



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

ECDE 7017

Exploring Contemporary Issues in Education 1: Policy Review and Critical Analysis Session 1: 29th September 2026

Module Lead: Dr Julia Holloway
j.holloway@uwtsd.ac.uk

Trawsnewid Addysg, Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

www.uwtsd.ac.uk

Welcome



SPEED DATING



What did you find out?

- One interesting fact
- A question that you would like to ask



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Active participation



One Page Profile:

My name:

Doctor Julia Holloway

What I like to be called/preferred name:

Julia

My research interests are:

- *Mentoring*
- *Initial Teacher Education*
- *Newly qualified teachers and induction*
- *Learning experiences of international EdD students*
- *The professional standards*
- *Curriculum development*

Things I might find challenging:



What I'm most looking forward to this year:

Sharing your doctoral journey with you

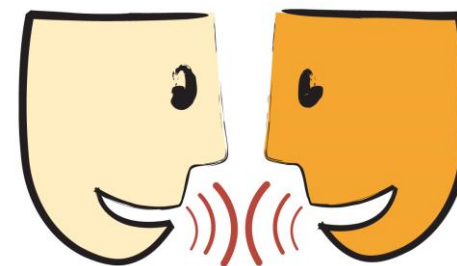


What my friends and family admire about me:

- *Kindness*
- *Resilience*
- *commitment*

How you can support me:

*Keep the lines of communication open.
If something is troubling you, tell me!*



What is important to me:

- *My family*
- *Striving for excellence - Always giving of my very best*

What I'm least looking forward to:

Driving back and forth to Cardiff on wet winter evenings



A dramatic, low-angle shot of a person walking up a dark, narrow staircase. The person is silhouetted against a bright light source at the top of the stairs, creating a strong backlight effect and lens flare. The walls of the staircase are dark and textured, with metal railings on both sides. In the background, a tall, multi-story building with many windows is visible, also silhouetted against the bright light. The overall mood is one of hope, progress, and reaching a goal.

Over to you...

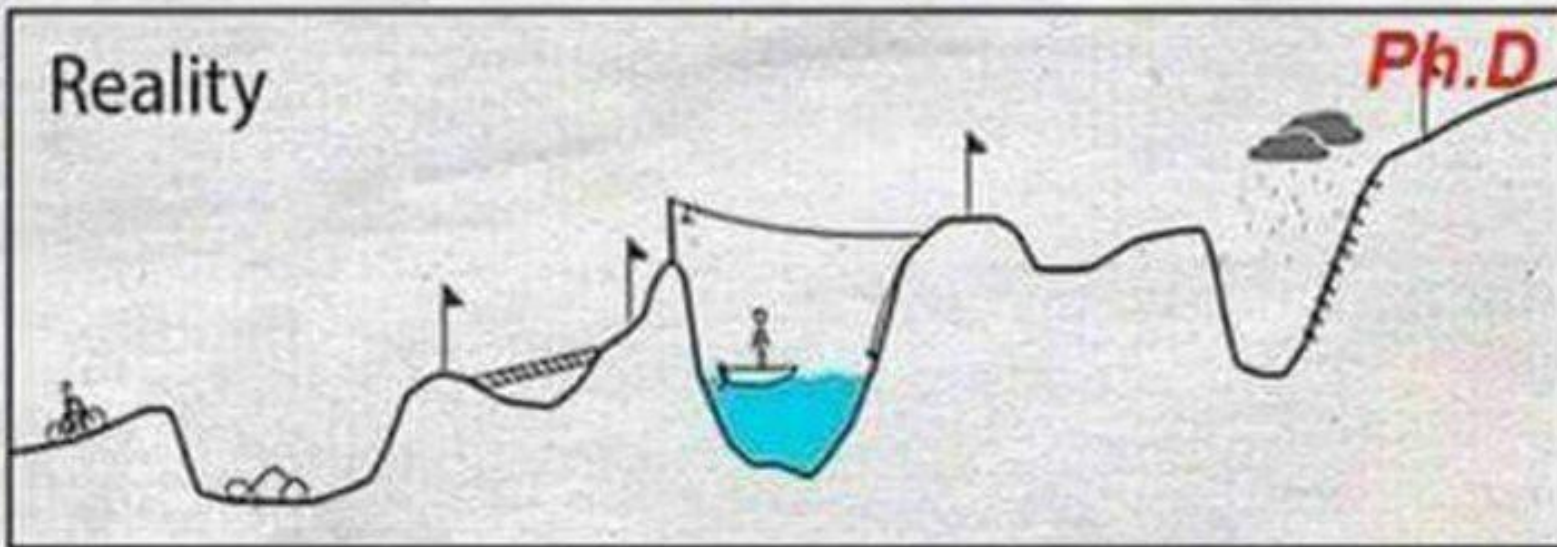
Your plan



Ph.D



Reality



Ph.D



The Professional Doctorate in Education has been developed with the Welsh Government's ambitious action plan, *Education in Wales: Our National Mission* (2017), in mind.

As such, we are committed to supporting educators in Wales – and beyond – to be lifelong professional learners that reflect on and enhance their own practice to motivate and inspire the children and young people in their care.

'Teachers should be the most dedicated students in the classroom. We will support them to be lifelong professional learners to help raise standards for all our young people,'

Wales Education Minister 2016-2021,
Kirsty Williams MS

The full-time Professional Doctorate in Education – a tale of two parts

Part 1 (1.5 years)

Candidates will study the following Level 7 modules

- Exploring Contemporary Issues in Education 1: Policy Review and Critical Analysis
- Introduction to Research Methods in Education

In the second term you will study two compulsory Level 7 modules:

- Writing a Critical Literature Review in Education
- Research Design and Management in Education

The third term this year, and Autumn Term next year, involves one practical and small-scale research development module at Level 7 (your own small-scale research project):

- Exploring Contemporary Issues in Education 2: Applying Critical Skills, Contributing to Knowledge, Leading Improvement

Module aims:



To develop the **higher-level critical and analytical skills** required to **contribute meaningfully to the education debate**, across a **variety of different platforms**.



