Scotland's education policy of Learning for Sustainability, the Anthropocene and learning to resist

Corinne Angier

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Stirling, Scotland

Email: cfa1@stir.ac.uk

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The Anthropocene, a term first coined by the biologist Eugene Stoermer and popularised by the chemist Paul Crutzen, is increasingly accepted as a description of the current geological era where human activity is the overriding cause of change to the biosphere. The threat to human survival of climate change and environmental degradation has prompted renewed attempts at global governance through international protocols and by the construction of targets to achieve sustainable development. The Scottish government aspires to Scotland achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. In education this ambition is to be achieved through 'Learning for sustainability' (LfS) (Scottish Government 2012) as an entitlement for all children and the responsibility of teachers in every age phase and every subject. LfS in the Scottish curriculum encompasses sustainable development education, global citizenship education and outdoor learning. In this paper, I propose that Scottish educational policy may be thought of as a textual fabric of interwoven discourses and I use an extract from an exemplar document to demonstrate that LfS policy is cut from the same cloth. I argue that the partially devolved responsibility for policy implementation allows schools and teachers some opportunity to decide which of these discourses with which to align. This opens up opportunities to resist schooling for the *status quo*. New thinking offers the hope that the worst-case scenarios of the Anthropocene might yet be averted. Drawing on a description of LfS as "learning to mind" (Griffiths and Murray 2017), I suggest that the broad affordances and range of interpretations inherent in LfS provide a space within which more critical and emancipatory practices might flourish.

Keywords: learning for sustainability; education policy; global imaginaries; Anthropocene

Introduction

The damaging impact of human activity on the biosphere is beyond doubt whilst the ever-growing inequality amongst the human population is exacerbating insecurity and leaving millions of people in abject poverty. The trajectories are bleak, and we are starting to see mass migration in search of water, food, shelter and security. Radical change might be aided by a new focus in education on global awareness across a wide spectrum of issues from the science of climate change to the politics of decolonisation. In Scotland this has been formulated in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the policy outcome is called Learning for Sustainability (Scottish Government 2012).

Learning for sustainability (LfS) has been conceptualised within the Scottish curriculum as an entitlement of every child and the responsibility of every teacher in Scotland. It is a term unique to Scottish educational policy, first used as a policy intention in 2012, which embraces sustainable development, global citizenship and outdoor learning. These labels all have contested meanings and each draws on a hinterland of other traditions so that from the outset LfS invites different interpretations and may be aligned with contrasting discourses. I begin with a brief sketch of education policy in Scotland and in particular the development of citizenship. I draw on the discourse analysis literature and use an exemplar from a key LfS document to demonstrate the complexity of discourses found in policy. I use the metaphor of policy as a woven cloth, and not a patchwork, formed from threads of nationalist, liberal, neoliberal and critical discourses (Swanson 2011). I argue that the devolved responsibility for policy implementation opens up some space for schools and teachers to decide which of these discourses to align with. In the final sections of the paper I consider whether LfS is in danger of being side-lined by other educational priorities. The experience of a global pandemic lends strength both to the voices that argue for a renewed focus on the standard curriculum to make up for lost time during school closures and for the voices that argue for education as a space for fundamental rethinking about the world that children are inheriting. I conclude, drawing on an interpretation of LfS as "learning to mind" (Griffiths and Murray 2017), that LfS might be grasped by those who want to resist schooling for the *status quo,* and instead evoke many alternative ways of thinking that enable learners to reimagine the Anthropocene.

The Scottish education policy context

The establishment of the new Scottish parliament in 1999 prompted a focus on education as a means of developing and sustaining a distinct Scottish democracy (SCCC 1999). In the

decade leading up to devolution, Scottish education policy had been dominated by the neo-liberal[1] reforms of Michael Forsyth who, in his role at the then Scottish Office sought to impose the same agenda that was being introduced in England by Thatcher's administration (Humes 1995). The resistance to this colonial imposition on the historically distinct education system of Scotland has been suggested as one of the drivers of support for devolution (Paterson 1998, Munn and Arnott 2009). Within a decade of devolution, the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) were leading a majority government and their campaign for an independent Scotland required the public representation of a national identity within which everyone could recognise themselves.

