The OECD calls these modalities "competencies," a language that has already made its way into the provincial curriculum. But here's the catch: Throughout all of the OECD's presentations at the Vancouver conference an explicit pitch was made. That pitch was to replace teachers and schools with artificial intelligence and computers. Rather than provide students with an education system in whole, the OECD proposes to break its system into various learning modules. Some of these modules can be taught with computers (such as reading and mathematics). Other modules (such as caring and social development) can be taught with humans (for now). In the OECD learning system, the cognitive domain is for computers, freeing up the learning system's educators (not necessarily teachers) to focus on the social-emotional module.

Throughout all of the OECD's presentations at the Vancouver conference an explicit pitch was made. That pitch was to replace teachers and schools with artificial intelligence and computers.

Much of the OECD's presentation at the Vancouver Conference came across as more sales pitch than detailed policy development. We were told that, given the uncertain future presented by changing times, innovation is needed. Since artificial intelligence and other computer programs threaten to create mass unemployment, policy makers should use computers to train students in the cognitive competences, freeing up educators to just focus on the social emotional competences. The OECD's "learning compass" framework is organized in ways that makes this division of labour, between human carers and computer teachers, easier to see. At the core of the compass are its foundations, which are "skills and knowledge" and "attitudes

and values." The pitch: Once computers teach skills and knowledge, such as for reading and mathematics, humans are free to focus on the attitudes and values that students will need in this new world. Some of this language, or this mindset, is already embedded into our provincial curriculum. For example, the "core competencies" are woven throughout the provincial curriculum. As "sets of intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies" the core competencies (which should not be confused with the similarly named "curricular competencies" of the various subjects and grades) organize learning, beyond what students demonstrate in terms of specific skills and understandings, into the sets of communication, thinking, and personal social. Like the "learning compass," the Core Competencies broaden education to include everything and then divide everything into categories that separate the social-emotional aspects of teaching and learning into its one domain. Public education, with its sole mandate of, quite simply, public education has no need to separate the feeling from the knowing. Teachers engage with each student, in whole, and help students develop relationships in all domains.

The OECD's agenda promotes a vision of education based on values that are incompatible with a broad mandate for public education in the province.

The OECD's agenda promotes a vision of education based on values that are incompatible with a broad mandate for public education in the province. Rather than provide an education based on local community values, traditional knowledges and ways of knowing, and sustaining the land through shared responsibility, the OECD promotes learning systems that seek to transform learners to create new value, resolve tensions and dilemmas, and exercise personal, or individual, responsibility. A broad mandate for public education calls for much more than simply creating value or promoting individualism. Yes, value creation and identity formation are important. The individual matters as much as the community. But all of our students deserve a deep, caring, critical, and rigorous education, too. The OECD model is not useful for teachers, students, and communalities in British Columbia because it is based on global notions instead of local needs. Far from providing innovative "new value" the OECD's compass framework offers little of value for our province.

The compass as a source of (dis) orientation: Why the OECD 2030 Learning Compass missed the mark,

Jo Atkinson-Cornthwaite, Teacher in Nanaimo-Ladysmith, BC

As a "BC delegate," I was curious how the two days would unfold as educational leaders from across the province made presentations "showcasing British Columbia's education system in partnership with the OECD's Education 2030 Project" (Ministry of Education, 2019). As speakers took the stage, standing against a backdrop of Haida art, I wondered what vision of education would be presented, and how this vision would meet the needs of all the students in my classroom.

Day one was made up of speeches by educational leaders in BC. John Horgan, the Premier of British Columbia, spoke of different learning needs and the importance of publicly funded healthcare. He neglected to mention publicly funded education, at the same time as he spoke of school systems providing "an adequate education"[1] for British Columbia students. He also mentioned that we [British Columbia] had the "highest quality teachers in the world." Looking around the room, primarily filled within Ministry and senior administrative staff, I wondered where these teachers' voices were represented.

Where were teachers' voices represented?

John Horgan also spoke about the "historic injustice of residential school," but I found that his words were in tension with the decorative backdrop of Haida artifacts. It seemed to be a colonial juxtaposition: cultural artifacts from local First Nations as decoration for a speech which included the mention of "historic injustice of residential school." I wondered how the use of cultural artifacts for decoration is a current injustice in and of itself.

Next, Rob Flemming, the British Columbia Minister of Education, spoke about the province's "Policy for Student Success" which, according to the Minister, "prepares students for a fast-paced and changing world." He spoke of the "quality teaching and leadership" which can be found in the province of British Columbia, as well as the importance of "investing in our schools," integrating "First Nation perspective" into the curriculum, and how "teachers and support staff" are on the frontlines of education. However, the implied imagery of a battlefield seemed paradoxical, given that he was at the conference to unveil a "learning compass" focussed on well-being.