To **critically evaluate** contrasting approaches to one or more contemporary issues relating to education in Wales, the UK and international contexts, taking into account differing educational orthodoxies.



To **critically evaluate** the presentation of contemporary educational issues and proposals in legislation, statutory and non-statutory guidance, through consultation documents and the representation of those issues and proposals in the press, social media and other channels.



To demonstrate **a critical understanding** of the development of education policy, its impact and its potential pitfalls; including its perception among policymakers, schools, teachers, parents, communities, and children and young people.

Module learning outcomes:

Upon the successful completion of this module, students should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

Assess the impact of differing approaches to the presentation of policy, proposals and educational outcomes for differing audiences.

Understand the evidence of impact that differing discourses have in promoting or mitigating the impact of educational change.

Explore critically the relationship between education policy, implementation strategy and impact locally, nationally and internationally.

Articulate an understanding of the challenges and opportunities in leading educational change successfully.

Assessment:

Assessment Component 1 – 20% (13th October 2026)

Prepare a presentation for a conference that critically evaluates a contemporary issue in education in Wales, its representation in official statements, media treatment and your understanding of its treatment in an international context (10-minute presentation).

Assessment Component 2 – 30% (2nd November 2026)

Design an academic poster outlining your detailed planning and rationale for component 3 (a written assignment reporting on a contemporary policy issue in education). Relevant documents and notes may be included to support your ideas.

Assessment Component 3 – 50% (23rd November 2026)

Prepare a policy report on a contemporary issue in education of your choosing.

assessment

Module Overview

ECDE 7017 Dates and Times:

Date	Time
September 29 th	9-4
October 6 th	9-4
October 13 th	9-1 Assessment Component 1 - presentation
October 20 th	9-1
November 2 nd	9-1 Submission of component 2 – academic poster
November 9 th	9-1
November 16 th	9-11
November 23 rd	Submission of Component 3 – policy report

Assessment Points:

Submission dates:	Assessment component
October 13 th 2026	Component 1: individual presentation
November 2 nd 2026	Component 2: academic poster
November 23 rd 2026	Component 3: policy report

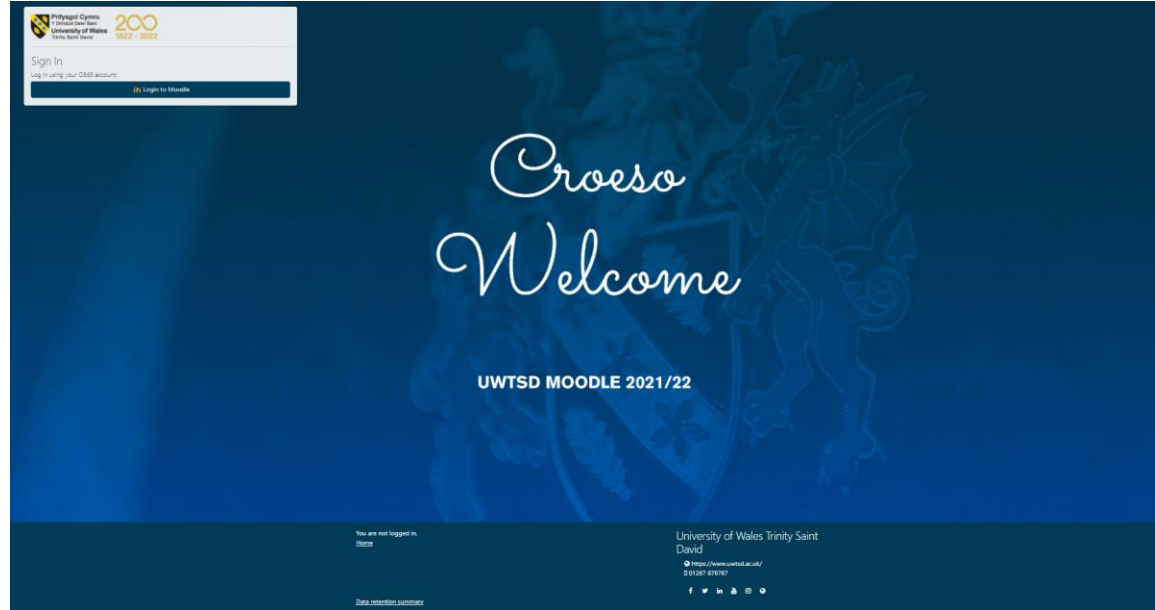


Promise

- Critical analysis
- Academic poster design and content
- Writing for a professional/academic audience:
report writing
- Policy interest/ focus

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Navigating Moodle



Username: studentnumber@student.uwtsd.ac.uk
(e.g. 7018654@student.uwtsd.ac.uk)
Password: dob08.10.22

Navigating Moodle

- Username:
studentnumber@student.uwtsd.ac.uk
(e.g. 7018654@student.uwtsd.ac.uk)
- Password: dob08.10.22



Moodle

Exploring Contemporary Issues in Education 1: Policy Review and Critical Analysis (ECDE7017)

[Course](#) [Settings](#) [Participants](#) [Grades](#) [Reports](#) [More](#) ▾

Welcome to ECDE7017

Welcome to ECDE 7017: Exploring Contemporary Issues in Education 1: Policy Review and Critical Analysis

Module Lead: Dr Julia Holloway

Email: j.holloway@uwtsd.ac.uk



MyTSD – enrolment, student photos, programme details



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Croeso i MyTSD / Welcome to MyTSD

Sylwer: Nid yw eich enw defnyddiwr MyTSD yr un peth â'ch cyfeiriad e-bost.
Please Note: Your MyTSD username is not the same as your email address.

Gwybodaeth / Information

Os yw'r hyn sy'n cael ei arddangos ar MyTSD yn anghywir, gallai hyn fod oherwydd bod gan eich porwr gopi wedi'i storio o hen fersiwn o'r wefan. I gywiro'r broblem hon, pwyswch CTRL F5. Os ydych chi'n defnyddio glianiadur, mae'n bosibl y bydd angen i chi actifadu'r bysellau swyddogaeth er mwyn i F5 weithio. I wneud hyn bydd angen i chi ddefnyddio'r botwm 'Fn' sydd fel arfer wedi'i leoli ger y bylchwr.