Education is symbolically and practically a highly significant policy area. Traditionally regarded as "the central pillar" of Scottish identity (Paterson 1998 p.224) where "the 'lad o' pairts', a young person who succeeds through ability rather than accident of birth, is a deeply embedded ideal in Scottish consciousness" (Hayward 2007 p.253). These myths of meritocracy, inclusion and social mobility[2] have long been belied by the facts of inequality and the new government launched the "National Debate on Education" in 2002 as a consultation exercise "to hear as many views as possible from a wide range of people about the kind of education system we want to see for future generations" (Scottish Executive 2002). Smith in his discourse analysis of the history curriculum (2018 p.31) argues that "debates [within education] can be seen as proxies for larger questions about the Scottish nation as a whole."

Discourse analysis is a much-used tool to analyse education policy and identify the ways in which it is both shaped by and intended to shape political ideology. Arnott and Ozga (2010, 2016) have undertaken extensive analysis of Scottish National Party's education policy texts and identify two dominant discourses. The first, emphasising the neoliberal values of competition and economic growth, "references 'outwards' to establish Scotland in a global competitive market", which has to be reconciled somehow with the second discourse of "a flourishing Scotland and an emphasis on community, fairness and inclusiveness – refencing 'inwards' to establish embedded and collective narratives" (Arnott and Ozga 2016 p.258). They align this second discourse with the identity of a generic Nordic social democracy.

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[1] Throughout this paper, I use a range of key sociological concepts. Where their meaning may not be familiar to all readers I give a brief definition. Neoliberalism is the extension of a liberal belief in individual freedom to market freedom such that the requirements of economic growth are prioritised over the welfare needs of people and sustainable use of natural resources.

[2] Meritocracy is a political system where people are chosen to govern according to their merit or capacity to contribute which might be measured by educational attainment. Inclusion is usually taken to mean that the education system can be adapted to meet the learning needs of all. Social mobility is the notion that a child may move into a different social class from their parents. Education is usually viewed as a mechanism for upward mobility.

I read a strong thread of traditional liberal[3] discourse within Scottish education policy which stretches back to before the SNP established their first (minority) administration in 2007. The disciplined academic focus and authoritarian nature of schools (Humes 1984) is consistent with a Scottish enlightenment view that "the educated have a duty to serve society" (Paterson 2000 p.225) and sustain democracy. In this complex weave it is also possible to discern the thin thread of a social-justice oriented critical[4] discourse which is implicit in social democratic responses to inequity. This complex policy cloth has therefore a strong warp thread of liberalism with the weft threads representing liberalism's two progeny: the freedom-focused neoliberalism and the social justice-focused criticality. Smith (2018 p. 34) describes education as "a site of identity construction" for a nation and at the same time "the vehicle" through which this identity can be realised on the world stage. What is noticeable in Scotland is the alignment of national identity with any and all of these different discourses threads, so that policy documents are a curious but distinctive weave where almost anyone can find at least some acknowledgement of their own perspective.

Citizenship in the Scottish curriculum

The development of citizenship provides an important contextual background to the subsequent introduction of Learning for Sustainability. Five national priorities for education were announced in 2000, one of which focused on "values and citizenship" (Scottish Executive 2000a), and a review panel was set up to "develop a succinct paper that would, following extensive consultation and discussion, provide the basis for a coherent, national statement on education for citizenship" (LTS 2000 p.i). The panel chair stated that "Schools have a dual role in society: they reflect its customs and traditions and help to shape new ways of life" (LTS 2000 p.iii). The newly elected devolved government can, perhaps, be seen in the ensuing development of citizenship, as working to decide exactly which "customs and traditions" it wanted acknowledged and which aspects of Scottish life were ripe for reshaping. The panel established a significant new perspective that has prevailed in Scottish policy ever since by stating that "young people should be regarded as citizens of today rather than citizens in waiting" (LTS 2000 p.2). This aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and contrasted with a view of 'citizens in the making' (Marshall 1950/2013) that had informed the curriculum in other jurisdictions including England (Biesta 2008). Four strategies were proposed to enable the development of

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[3] A liberal discourse values the freedom of the individual, their rights to property and rights to make choices such that they can define and live a good life. There is a strong association with education as the mechanism for developing the values and skills needed to make rational choices.