Scott McDonald, the British Columbia Deputy Minister of Education,

[1] All quotes in this article come from the author's note taken during the event.

What does it mean to be "celebrating diversity and meeting the needs of every child in school," while at the same time framing students as data sets to be tracked and managed?

focused on data, giving the example of the Personal Education Number (PEN) in BC to "track the flow of data." As a teacher, I found it difficult to listen to someone speaking about the students of British Columbia in terms a data flow. What does it mean to be "celebrating diversity and meeting the needs of every child in school," while at the same time framing students as data sets to be tracked and managed?

The next section of the day featured a panel, speaking about the "strong history of networks" in British Columbia. This panel included Linda Halbert and Judy Kaiser with the Network of Inquiry and Indigenous Education (NOII), formerly known as the Network of Inquiry and Innovation. Given the flow of the day, I couldn't help but wonder about the meaning of the name change. I also wondered how the panel's assertion that education is "not about the numbers" was in tension with the data-driven focus of both the Ministry as well as the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). How do we define and measure "getting better?"

How can "small acts" of reconciliation be taken into account in a global framework?

Next, Melanie Mark, British Columbia's Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training spoke to the conference. Minister Mark is the foremost First Nations' woman elected to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia and subsequently the original First Nations' woman to serve in the Cabinet of British Columbia; she is a woman of Nisga'a, Gitxsan, Cree, and Ojibway ancestry. Minister Mark discussed the importance of skills: Science, Technology, the Trades, entrepreneurship, and Arts and Design, in moving the economy forward. She also mentioned to the assembly that "no act of reconciliation is too small" and that we need to be "champions for change." I wondered how these "small acts" could be taken into account in a global framework, and whether these small acts would be visible in a framework driven by Western knowledge systems.

All of these tensions, and the questions they prompted for me, culminated at the end of Day One when the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* was unveiled. Looking at the backdrop of Haida culture in this seemingly colonized lens, I began to wonder what level of certainty the compass created for First Peoples, not just in Canada but around the world. I thought about the certainty that "discovery" brought and the arrogance of a compass design. I began to wonder if we needed a compass or needed to challenge the OECD for creating a "learning compass." I left the first day of the conference with more questions than answers.

On Day two of the conference, I had the opportunity to hear Chief Edward John speak. Chief John is a Hereditary Chief of Tl'azt'en Nation

located in Northern BC. He is Grand Chief, and also Chief Justice John, from the Carrier village of Tache, along the north shore of Nak'al Bun (Stuart Lake), about 60 km from Fort St. James and he attended residential school as a child.

Chief John spoke of "better policies" leading to "better lives" for Aboriginal, First Nations and Metis youth. He affirmed that the first step to reconciliation is "knowing the truth." He spoke of "abuse and denigration" and specifically referenced "physical, emotional, and spiritual" abuse. He spoke of the "requirement to attend" residential school. Aside from the mention of abuse, the most shocking moment for me was when he mentioned that the Game Warden came to collect the children for school. This made me realize that First Nations children were appropriated the same level of respect given to wild animals. It was sickening. He stated that the school in Fort St. James was not for "Indian kids." He spoke of the "cultural genocide." However, Chief John quickly moved from truth to reconciliation by stating that "I don't want to complain, I want to find solutions."

Chief John went on to discuss graduation rates moving from 25 to 60 percent of First Nations students. He talked about 370 million indigenous people around the world and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous People. He talked about Bill C91, C92 and C260 on the Rights of Indigenous People. He talked about the importance of song and drum and ceremony. He spoke about the importance of quality education. He mentioned not being afraid to open any door, nor close any door. He spoke of the tree, and our dependence on each other. The tree being a symbol of co-dependence. He spoke to climate change and how climate change affects everyone. Chief John spoke about the green space being held by Indigenous people. He spoke of the responsibility of taking care of the land. Chief John emphasized the importance of "creating space for teachers." He asked us to remember the "teachers that reached out and supported you." He mentioned in his own life the "love, support, and patience of elders." He mentioned the importance of visible support and a "supportive workplace." The idea of teacher mentorship came into my mind.

Chief John also mentioned that he was tired after serving 11 terms over the course of a 30-year career. At the same time, Chief John stressed that we can not afford to be bitter and we need to turn to bright spaces and feed the dream. He concluded by playing the collective a video titled "Why Us?" by N'We Jinin.[2] This powerful video outlined the struggle of First Nations youth, Chief John's family, trying to reacquire culture and language and find meaning in education.