If MyTSD displays incorrectly this could be down to your browser having a cached copy of an older version of the webpage. To remedy this problem press CTRL F5. If you are using a laptop, you may find you need to activate the function keys for F5 to work. To do this you need to use the 'Fn' button which is usually placed near the space bar.

Wedi Anghofio Cyfrinair? / Forgotten password?

[Cliciwch yma i'w ailosod](#)
[Click here to reset](#)

Cynnal a Chadw / Maintenance

Gwaith Hanfodol i Gynnal a Chadw TG

Ni fydd MyTSD ar gael rhwng 08:00am a 12:30pm ar Dydd Sul 10/10/2021 oherwydd gwaith cynnal a chadw hanfodol.

Essential IT Maintenance

MyTSD will not be available between 08:00am to 12:30pm on Sunday 10/10/2021 due to essential maintenance.

Mewngofnodi / Log In

Enw Defnyddiwr
Username

Cyfrinair
Password

[Mewngofnodi / Log in](#)

Username: student number
Password: dob08.10.22



ECDE7017_GRP

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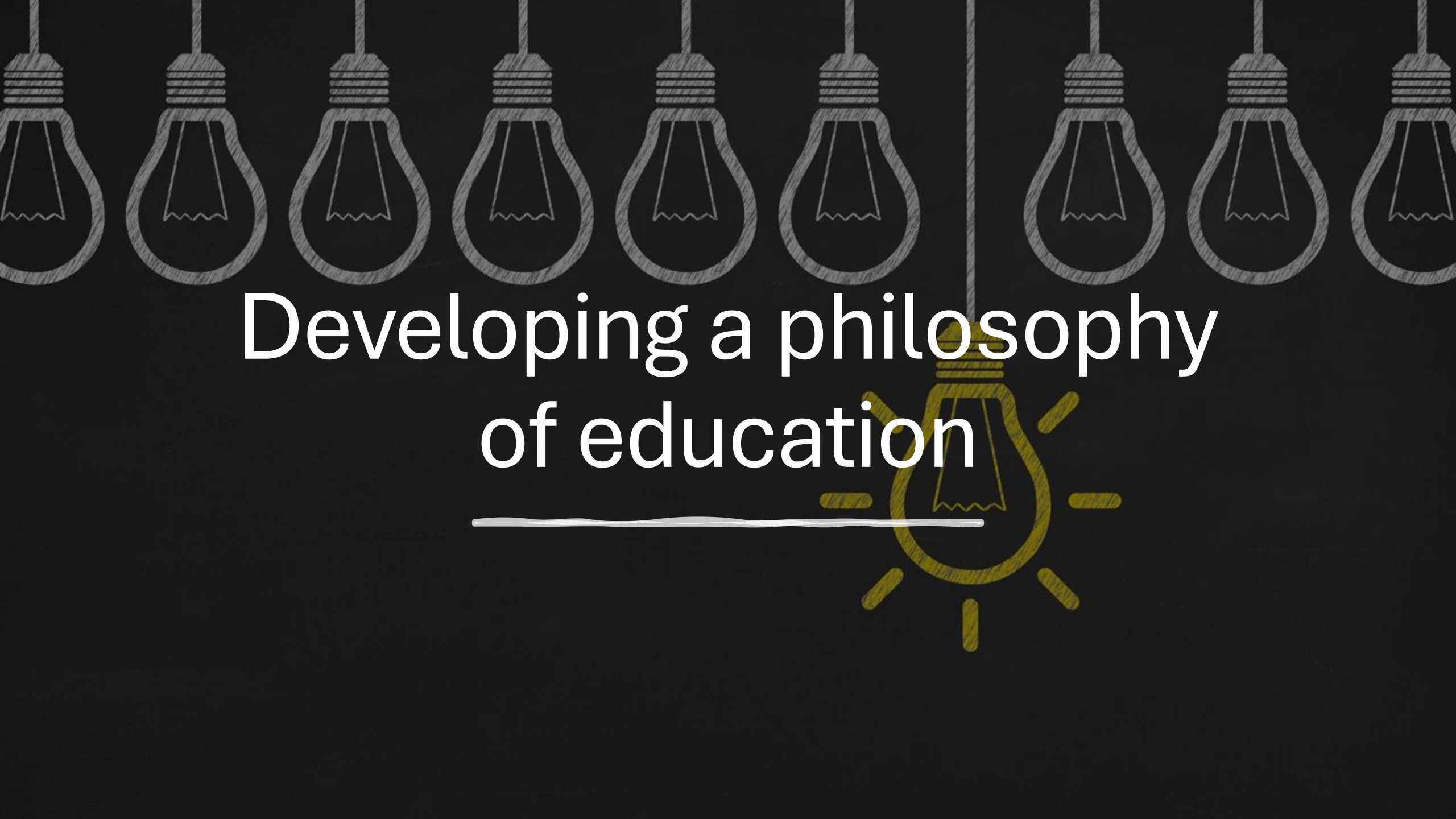
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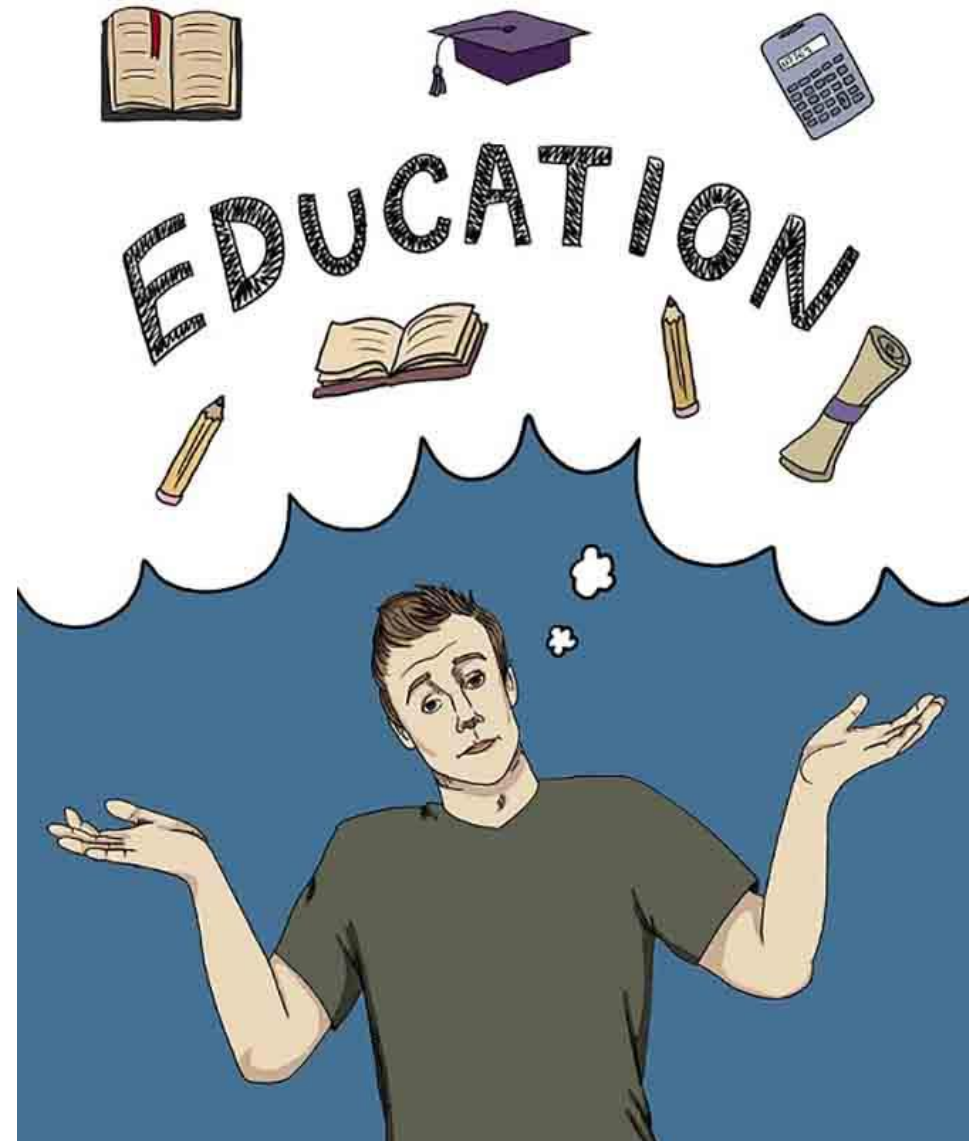
The education ecosystem