[4] A critical discourse draws on Critical Theory which has its roots in Hegel, Marx and the Frankfurt school of political philosophers. The current state of inequality and oppression is questioned and there is an explicit commitment to action for social justice.

these young citizens: participation in activities including decision making within school, classroom-based learning, cross-curricular projects, and activity in the community (LTS 2000). Citizenship maintained a high profile during the wider national consultation and 'a responsible citizen' emerged as one of the four capacities asserted as the purpose of Scottish education in the new Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) (2004). There remains an inherent tension between the notion of children as already citizens and the emphasis in the curriculum on learning to be a responsible citizen (Jessop 2011).

The suggestion that pupils should participate in decision making in schools is an acknowledgement of the need to contest and dispute policies and practices as part of democratic living (Olssen 2009). It was a radical notion for the "fundamentally undemocratic, indeed authoritarian structure of the typical Scottish secondary school" (Maitles and Gilchrist 2006 p.68). Research however shows scant evidence of this critical citizenship in student voice practices (Ross *et al.* 2007, Hulme *et al.* 2011) such that "creating space for pupils to question or challenge the school's way of doing things still seems a long way off" (Munn and Arnott 2009 p.451). In a rare example of empirical research with teachers, Biesta, Priestley and Robinson (2015 p.634) found "at no point did any of our respondents talk, for example, about social justice or democratic values." It is perhaps safe to leave a thin thread of critical discourse in policy documents if "the inherent conservatism of the teaching profession is preventing this potential … from being realised" (Jessop 2011 p.994). It may actually be easier for pupils to question and challenge authorities outwith the school as demonstrated by the campaign of the Glasgow Girls[5] against Home Office practices.

Biesta (2008) argues that there is a strong emphasis in Scottish education policy on social rather than political citizenship and what Westheimer and Kahne (2004) have called 'personally responsible' and 'participatory' citizens. This aligns with the liberal tradition of education to produce thoughtful individuals who will volunteer and fundraise and has been termed 'soft' (Andreotti, 2014) rather than critical in the context of global citizenship. Such a citizen will conscientiously donate to a food bank without asking why people are going hungry, and Jefferess (2008) warns this may foster colonial attitudes (Swanson and Pashby 2016) of benevolence. There is one single discordant example in the early citizenship policy documentation (LTS 2000 p. 3) where the problem of homeless young people being denied a vote is acknowledged as structural inequality. I read this as the thin thread of a critical discourse encouraging the 'justice-oriented' citizen (Westeimer and Kahne 2004) to question their world.

The strong emphasis on learning "through the day-to-day experiences of the life of the school community, with its values and social contact, and from out-of-school activities, events

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[5] The Glasgow Girls were a group of seven 15 year olds who campaigned against the Home Office practice of dawn raids following the detention of one of their classmates.

and celebrations" (Scottish Executive 2004 p. 13) brings education close to home. This is a shift of focus for the 'lad o'pairts' where school offers a route out of poverty to someplace else, and for those teachers who understand their role as advocating for academic endeavour. Collaborative activity in the local community addresses a concern that "democratic citizenship should not be understood as an attribute of an individual, but invariably has to do with individuals-in-context" (Biesta and Lawy 2006 p.69). The notion of place is a very strong theme in Scottish government discourse: "Our vision is of a society built around communities of place and interest" (Scottish Executive 2000b). Scotland has a complex history of land ownership with some aspects of feudal law only repealed in 2004. It is noteworthy that the key phrase in the final Curriculum for Excellence document is "to develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's *place* in it" (Scottish Executive 2004, my emphasis) rather than Scotland's role or contribution.

Three distinct characteristics can be seen as prevailing in Scottish citizenship education policy: pupils are already citizens, citizenship is a capacity developed by practice, and the site for this practice is not only the school but also the wider community in which the school is situated and where the children live. Within this complex weave of policy documents Scottish Nationalism can be found aligned with each of the liberal, neoliberal and critical threads. This allows the broadest possible conception of a potentially independent Scotland and leaves the teaching profession in a position where they can justifiably choose to read policy in many different ways. What is interesting is that they appear to be explicitly encouraged to do so.