[2] Available at: *www.youtube.com/watch?v=wktfs76vM8E*

"In my culture, we do not have a compass, land is the compass."

Chief Edward John

After he spoke, I had the opportunity to ask Chief John what the idea of a compass meant in his culture. He stated that "in my culture, we do not have a compass, land is the compass."

This statement is perhaps the best summary of the OECD conference. What does it mean to celebrate Indigenous cultures at the same time as you launch a "learning compass?" What histories are being erased? How is the conversation controlled, and how is the importance of Reconciliation and Indigenous perspectives in British Columbia pushed aside? How might the OECD agenda silence meaningful conversation and Reconciliation?

Rather than engage with these questions, I left the conference feeling that the OECD had an agenda to release a lens and they needed to paint a picture for the world. They were hyper-focussed on AI (Artificial Intelligence), software and apps as the future method for student learning, implicitly eliminating the need for teachers. In doing so, they completely missed mentioning the importance of people, teachers and the role they play in humanizing the system and nurturing our students. I agree that well-being is an excellent focus; however, the greatest factor in well-being is human connection. For this teacher, eliminating human connection and teachers as part of our public education system is out of the question. The best way to ensure well-being for our youth is by modelling well-being to our students. I can assure you, as a teacher, my model in my classroom is far more nuanced, responsive and complex than what AI can ever offer. This teacher, and I would dare to say all teachers, can never be replaced by a robot when it comes to ensuring the well-being of children and youth.

Where is our educational "Magnetic North?"

Who controls the magnet that affects the *OECD Learning Compass 2030?*

Who is the cartographer for our students?

Reflecting on the "learning compass," I have remembered three things I learned during the undergraduate years as a Geography major: 1) Magnetic North is constantly shifting, 2) a strong magnet affects the accuracy of the compass, and 3) a cartographer constructs the map. Rather than finding answers at the conference, I am left with three questions: 1) Where is our educational "Magnetic North?" 2) Who controls the magnet that affects the *OECD Learning Compass 2030*? 3) Who is the cartographer for our students?

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Naming our Future - Education 2030 and the OECD 2019 Vancouver, *J-C Couture, Research Fellow, Manchester Metropolitan University*

> The bottom line is if we want to stay ahead of technological developments, we have to find and refine the qualities that are unique to our humanity - that complement not compete with our capacities that we have created with our computers. Schools need to develop first class humans not second-class robots. Education has made great strides to help us understand the world around us and even explore far away planets. It's time education helped us understand our minds and experiences. We better understand our own minds before some algorithms make them up for us. Again, *The Learning Compass* will show us the way.
>
> *Andreas Schleicher, May, 26, 2019*[1]

Perhaps this passage from the address of Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), best captured the core of the agenda for the two-day Vancouver summit of the *OECD Education 2030 9th Informal Working Group meeting and B.C. Education Conference* (May 25–26). I observed the summit and the keynote "Launch of *The Learning Compass*" within the context of a research initiative that is attempting to map the impacts of the OECD's "uses of the future" on Canadian education in the past two decades (Couture and Stiles, in press). The following outlines some of the more salient moments of the two-day gathering of the invited 400 policy makers and educators from around the world, and identifies some strategic implications for Canadian teachers, school leaders, and their organizations related to the profession's diminishing impact in curriculum design, assessment, and advocating for improved conditions of practice.

A brief history of the OECD's use of the future

Launched on the second day with considerable fanfare, the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* was the central feature of the Vancouver Summit. As Dirk Van Damme, head of the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation observed, "the Learning Compass is not prescriptive in nature; not an assessment framework; not a curriculum framework"[2]—while at the same time extolling its critical role

[1] Since the time of this writing the original presentation cited in the references is no longer available on the OECD website. The last available date was September20, 2019 with a replacement video featuring an interview currently in its place.

[2] Author notes from conference.

providing a comprehensive "learning framework" and vision for answering the question, "What knowledge, skills, attitudes and values will today's students need to thrive and shape their world" (OECD, 2018b, p.2)? Channeling the OECD's earlier work in "The Future We Want" consultations, the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* reaffirms the organization's aspirations for global educational reform:

> A fundamental goal of this work is to support evidence-based decisions on how to improve curricula, teaching, assessments and schools' responses to cultural diversity in order to prepare young people to become global citizens (OECD, 2018a, p. 6).

It is important to understand the context surrounding Education 2030 and the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* launch and how these efforts represent a nexus point for a wide range of inter-connected policies and reforms tied to curriculum and assessment, teaching practice, and school leadership. It is helpful to consider the alchemy of Schleicher's angst and sense of urgency regarding the global challenges we face, rolled into his existential global policy project where education will help us "understand our own minds."