Developing a philosophy of education

What is the purpose of education?





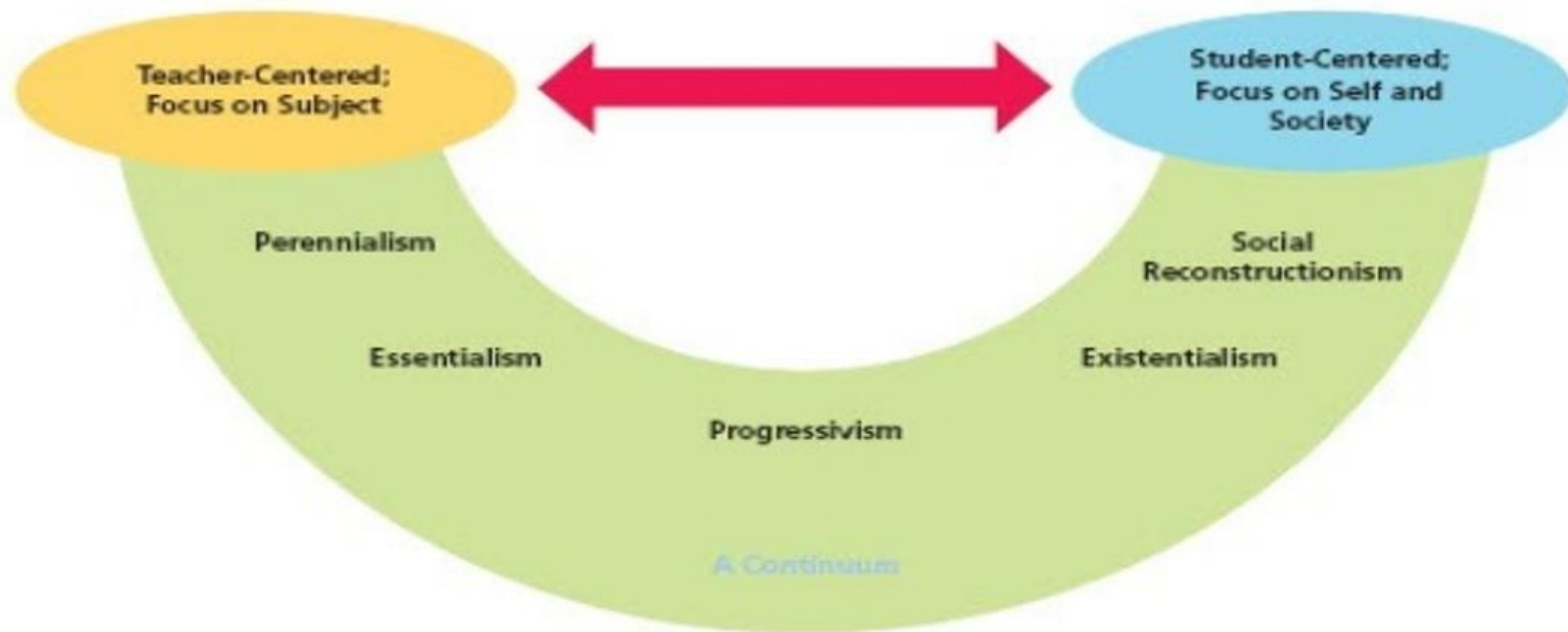
Share your ideas



Philo – ‘love’
Sophos – ‘wisdom’



Philosophies of Teaching



Fact finding
task: Key
philosophies
of education



Essentialism

- Essentialism strives to teach students the accumulated knowledge of our civilisation through core courses in the traditional academic disciplines. Essentialists aim to instil students with the 'essentials' of academic knowledge, patriotism, and character development. This traditional or back-to-basics approach is meant to train the mind, promote reasoning, and ensure a common culture in Britain.