Implementation of Scottish education policy

The implementation of policy is arguably more important than its crafting. In Scotland this responsibility is shared between the government body Education Scotland (which incorporates the inspectorate HMIE[6]), the 32 Local Authorities who administer and run schools and the schools themselves. What is unusual is the level of responsibility that in policy rhetoric is devolved to teachers.

> The opportunity offered … by *CfE* is that curriculum development, and transformational change … will be driven by the professional capacity of teachers rather than through the central development of guidance and resources and external accountability. (Black *et al.* 2016).

New education policy is presented in documents, and increasingly as web pages, with exemplars (often named) of schools already engaged in appropriate initiatives. This suggests both grassroots policy development and that what is being asked is possible. This "less prescriptive [than

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[6] Her Majesties Inspectors of Education was independent of government until 2011 when Education Scotland was formed, and inspection was taken 'in house'.

England] approach … has allowed teachers to adopt a flexible approach in interpreting the policy" (Munn and Arnott 2009 p 452). What is unknown in this process is the extent to which the compilers of these exemplars are choosing between a range of practice and deciding which to foreground. It is possible that very different interpretations go unnoticed or are deliberately ignored. The apparent freedom is tempered by the inspectorate, which is in a position to decide whether a particular interpretation is acceptable (Biesta 2008). Exemplars that are validated by the inspectorate by appearing in their publications are bound to influence school leaders. This 'show and tell' mechanism of policy implementation has been described as the "Scottish tendency to prefer a pragmatic approach, clearly exemplified in the inspectorate's celebration of 'best practice' as the most appropriate means of effecting improvement" (Priestley and Humes 2010 p.358).

Smith (2017 p.39) argues that no matter how policy is interpreted, that "citizenship education implies an induction into this society… is inherently uncritical; it assumes the rationality of existing practices and socialises the student to conform to these." If schools are going to engage in questioning and reshaping the trajectory of our Anthropocene world then perhaps such an activity needs a new name which does not have the geographical and political connotations of inclusion and exclusion associated with citizenship. Learning for Sustainability suggests a global cosmopolitanism appropriate to a connected biosphere.

Introduction of Learning for Sustainability

The view of the original citizenship panel that "Education for citizenship is a key part of the responsibility of every teacher ... It is part and parcel of every area of study and of all and learning" (LTS 2000 p.7) resurfaced almost verbatim when Learning for Sustainability was introduced a decade later. The term was devised collaboratively by the One Planet Schools Ministerial Advisory Group and the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS) where it became one of the three underpinning themes of the revised standards for registration of teachers:

> 'Learning for Sustainability' is a whole-school commitment that helps the school
> and its wider community develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and
> practices needed to take decisions which are compatible with a sustainable future in
> a just and equitable world (GTCS 2012).

Any definition invites scrutiny and opens debate about how it might impact on understanding and action. The absence of reference to development[7] "avoids rather than resolves" (Griffiths and Murray 2017 p.40) the controversial issue of whether growth-based development can be reconciled with sustainability on a finite planet. Khoo (2013) asks what is it that we are

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[7] Development is a highly contested and colonial notion that suggests the global South should follow the neoliberal free market economics that characterise much of the global North.

sustainably developing and the Scottish government has chosen to align not only LfS but, more recently, its entire national performance auditing to the United Nation's global goals[8]: "we use sustainability in the way it is understood by UN agencies and countries across the globe to incorporate the inextricable link between environmental, social and economic issues" (Scottish Government 2012 p.9). Scoones (2007) argues that its boundary position at the intersection of disciplines and its lack of specificity makes the notion of sustainability a productive one for provoking debate and generating policy.