To more fully understand the backstory leading to the Education 2030 Vancouver Summit, one might look to one of the OECD's foundational documents, *Preparing Our Youth for an Inclusive and Sustainable World*. This report indicated that in 2015, 193 countries committed to achieve the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), that offered "a shared vision of humanity that provides the missing piece of the globalisation puzzle" (OECD, 2018a, p. 2). The report goes on to conclude that:

> the extent to which that vision becomes a reality will depend on today's classrooms...This has inspired the OECD's PISA, the global yardstick for educational success, to include global competence in its metrics for quality, equity and effectiveness in education. PISA will assess global competence for the first time ever in 2018. In that regard, this framework provides its conceptual underpinning (p. 2).

However, it is important to note that it was not until recently that the OECD attempted to shift from a predominantly human capital conception of educational progress to instead wrap a global competence agenda within the blanket of the United Nations' sustainable development agenda. The OECD was a latecomer to global efforts to mobilize the SDGs and the UN development agenda,

offering an example of how the organization continues to extend its policy reach to influence educational policy making (Sjøberg, 2019, p. 19). Although there is no mention of the SDGs, global competencies/ citizenship, or sustainability in the Global Competency Framework initially published in 2016, the OECD would later claim that its Learning Framework 2030 "contributes to the UN 2030 Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs), aiming to ensure the sustainability of people, profit, planet and peace, through partnership" (OECD, 2018b, p.3, cited in Auld and Morris, 2019, p. 9). Positioning the inclusion of Global Competencies in PISA 2018 within its publication, "The Future We Want" (OECD, 2018b), attempts to create a handshake between the assessment of competencies and the UN's development work. This represents an exercise in *post hoc* rationalisation (Auld and Morris, 2019, p. 10) that seeks to justify support for the expansion and redesign of PISA 2021 announced at the Vancouver summit.

Why should attending to all of these policy machinations and nuances matter to Canadian teachers and their organizations? Historically, the OECD has mobilized PISA to generate both a "sense of crisis and appetite for reform (Sjoberg, 2019, p. 17) through "considerable effort... generating high profile media publicity as a way to capture attention" (Sjoberg, 2019, p. 21). Two decades ago, Kuehn (1999) lead researcher for the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, offered what has proven to be a prescient analysis of the OECD's proposal to develop and mobilize PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) based on indicators that reflected a narrow human capital model of educational performance. The subsequent launch of PISA in 2000 opened a floodgate of research and commentaries that has been unparalleled in education policy analysis. Today, a cursory search on Google Scholar for "OECD PISA" from 2000 to 2019 produces 13,700 relevant hits, giving some indication of both the range and volume of interest in PISA as it approaches its twentieth anniversary next year. Currently few would disagree with the analysis that PISA has become the equivalent of a "GPS or a global positioning system, that aims to tell policymakers where their education systems place in a global grid and how to move to desired destinations" (Sahlberg and Hasak, 2016). In *The Global Education Race—Taking the Measure of PISA and International Testing*, Sellar, Thompson, & Rutkowski (2017) describe how the programme continues "to represent the state of the art in educational measurement" (p. 6) yet is widely misunderstood and too-often used to justify unfounded policies and practices. Indeed, with the growing acknowledgement among researchers that "it is high time that policy-makers pushed the pause button on PISA" (Harris & Jones, 2017, p.221) one can anticipate significant challenges ahead for Education 2030 and efforts at renewal for PISA 2021.

Moving beyond the growing body of research and commentary surrounding PISA, it is evident through the growing network of policy makers and proponents of PISA, that the OECD has been successful in positioning itself not only as a forward-thing economic development think-tank and global thought-leader. More recently, the OECD has taken up futures thinking and strategic foresight as key drivers of its work. The creation in 2018 of a dedicated unit focussed on building strategic foresight capacity within the OECD bureaucracy signals this sharpened focus. This investment in futures thinking continues a long-standing effort of the OECD through a triad of roles as an ideational artist, ideational agent and ideational arbitrator in supporting the work of educational bureaucracies and ministers in navigating often conflicting and complex policy trajectories (Marcussen, 2001). Whether it is differences over the efficacy of market-driven reforms or advancing the need for state intervention, the OECD acts as a "thought-broker" by continually leveraging its status and influence by globally marketing ideas and policy trajectories.

When the OECD discovers that a set of principled ideas has gained ground among the member states, it imports these ideas and operationalizes them so that they end up taking the form of causal ideas which can be resold in the member states at a high price.

