

**DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS
EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE**

Suggestions for an OECD key competencies framework

**OECD EDUCATION 2030
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OECD EDUCATION 2030

DISCUSSANT'S SUMMARY – JULIA ATKIN

Preliminary Comments

Contextual perspective

1. My work in education spans 1975 to the present. The perspective I bring to this discussion is one of grounded theory. Since my early PhD research into thinking, problem solving and learning for deep meaning, I have been working with schools, universities, education systems (mainly in Australia and NZ) to guide and assist them in their endeavors to transform approaches to learning and teaching: learning how to learn, professional learning, reconceptualising curriculum for the knowledge era and re- designing learning environments. I'm currently working with the OECD on two projects: Learning Environment Evaluation Project (LEEP) and, with regards to Education 2030, Designing Learning for 21C.

The importance of the OECD 2030 Project

2. I applaud the OECD and its member countries for undertaking the 2030 Project. Almost 20 years since the DeSeCO work and the introduction of PISA, a review and re-visioning process for Education 2030 is very timely. There is much to learn from the work of many countries in reforming their curricula and in working to implement the changes that are necessary for education design to keep pace with, and ideally influence the direction of a rapidly changing world.

Discussant's role

3. I welcome the opportunity to engage with the group in order stimulate reflection and conversation about the CCR Framework as one of multiple sources of thinking that can contribute to the work of the OECD 2030 Project. I offer the following wonderings, questions and comments on the *CCR Frameworks Issues paper including Cross-Walks*, in the spirit of dialogue not debate.

Response

1. A wondering

4. I'm wondering if the CCR Framework is a *Curriculum* Framework or a *Competencies* Framework? In reading both the Education 2030 value proposition and the CCR paper, I constantly found myself searching for clarity on this question. In relation to the CCR paper, what is the key question that the CCR is addressing in its document?

2. Question

5. Focusing on a Competencies Framework, I'm wondering if/how the DeSeCo Framework for Key Competencies twenty years on, falls short of what is required for 2030? *Addressed to Charles:* Is the Framework itself an issue, is it missing something? OR *Addressed to OECD Project Team and delegates:* Is our challenge as educators and policy makers working out how we support the embedding of competencies into educational practice: learning design, teaching approaches, how teachers perceive their role, assessment design, pre-service teacher education, in-service teacher education?

3. Reflecting on the CCR Framework

6. A comment on each category – *via slides*. For discussion: I'd like to understand why CCR chose the category of 'Character' over, for example 'Dispositions and Attributes' or the DeSeCO category of 'Acting Autonomously'? I have several difficulties with 'character' as a category of any Framework to be applied globally. It has many components.

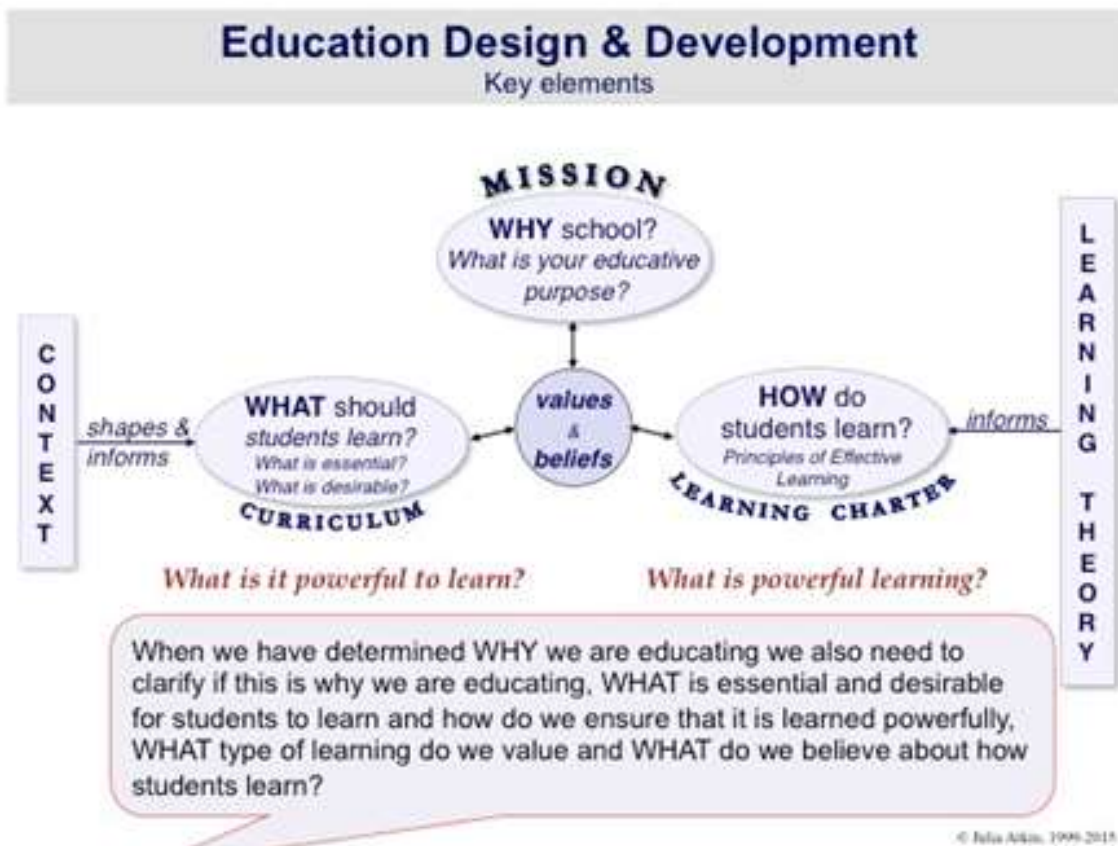
- Moral character – incorporating values as an integral component in the expression of character cultural values, personal values, universal human values.
- Intellectual character – incorporating qualities of mind as applied to learning, thinking, creating.
- Civic character – participating and contributing responsibly for the greater good of society.
- Performance character¹ – behavioral and psychological skills and capacities.
- National character – culturally derived and formed identity, traits and values.

7. I can understand that universal human values have a place in a global framework and possibly intellectual character, but I definitely struggle with national character and even civic character when our rich histories frame our national character and the values of a specific society might define what is civic character for that particular society. **MACROBUTTON NUMBERING** I will expand on my thinking with regards to this reflection in the webinar.

4. Question

8. Has CCR linked its framework (whether for curriculum or competencies) to the fundamental question defining our educative purpose "Why educate?" People bring multiple perspectives and agendas to the education debate. To transcend these different (sometimes surface) agendas I've derived questions to guide schools in developing a conceptual framework² from which to design and review their curriculum and approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. This questioning framework is captured in diagram 1. My challenge to OECD (and CCR) is to start with a shared understanding of our collective response to the essential question 'Why educate?' Education is caught in the eddy of a paradigm shift and the only way we can escape this position is to think deeply and collectively about why we are educating. It is only when the answer to this question is articulated that we have any reference point for deciding on what is essential and desirable for all young people to learn, that is, the curriculum. From this point all questions re competencies, knowledge/ways of knowing, learning, teaching and assessment can be derived.

Figure 1. Key questions underpinning education design and development



¹ University of Birmingham, Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues

² Atkin, J Reconceptualising the Curriculum for the Knowledge Era, Part 1 The Challenge, <http://www.learning-by-design.com>