The One Planet Schools report (Scottish Government 2012) was commissioned by the newly elected SNP majority government to fulfil an election pledge, and it was accepted almost in its entirety by ministers. It is as significant as the citizenship panel's documentation a decade earlier and cut from the same cloth albeit with a slightly greener hue: "Our vision is of a flourishing Scotland where sustainable and socially just practices are the norm throughout society and our roles and responsibilities within a globally interdependent world are recognised (Scottish Government 2012 p.5)." 'Flourishing Scotland' is an oft used floating signifier in education policy. Here it is signalling the benevolent liberal society where more critical stances are not blocked but globalisation[9], with its associated neoliberal, free market capitalism, is understood to be the current world order and non-negotiable. "This is a Scotland where learners are educated through their landscape and understand their environment, culture and heritage (*op. cit.* p. 5)." Education is located and Scotland as a place is emphasised, leading to the considerable importance of outdoor learning which gives LfS a deep green, sometimes even ecologist (Stirling 2001), hue. "Our expectation is that Scotland will provide leadership globally as one of the first sustainable, low carbon industrialised nations on Earth" (*op. cit.* p. 5)." This identity of a small country leading on the global stage can be read in many ways (Swanson and Pashby 2016). Some will notice social justice in reducing emissions that have a disproportionate impact in the global south, but others might wonder whether this is a neoliberal vision with the Trojan horse of capital looking for new sectors to develop. An extended extract below illustrates how successfully different discourses are woven together in the document. All emphasis is mine and my commentary is in square brackets:

> At the heart of this report lies the desire to *improve outcomes* [we begin with the standards agenda of neoliberal performativity] for each and every learner [social inclusion] in Scotland. The 21st century has presented us with new challenges and opportunities and requires a different approach to learning. In our *fast changing*

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[8] The UN global goals are 17 sets of targets which together form a programme to achieve a just and sustainable global future.

[9] Globalisation describes the increasing interconnectedness of the human population through travel, online communication, culture and trade.

world [signalling globalisation] it is necessary for learners to have the skills to *adapt and to thrive* [signals a Darwinian competition].

The big issues that affect our planet such as climate change, loss of biodiversity and global poverty, require a *population committed to living equitably within ecological limits* [population of where is left open so national policy is not explicitly aligned with radical action] and to finding solutions that enable them to do so. Democracy *needs* [needs signals something human and personal] people who *recognise the importance and value of participation* [the responsible liberal citizen] and of *making their voice, and the voices of others, heard* [liberalism segues into liberal multiculturalism]. Addressing the injustices and inequalities in and between societies requires *people who care about social justice and human rights*, [and finally it reaches a critical stance with wording very similar to the requirements in the teaching standards] who recognise that our lives are *inextricably linked* [we return to globalisation] and that, in our interdependent and globalised world, we *all have a role in both creating and addressing injustice* [this time globalisation requires a critical response]. We are part of rather than apart from nature, and so *the threat to biodiversity is a threat to ourselves*, [we are back now on the familiar territory of liberal enlightened self-interest] and understanding and acting to preserve biodiversity calls out for people who *are ecologically literate* [this requires a sound liberal education] and are *deeply connected to the natural world* [this is signalling a new kind of capacity or skill]. Our communities need to be enriched and revitalised by learners who have a *strong sense of place* [this is a more familiar connection to Scottish National heritage] and who are committed to the *common good* [we are safely back to a liberal enlightenment sense of responsibility].

As many practitioners *are discovering* [if you are not doing this then you should be], sustainable development education, global citizenship and outdoor learning provide motivational, relevant, challenging and creative learning experiences which *engage learners and improve behaviour, attitudes and attainment* [the standards rhetoric again] a view supported by a *growing body of evidence and research* [xiv] [evidence based practice suggests teachers need to be told what to do]. In addition to this, with regard to outdoor learning, direct experience of the landscape and *the natural and cultural heritage of Scotland* [reminder of national identity] *helps all young people and teachers understand the Earth's systems, develop respect and care for our planet, create a personal connection with the environment* [xv] *and, as recent research has shown* [xvi], *improves their physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.* [Something new and almost spiritual here, a deep green environmental discourse]. As such, outdoor learning is a key aspect of learning for sustainability and should be a core pedagogical approach in its delivery. (Scottish Government 2012 p.12).

The extract is typical of LfS documentation and to slightly stretch the metaphor I think this curious weave of discourses is intended to produce a cloth that anyone should be able to wear. What matters is that everyone understand the need for new clothes.