When the OECD discovers that a set of principled ideas has gained ground among the member states, it imports these ideas and operationalizes them so that they end up taking the form of causal ideas which can be resold in the member states at a high price. Credibility is gained by constantly operationalizing ideas which are already in demand among the member states and by helping member states to concretely implement diffuse ideas (Marcussen, 2001, p. 3).

Marcussen (2001) points to long list of publications ranging from "'The Battle Against Exclusion' about global social policy…'The Digital Divide: Bridging the Learning Gap' about education policy… 'Preparing Youth for the 21st Century' about labour market policy…reports that cannot possibly be contested by anybody" (p. 23), and argues that ultimately, the goal of OECD bureaucracy and its growing network of supporters is to exposit the "correct" and "good" opinion about a complex of problems. These types of reports consolidate what is at any point of time considered to be politically correct behaviour and they indirectly help to coerce member states to promote a certain legitimate discourse and sometimes even a certain concrete behaviour (p. 23).

The Vancouver Summit exemplified the OECD's roles as ideational artist, agent and arbitrator. For example, two memes work in tandem within Education 2030 to support the OECD's growing policy influence: "Leaving No One Behind" leveraged on the fulcrum of the "Future We Want." How educators and the broader public might visualize the image of the student's journey, enabled by "co-agency," was featured in a video as an illustration of the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* at work

at the Vancouver summit (OECD, 2019). As the video narrator intones, "when a student holds *The Learning Compass* he or she is exercising agency—the capacity to set a goal, reflect, and act responsibly to effect change—to act rather than be acted upon." While the video stresses that "the student is not alone" in their journey, the viewer is invited to imagine the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* as both a framework for educational development and a pathway for students as they develop "transformative competencies" that will help them "create new value."

The ideation represented by the avatar of the student depicted in *The Learning Compass* video deploys one particular future operationalized by the appropriation and colonization of alternative multiple futures and potential policy trajectories. *Education 2030*, and the supporting video, illustrates how "uses of the future" (Miller, 2018) can be deployed to foreclose education policy-making and practices. These processes of ideation are an important policy move used to enclose and exclude alternative imaginaries about what counts as learning and what defines exemplary practice in teaching and school leadership. Just as PISA has evolved into a GPS for policy-makers, the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* offers the potential to frame educational development in the years ahead. Underscoring this challenge, research shared regarding the OECD's appropriation of futures thinking (Couture, Stiles & den Heyer, 2019) is attempting to make visible the critical derivative of educational policy-making that "whoever gets to name the future, owns the future" (Niedzviecki, 2015).[3]

Processes of ideation are an important policy move used to enclose and exclude alternative imaginaries about what counts as learning and what defines exemplary practice in teaching and school leadership.

In these contexts, it is imperative to consider the timing of the Vancouver summit and the launch of the *OECD Learning Compass 2030*, all anticipating the impending release of the December 3, 2019, PISA results that will include results for student performance with OECD defined global competencies. Through a governance network of both formal and informal policy actors, such as the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) global competence and competencies grew as a pervasive policy trajectory across Canada throughout the past decade. In 2018, these competencies were assessed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) influential triennial Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) without consultation with the teaching profession and teacher organizations. As of April 2018, 57 countries signed up to participate in this component of PISA that has proven to be highly problematic both

[3] Niedzviecki coined this invocation drawn from the question "Who owns the future?" related to the work on futures thinking first popularized by Jared Lanier. See Maslin, J. 2013. "Fighting Words Against Big Data
Who Owns the Future?'" New York Times, May 5. *www.nytimes.com/2013/05/06/books/who-owns-the-future-by-jaron-lanier.html*.

in design and implementation. Not only does the construct of *global competence* reflect the problem of dynamic nominalism[4] (Rutkowski & Thompson, 2018), jurisdictions will further implicate themselves in the culture of competitive comparison that inevitably leads to efforts to "rank up" (Sorenson, 2017) on what will become misleading and distorting indicators of educational development.

Across Canada, the Global Competency policy initiative continues to drive problematic reform initiatives. In New Brunswick "the Atlantic Canada Framework for Essential Graduation Competencies as well as the pan-Canadian global competencies that are being developed at the national level" will inform the government's 10-year education plan (Government of New Brunswick, 2016, p. 16). The ambitious claims by the government outlined in the report, including the focus on competencies, stand in contrast to the conclusion by Auditor General Kim MacPherson, that the current system is not sustainable and that for the province's 98,000 students, the provincial assessment results in reading, math and science demonstrate that targets have not been met in 15 years (Auditor General of New Brunswick, 2019).