Essentialism

William Bagley (1874-1946) believed that the major role of the school is to produce a literate, intelligent electorate; he argued against electives while stressing thinking skills to help students apply their academic knowledge.



E.D.Hirsch (1928 -) established the Core Knowledge Foundation to develop a prescribed curriculum in subject areas, including technology.



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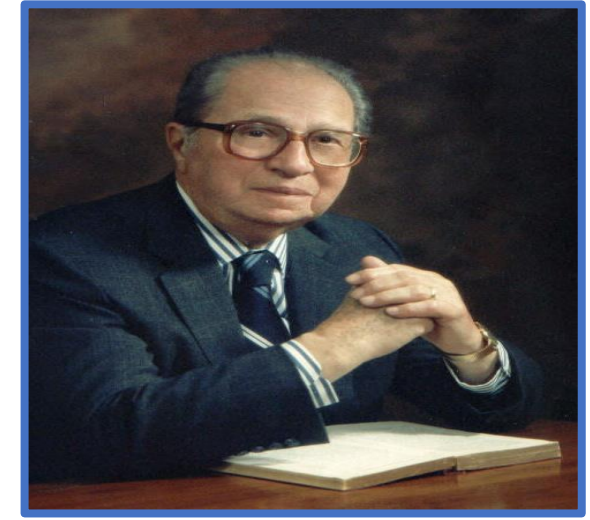
APLP
PDPA
Partnersiaeth Dysgu Proffesiynol Yr Athrofa
Yr Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership
Transforming Teaching Together

Perennialism

- Perennialism is a cousin of essentialism. Both advocate teacher-centred classrooms. Both tolerate little flexibility in the curriculum. Both implement rigorous standards. Both aim to sharpen students' intellectual powers and enhance their moral qualities.
- Perennialists organise their schools around books, ideas, and concepts, and criticise essentialists for the vast amounts of factual information they require their students to absorb for 'cultural literacy' Perennial means 'everlasting' – a perennialist education focuses on enduring themes and questions that span the ages. They recommend that students learn from the Great Books – works by history's finest thinkers and writers, books as meaningful today as when they were first written.



Perennialism



Robert M. Hutchins (1899 – 1979)

During the 16 years he served as president of the University of Chicago, Hutchins abolished fraternities, football, and compulsory attendance, and introduced the Great Books program.

Mortimer Adler (1902 – 2001) renewed interest in perennialism with the publication of *The Paideia Proposal* (1982). Adler advocated that all students be educated in the classics and that education be a lifelong venture.



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Progressivism

- Progressivism organises schools around the concerns, curiosity, and real-world experiences of students. The progressive teacher facilitates learning by helping students formulate meaningful questions and devise strategies to answer those questions. Answers are not drawn from lists or even Great Books; they are discovered through real-world experience. Progressivism is the educational application of a philosophy called pragmatism. According to pragmatism, the way to determine if an idea has merit is simple: test it.



Progressivism



A founder of progressivism, John Dewey (1859 – 1952) not only worked to democratise schools, he also fought for women's suffrage and the right of teachers to form unions.

Nel Noddings (1929 -) believes that an ethic of care can best be cultivated when the curriculum is centred around the interest of students. Schools are challenged to nourish the physical, spiritual, occupational, and intellectual development of each child.



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Social Reconstructionism

- Social reconstructionism encourages schools, teachers and students to focus their studies and energies on alleviating pervasive social inequities and, as the name implies, reconstruct society in a new and more just social order. Although social reconstructionists agree with progressivists that schools should concentrate on the needs of students, they split from progressivism in the 1920s after growing impatient with the slow pace of change in schools and society.



Social Reconstructionism

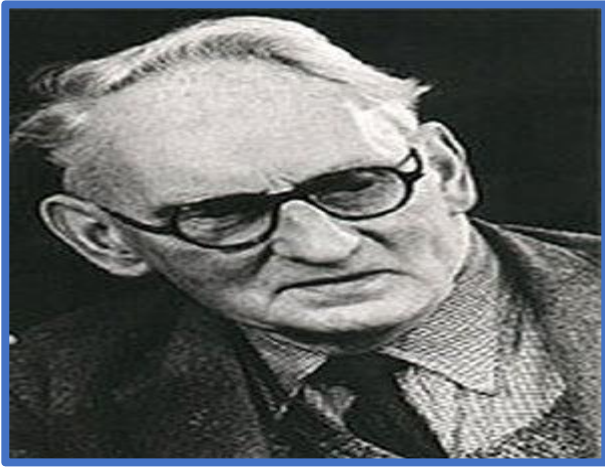


George S.Counts (1907 – 1974)
viewed education as an important
tool to counter social injustices, and,
if educators questioned their own
power to make critical decisions,
Counts's plea was to “Just do it!”

bell hooks' (1952-)
theory of education,
engaged pedagogy, helps
students and teachers
develop a critical
consciousness of race,
gender, and class biases.

Existentialism

- Existentialism asserts that the purpose of education is to help children find meaning and direction in their live, and it rejects the notion that adults should, or could, direct meaningful learning for children. Existentialists do not believe that 'truth' is objective and applicable to all. Instead, each of us must look within ourselves to discover our own truth, our own purpose in life. Each student should decide what he or she needs to learn, and when to learn it.



Existentialism



A.S. Neill's (1883 – 1973) attitude toward education stemmed from his own problems as a student, problems which fuelled his creation of Summerhill, a school that encouraged youngsters to make their own decisions about what and when to learn.

Maxine Greene (1917 - 2014) believed that it is crucial for students and teachers to create meaning in their lives. Greene saw the humanities and the arts as catalysts for moving people to critical awareness and conscious engagement with the world.