By 2014, LfS had an expanded remit and an international audience were advised it "should be taken to include global citizenship, sustainable development education, international education, education for citizenship, outdoor learning, children's rights and play" (Education Scotland 2014 p.8). The complexity of connections is emphasised through the frequent use of a word cloud (fig 1.) "but it is left unclear how they all cohere, if they do, within the single issue of 'Learning for Sustainability.'" (Griffiths and Murray 2017 p.41).

Fig 1. LfS word cloud 1 (Scottish Government 2012 p.10)

This lack of coherence fits with the policy implementation described above—"each centre and school has taken sustainability forward in a way that best meets their needs and local contexts: There is no one-size fits all approach" (Education Scotland 2014 p.6). The enthusiastic pamphlet 'Opening up great learning: Learning for Sustainability' (Education Scotland 2015) gives guidance for schools and teachers which is firmly rooted in the notion of think global act local and encourages teachers to take lunchtime walks in the area around their school. What has emerged as a typical response from schools appears to be remarkably similar and in some cases amounts to a relabelling of activity they were already engaged in. Schools join a programme offered by an external agency which usually leads to accreditation through auditing of some kind. Examples of this are the *John Muir* award, *Eco-schools* award, UNICEF's *Rights Respecting Schools* award, the British Council's *Connecting Classrooms* and the *Scotland Malawi project*. Organisations seeking to engage schools have found that presenting themselves in terms of the neoliberal discourse of competition, accountability and performativity has been successful. It is notable that even the youngest children are encouraged to be competitive e.g. the *Eco-schools* pocket gardens competition for early years settings. Engagement with these programmes, for which funding is often available, is noticed and publicised by Education Scotland through their

Twitter feeds, newsletters, webpages and reports. The line between the professional notion of sharing good practice and strategies for public relations is unclear in these contexts. It is not possible to know without ethnographic research how these programmes are experienced by pupils, teachers and the community. The ambivalent response of schools and Local Authorities to pupils who joined the Friday school strikes for climate (e.g. Edinburgh City Council 2019) suggests there are tensions when young people seek to exercise agency.

LfS and the challenges of the Anthropocene

LfS is now variously described on the Education Scotland website as a "policy driver", a "curriculum entitlement" and a "practical approach" to curriculum development, yet it does not appear at all in the 'what we do' drop down list on their website's landing page. The Inspectorate's report on "Quality and Improvement in Scottish Education 2012–2016" makes no mention at all of LfS, nor does the "Statement to practitioners from HM Chief Inspector" (Education Scotland 2016), which was intended to clarify CfE. The draft revised GTCS standards which were published in 2019 seem to have tidily put to one side the requirements for engaging in social justice (GTCS 2019). The newly designed qualification in applications of mathematics has scant connection to LfS despite the Scottish government's action plan requiring that the qualifications authority address LfS in all new specifications (Scottish Government 2019). Schools are under increasing pressure to achieve the ambition of the National Attainment Challenge and to Develop the Young Workforce (Education Scotland 2020a). Programmes, such as those offered by the British Council, that might justifiably claim to contribute to the broader curricular aims, are now evaluating their work in terms of closing the attainment gap (Livingstone *et al*. 2018). Priestley and Minty (2013) argue that there is inherent incommensurability in a curriculum that is simultaneously defined by its purpose, as four capacities, and by its outcomes as graded subject-specific content. Attempts to argue for LfS as a means to raise attainment is implicitly accepting that the standards agenda can be reconciled with sustainability (Christie *et al.* 2019). LfS could be seen as a policy drifting away except that global events keep re-emphasising its significance. The anticipation of the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP26, which was due to take place in Glasgow in September 2020, and its postponement due to COVID-19 are unavoidable reminders that we cannot halt the trajectories of the Anthropocene without strong coordinated action both internationally and locally.

The most recent exemplars of approved LfS activity are in the form of four videos on the Education Scotland website (Education Scotland 2020b). They describe the work of two primary schools which have clearly been carefully chosen and presented. Both schools are in challenging circumstances which argues strongly that LfS is not simply an enjoyable add-on for schools in

favourable socioeconomic circumstances. Once again, every discourse is evident and there is the familiar green hue but also what can be seen as a very strong foregrounding of place and local connection.