As education observers have noted for some time, the New Brunswick initiative reflects a larger national effort to advance the construct of global competency. The CMEC (2019) actively supports the mobilization of six pan-Canadian global competencies "that reflect the Canadian context" with the caveat that "the competency descriptions may continue to evolve as jurisdictions work with these competencies individually and collectively in curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment," and additionally should all be "built on foundational skills of literacy and numeracy" (Council of Ministers of Education, n.d.).

The efforts of Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) to shape and define the OECD Global Competency and Education 2030 agenda are apparent in education ministries across the country.

The efforts of CMEC to shape and define the OECD Global Competency and Education 2030 agenda are apparent in education ministries across the country. For example, both Alberta and British Columbia have pursued comprehensive curriculum reforms catalysed by the OECD competency agenda. Both jurisdictions have encountered significant challenges: addressing complex design challenges, a failure to rethink outmoded accountability regimes and assessment practices, underestimating the support needed in the field for professional

[4] Briefly stated, "dynamic nominalism" describes the iterative process whereby the names and categories applied to individuals potentially limits our capacity to understand them as human subjects. Since humans, unlike inanimate objects understand and respond to the categories applied to them, any conclusion derived from categories of "making up people" are problematic including the potential to limit the possibilities for what humans might become - since we are as humans are always becoming through a loop of interactions in a world of representation. See Hacking, I. (2006a). Kinds of people: Moving targets. Paper presented at the 10th British Academy Lecture. *www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/hacking-draft.pdf [viewed 23 April 2008*].

development (Couture & Stiles, in press; Gacoin, see paper in this collection), and increasingly narrow indicators of what is considered exemplary school leadership (Stiles, 2019).

Another example of the difficulties surrounding the competency agenda is illustrated in Ontario's comprehensive review of what 21st century competencies look like:

> Many international thought leaders and business leaders—and many young people, too are increasingly asking education systems to prepare students with "21st century" competencies that will enable them to face complex challenges now and in the future. These competencies—knowledge, skills, and attributes that help children and youth to reach their full potential—are additional to the important foundational skills of literacy and mathematics, and to the core learning in other subjects (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 5).

Prefacing the 16 pages, attempting to navigate multiple fluid definitions ascribed to competencies, an important caveat is offered:

> Other labels associated with the term "21st century competencies" include "deeper learning," "21st century skills," "global competencies," "college and career readiness," "student-centred learning," "next-generation learning," "new basic skills," and "higher-order thinking." These labels are typically used to include both cognitive and non-cognitive skills, knowledge, and attitudes" (p. 5).

As with CMEC and the Ontario ministry's policy aspirations and efforts to pin down the stubbornly fluid definitions of "competency," we see how Education 2030 can readily become a looking-glass where pundits and policy makers will see whatever they want to see by invoking and "using the future" as an imaginary to be anticipated and realized, meanwhile ignoring the systemic barriers to optimal teaching and learning. In this light, it is important to understand that the decision was made two years ago by the CMEC and Alberta Education to include assessment items tied the OECD Global Competency Framework despite the concerns of the profession. As part of the PISA 2018 administration, this effort to assess global competencies included two domains: the Cognitive questionnaire that purported to assesses problem-solving and critical thinking and a student self-reflection Global Competency questionnaire. Only 27 out of a potential 71 countries signed on to the Cognitive section of the assessment. The rushed field-testing of the items included seven jurisdictions

with only two of that cohort choosing to administer the final version. Alternatively, 56 out of 71 jurisdictions decided to participate in the student self-questionnaire.

The concerns raised by researchers regarding the PISA 2018 Global Competency initiative, while often ignored or set aside by its proponents, are important to consider as we look to the December release of the PISA 2018 results. Aside from the numerous psychometric problems of assessing competence as a measurement construct, there are a number of profound ethical issues raised in the reporting of the student self-reporting questions. Researchers such as Harsha Chandra, Melbourne University, are undertaking important work to address questions such as: how do students and parents understand global competence in the context of increasingly diverse schools and growing inequity globally (personal communication, 2019)? For example, cultural differences would yield very different responses to questions for 15 year olds being asked questions such as: "I sign environmental or social petitions online; I keep myself informed about world events via <Twitter> or<Facebook>; I can do something about the problems of the world." While international large-scale assessments (ILSAs), and more particularly PISA, have been widely researched and critiqued, the focus has mostly been on the accuracy, validity and limitations of these assessments, and on their circulation and uptake in policy, currently, there are few studies that consider ILSAs from the perspectives of students, parents and school leaders (see Serder & Jakobsson, 2015 for an exception).