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The world Adding Quality to the World Transforming Teaching Together

A close-up photograph of three dragonflies perched on a green, spiky plant. The dragonflies are positioned in a row, with the one on the right being the largest and most prominent. They have large, bulging eyes and translucent wings. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green. Overlaid on the image is the text "Other philosophies..." in a white, serif font, with a thin white horizontal line underneath it.

Other philosophies...

Which of
the philosophies
do you feel
closely aligned
with and why?



Inventory of Philosophy of education



A Essentialism (Jack)	B Perennialism (Elin)	C Progressivism (Mark)	D Social Reconstructionism (Jon)	E Existentialism (Cara)
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1. _____	2. _____	2. _____	4. _____	5. _____
6. _____	7. _____	8. _____	9. _____	10. _____
11. _____	12. _____	13. _____	14. _____	15. _____
16. _____	17. _____	18. _____	19. _____	20. _____
21. _____	22. _____	23. _____	24. _____	25. _____
Score: _____	Score: _____	Score: _____	Score: _____	Score: _____

The education ecosystem



What are
the key
priorities in
education?

Locally?

Nationally?

Internationally?

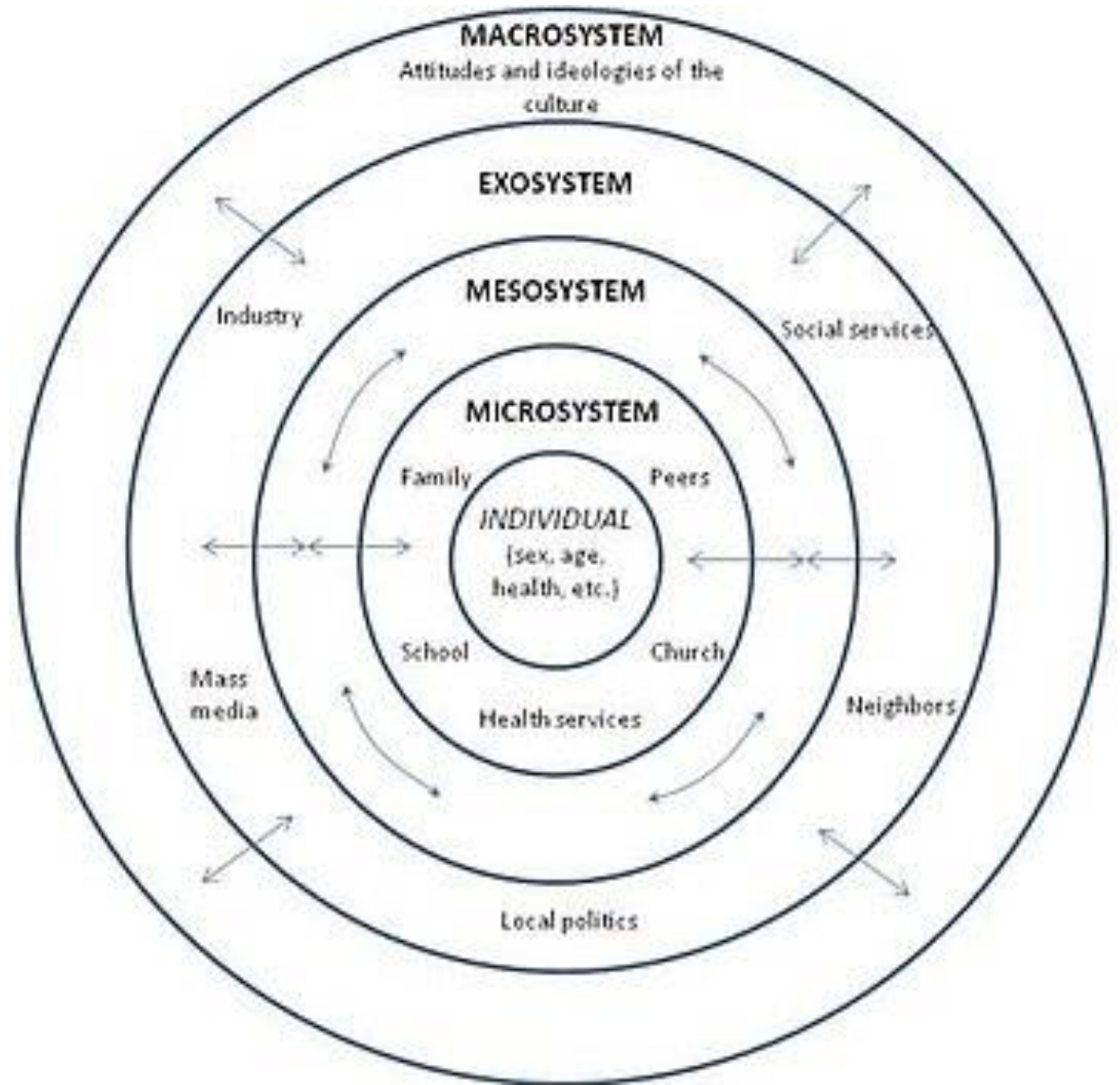
A background image showing a row of sharpened colored pencils in various colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, black) standing upright against a dark blue background. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Exploring contemporary issues in education: establishing priorities

- Children and young people
- Adult learners (including those in higher education)
- Teachers
- Parents
- Schools
- Communities in cities, towns or villages
- Policymakers

	Children and Young People			Adult Learners			Teachers	
			Children and Young People	Adult Learners (including those in HE)	Teachers			
	Communities		Communities	Contemporary Issues in Education	Local Authorities		Local Authorities	
			Parents	Policy Makers	School			
	Parents			Policy Makers			School	

Bronfenbrenner and an ecological system



A contemporary policy issue and a policy framework (Hodgson and Spours, 2006)