Sites of resistance

The 2020 closure of schools and cancellation of public exams due to COVID-19 has reignited discussion about the wider purpose of education and the welfare role of schools in feeding and protecting children. Publicly funded education provides at least three kinds of opportunities: the state can try to mould the citizens it needs, the aspiring pupil can garner qualifications they need to enhance their life choices and the whole school can develop and sustain a community ethos. Schools can choose to emphasis competition or collaboration, selection or inclusion, the world as it is or the world as it might be, and in doing so they are deciding whether to align with the neoliberal, liberal or social justice-oriented threads in education policy. The school can be a site for the reproduction of the values and attitudes that have led to inequity, oppression and biosphere destruction or a site where such values are challenged and the 'common sense' of infinite economic growth is resisted.

The explicit expectation that citizenship and Learning for Sustainability should include activity in the community is an opportunity to engage with local issues of land use, pollution, recycling, housing, transport and food supply all of which connect pupils' life worlds to global issues. Pupils' engagement with local campaigns will bring them into contact with elected representatives and there is scope to experience solidarity in working for change. Riddoch (2013) draws attention to the very small ratios at the lowest level of government in France where each local counsellor represents 125 people compared with 4,270 people in Scotland. She suggests this may encourage and account for more grassroots engagement in local government in France. Biesta and Lawy (2006) question whether schools can ever be the sites of democratic learning but LfS is inviting schools to support pupils to learn to be political through collaborative 'action' (Arendt 2018/1958) on their home patch. This is difficult and complex work especially if the teachers live elsewhere and do not identify with the community their pupils are part of. Christie *et al.* (2019 p.48) raise concerns about "tension between the policy rhetoric and professional understanding" and neither the academic discourse analysis nor the enthusiastic Tweeting by Education Scotland can make up for the paucity of empirical research with teachers. We might expect that the implementation of LfS is related in complex ways to teacher beliefs and life stories as well as the cultural and structural features of the contexts they work in, as Priestley and Minty (2013) have found with CfE. A small study by Kirk (2017) suggests that even where teachers are keen to develop LfS, they are confused, trepidatious and sometimes held back by the prioritisation of raising attainment. We need to find out whether the regular tide of performativity and

accountability with its calendared targets and cyclic monitoring is washing away all the efforts of emerging activist (Groundwater-Smith and Sachs 2002) and transformative (Sterling 2001) professionals.

Griffiths and Murray (2017 p.41) suggest that LfS be understood as an attempt to answer the question "How should humans live well in our world? … Education is needed to help students develop the judgement and wisdom to deal with the complexities and contingencies" which they describe as 'learning to mind'. They draw on Spivak's "uncoercive rearrangement of desires" and Hogan's use of "imaginative neighbourhoods" to argue for "a reflective, indeed minding, approach to pedagogy." (Griffiths and Murray 2017 p. 47). The characteristics of this pedagogy are the opening up of space by the teacher for attention, questioning and rigor. Griffiths and Murray move beyond critical and dialogic Levinasian discourses to add social materialism and deep ecology into the weave. They draw on Arendt, whose belief in natality as "the miracle that saves the world" (Arendt 1958/2018 p.247) underpins her view that children must be educated to have the capacity "of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us" (Arendt 1961/2020). Conceding space and agency to pupils means resisting a tradition of schooling as discipline and an understanding of the teacher as the authority (Angier and Povey 1999). It means taking risks in a risk averse culture and accepting questions for which no exam memo could create an answer. Giving pupils both practical experiences and intellectual space to imagine different futures may be the most important educational task of our time.

A review of Scottish education policy exposes the many different voices competing to draw the route maps to the future, and so the teacher finds herself in a crowded field of possible global imaginaries. She spends her days with the people who will be the actual future against a cacophonous backdrop suggesting how that future might look. LfS policy argues strongly that children need to get outside every day to explore and play in the natural world. Schools have to resist or appropriate the discourse of raising attainment to achieve this. Teachers who want to educate their pupils to resist both the complacency and the individualism that underpin the grim trajectories of the Anthropocene might also read in LfS policy a quieter permission for children to get 'outside' of the discourses that have damaged their world in order to explore and play with new global imaginaries.

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