Other researchers are working together to engage emerging questions. For policy-makers, system and school leaders, including those in teacher organizations, what are the implications of adding this global competency construct to the growing ILSAs that range in scope from measuring the "foundations" such as literacy and numeracy while reaching into the ephemeral spaces of social-emotional development and global competencies? How does global competence prioritize qualities for students that mobilize western conceptions of competence (mapping the cognitive) while potentially producing and circulating the deficits of "global incompetencies" that serve to pathologize certain students and groups (Pashby, 2011)? Other researchers are asking important questions such as how does global competence as a linguistic and cultural construct have historical roots in European colonial traditions that "silently carries on with hegemonic Western or Northern discourses and exports them around the globe" (Grotluschen, 2017, p.11)? These concerns raised by a growing number of comparative education researchers parallel important questions for teachers across Canada that focus on Truth and Reconciliation in the

education sector to bring a sharper focus to the nettlesome questions of what is defined as success in school and who gets to decide. In the coming months and years, teacher organizations across the world will need to collaborate and support researchers who are getting out in front of global competence and the promise of the *OECD Learning Compass 2030*.

Concerns raised by a growing number of comparative education researchers parallel important questions for teachers across Canada that focus on Truth and Reconciliation in the education sector to bring a sharper focus to the nettlesome questions of what is defined as success in school and who gets to decide.

As we are seeing across Canada, while significant curriculum and assessment reforms continue to diminish the role of the teaching profession and school leaders—the profession and teacher organizations have largely been unable to achieve improvements in the conditions of teaching and learning. Instead the response has been to concede and or advance policies that reinforce the policy handshake between teacher competencies and student outcomes (Naylor, 2018). For example, in Nova Scotia, we saw the break-up of the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union with the removal of principals, justified in the report "Raise the Bar: A Coherent and Responsive Education System for Nova Scotia" (Glaze, 2018). Commissioned by the government at a cost of $75,000, the widely criticized report not only cherry-picked PISA data to build the case that the province was in decline, the report illustrates how the regulation and control of the teaching profession and the diminishment of teacher organizations can be achieved through "neo-liberal ideology and managerial approaches [that] are key features of the regulatory models adopted in Ontario, BC and Saskatchewan, and possibly to be adopted in Nova Scotia" (Naylor, 2018, p. 58). On a global scale, one might also question the impact of the continued collaboration of teacher organizations with the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) and the International Summit on the Teaching Profession. In the Canadian context at least, it is difficult to identify any positive impacts on the conditions of practice for teachers and school leaders (Couture & Stiles, in press) setting aside the obvious gap that the province of Alberta is the only jurisdiction that has participated in the last two administrations (2013 and 2018)—leaving that provinces' teachers and school leaders to stand as a proxy for the Canadian educators.

While teacher organization leaders might feel there are few options other than to embrace the discourses and policies of standards and accountability—as we see for example in Alberta where the provincial teacher organization has championed a new regime of practice standards—such moves do little to address the decades old challenges of classroom teachers and school leaders:

> Some of these issues are long-standing, including the inclusion of diverse learners. Some issues are specific to provinces where

> education systems have been starved of adequate funding when governments...The needs of Indigenous learners, issues facing LGBTQ students, changing curricula, massive shifts in technology and communications are but some of the complex issues to address. Teachers in many provinces report serious stress and in one province, data regarding teachers' mental health rehabilitation claims show that almost half of all teacher rehabilitation claims have been related to mental health (Naylor, 2018, p. 84).

Responding to PISA 2018 and the ideation of *Education 2030*

The global future mobilized by the ideation of Education 2030 and the Vancouver Summit launch of the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* is emblematic of a pattern of educational reform Berkowich (2018) frames in "Policy Makers' Regulatory Mind-set, the Regulatory Governance Body of the System, and the Regulated Soul of Educators." This evocative title signals attention to how education policy-makers mobilize the complex relationship between "the ambiguity of the policy and the level of conflict that accompanies it" (Berkowich, 2018, p. 182). While space does not permit a detailed breakdown of his analysis, his work signals implications for Education 2030 and the Global Competency initiative. As he describes, the recurring neo-liberal strategy of "symbolic representation" often drives the impulse to mandate ambiguous and ill-defined top-down reforms that, when implemented at the system or school level, lead to confusion, conflict and contestation, especially when measures of success are imposed from the outside. In this light, highly ambiguous policy moves such as mobilizing and assessing Global Competency will have the real potential to create the impression of commitment to educational improvement while ignoring or side-stepping policies that address equity and sustainability. Berkowich (2018) illustrates how the neo-liberal policy drift globally has led to the tightening of linkages between curriculum, evaluation, and budgeting, and to increased surveillance and control of core of education processes (p. 190). This has also shifted professional cultures to accept tighter control and a focus on self-surveillance and regulation amidst the reduction of resources committed to addressing the systemic barriers to educational improvement, rather than addressing long-standing issues such as inclusion and the intensification of teachers work.