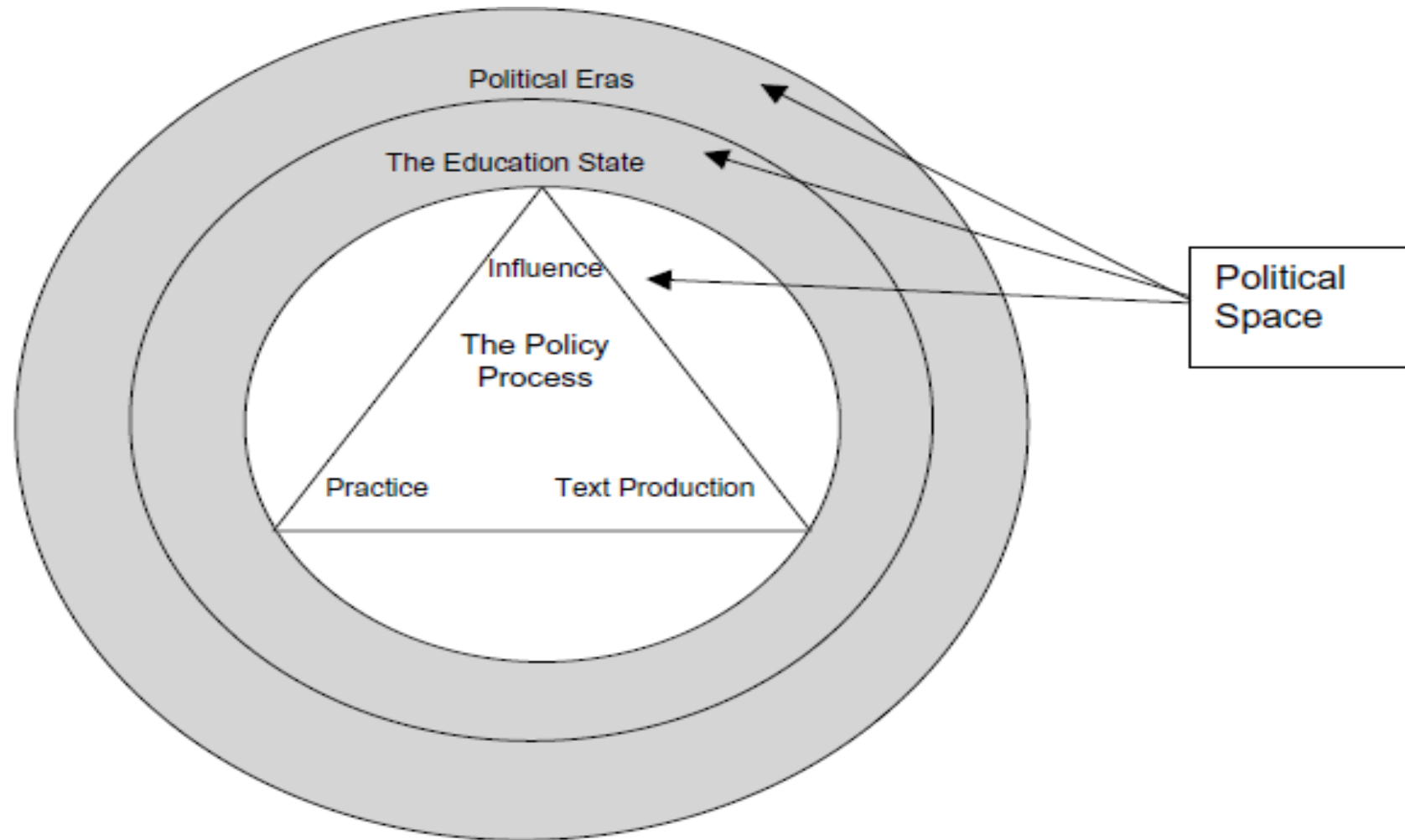


Figure 1. An analytical policy framework

Exploring Contemporary Issues In Education :

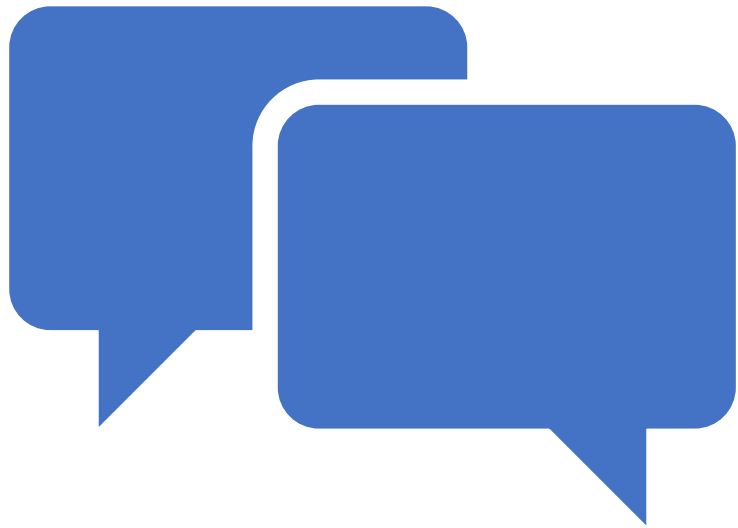
Activity / In a group – review your list and priorities in education

Discuss

- What are the similarities and differences ?
- Are there priorities that are specific to one group- or are they shared?