It is in these contexts that it is critical to consider how the ideations in its *OECD Education 2030* program and the renewal of PISA 2021 will mobilize and totalize particular conceptions of the future of society and school—including its aspirations for navigating curriculum design and renewal. Both in the short and long-term, with the stated goal of

having 170 nations participating in PISA by 2030 (Auld & Morris, 2019, p.2), it is necessary not only to critique but to collectively imagine and offer alternatives to *Education 2030* and the growing policy reach of the OECD. Stronger collaboration between the international research community and teacher organizations would be an important step in this regard, as argued by Roar Grøttvik (2019), political adviser with the Union of Education Norway, and Jelmer Evers (2017), a widely-regarded writer and reformer. Certainly, the redesign work for PISA 2021 announced at the Vancouver Summit is one further example that warrants attention alongside the issues raised here surrounding the Global Competency Framework. In the short term the impending release of the PISA 2018 results cannot be a distraction from addressing the longer-term work of interrogating the OECD's role as an artist, agent and arbitrator of the purposes of school and public education and how it mobilizes its particular version of the global future.

We need stronger collaboration between the international research organizations and teacher organizations to not only critique but to also collectively imagine offer alternatives to Education 2030.

As an alternative to the growing policy reach and ideation of the OECD's Education 2030 global future, Canadian researchers and teacher organizations might work collaboratively to take up the invitation from Yosef-Hassidim, taken from Bauman (1999), to rekindle our imaginations and resist "the TINA creed: 'there is no alternative,' a perception that we live within arrangements that are self-evident and inevitable" (p. 55). In these contexts, three strategic questions might inform a call to action for Canadian teachers and school leaders, their organizations, and the international research community:

1. How can the OECD's vision for a global future mobilized through Education 2030 and the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* be reconciled with the many long-standing issues related to its PISA programme?
2. Given the long-standing unmet needs of Canada's increasingly diverse and complex school communities, whose interests are ultimately being served through policy mobilizations and initiatives such as Education 2030 and the *OECD Learning Compass 2030*?
3. In Canada and around the world, what are new ways teacher organizations and researchers might better collaborate to imagine and offer alternative uses of the future for public education beyond those framed by Education 2030 and the *OECD Learning Compass 2030*?

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Afterword—Education 2030 as 21st century colonialism, *Larry Kuehn*

The teachers' union in Oaxaca, Mexico (Section 22 of the CNTE/SNTE) invited me to talk about Education 2030 at two seminars at the end of August 2019.

Oaxaca is a Mexican state that has about 30% indigenous population. The teachers' union has been very active in resisting education policies being imposed nationally that are greatly influenced by PISA results and the OECD. They are probably as aware of the global influence on the local in education as teachers' unions anywhere. Their resistance goes well beyond opposition as they have developed an alternative education program that has indigenous ways of knowing at its heart and which they want to replace the OECD-influenced national education program.

Some of the leaders of Section 22 had been at a conference of the Tri-national Conference in Defense of Public Education earlier where I had talked about Education 2030 and they asked me to talk about it at two union meetings.

I told them about the program of the OECD to extend its influence to all areas of education, well beyond the impact of PISA, with Education 2030 as the centrepiece. The OECD has chosen the "learning compass" as the metaphor to characterize the expanded program. Its intention is as a tool for the student to "create new value"—an individualist perspective, as opposed to preparing them as actors in social and political movements to improve things collectively, as in an indigenous context.

I pointed out the description of the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* when it was announced at an OECD conference in Vancouver in May as similar to the compass used by sailors setting out from Europe to colonize the globe in the 16th and 17th centuries. One of the Oaxacan teachers was quick to label the *OECD Learning Compass 2030* as the OECD's 21st Century tool to colonize education globally.

It is essential that we reflect on the impact of the OECD program not only on our own society and education system. We must also see how these tools serve to further marginalize those in the Global South and those seeking to preserve an indigenous heritage.

It is essential that we reflect on the impact of the OECD program not only on our own society and education system. We must also see how these tools serve to further marginalize those in the Global South and those seeking to preserve an indigenous heritage.

The challenge for teacher unions and others seeking to protect public education from destruction through neoliberal policies is to find new points of focus that allow for the deepening of teacher union internationalism in support of an education world that reflects indigenous values and social diversity.

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