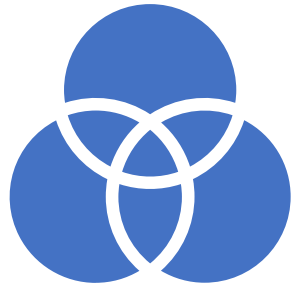
Individually

- Make a note of an issue that interests you

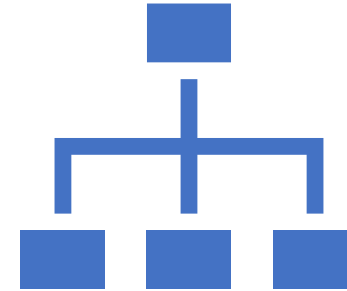


Group discussion

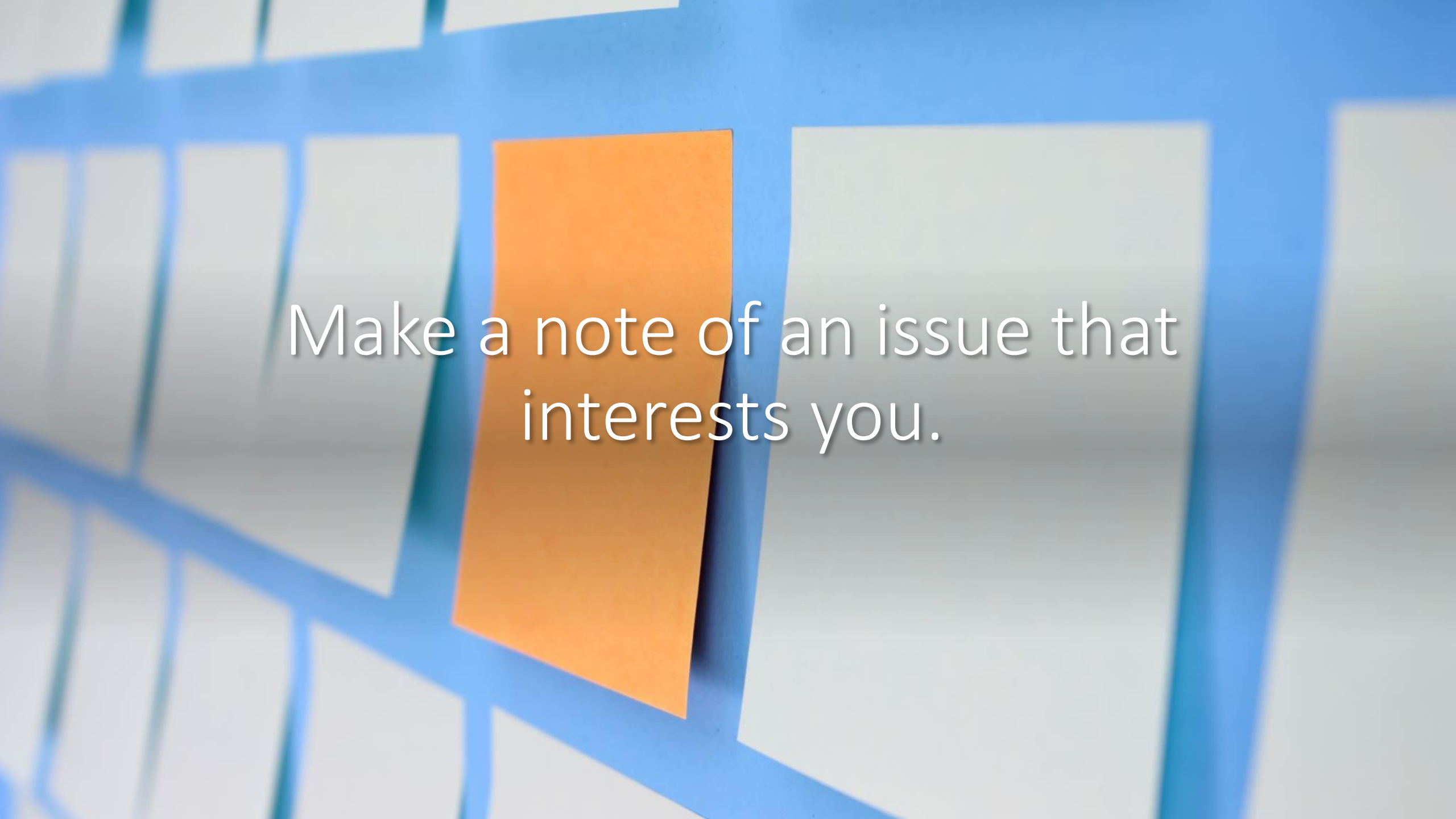
Review your list of priorities in education



What are the similarities & differences ?



Are there priorities that are specific to one group- or are they shared?

The background features a complex, abstract pattern of overlapping blue and white geometric shapes, creating a sense of depth and movement. A solid orange rectangle is positioned in the upper left quadrant, partially overlapping the blue shapes. Centered over this orange rectangle and the surrounding blue pattern is the text "Make a note of an issue that interests you." in a white, sans-serif font.

Make a note of an issue that
interests you.



critical *adjective* (NOT PLEASED)

**saying that someone or something
is bad or wrong**

critical *adjective* (IMPORTANT)

**of the greatest importance to the way
things might happen**

critical *adjective* (GIVING OPINIONS)

**giving opinions or judgments on books,
plays, films, etc**



Critical thinking...

Critical thinking 'examines assumptions, discerns hidden values, evaluates evidence, and assesses conclusions.'

(Petress, 2004)

'Critical thinking is the art of making clear, reasoned judgements based on interpreting, understanding, applying and synthesising evidence gathered from observation, reading and experimentation.' (Burns & Sinfield, 2016)

'Critical thinking means questioning not only assumptions of others, but also questioning your own assumptions.'
(Barnet & Bedau, 2011)

Six questions to trigger critical thinking:

Where did you find the information?

Was it presented to you? Did you search for it?

How hard did you have to look? Is your source reputable?

How has the author/speaker come to their conclusions?

Is their line of reasoning logical? What did they do to come to their conclusions? Are they reliable/based on evidence?

When was it written/said?

Is it recent and relevant?

What are the key messages

or results/findings?

What are its claims to new knowledge? What is their point? How does it compare to your own?

Who has written/said it?

Is the author speaking as an individual or on behalf of an organisation/employer? Are they an expert/do they have credibility? Can you identify bias?

Why has it been written/said?

Who is it aimed at? What are its aims?

Advanced British Standard: Sunak qualification will replace A-levels and T-levels

16 hours ago · Comments



GETTY IMAGES

By Julia Bryson and Branwen Jeffreys

BBC News

A-levels and T-levels will be replaced by a new qualification for all school leavers in England.

All 16 to 19-year-olds will typically study five subjects as part of the new Advanced British Standard, including some English and maths to 18.

Where did you find the information?

What are the key messages or results/findings?



How has the author/speaker come to their conclusions?

Who has written/said it?

When was it written/said?

Why has it been written/said?

One-word Ofsted grades should stay, says government



Hazel Shearing

Education correspondent

[@hazelshearing](#)

The system of one-word Ofsted judgements for schools in England has "significant benefits" and should stay, according to the government.

It said the grades, such as "outstanding" or "inadequate", gave parents an important summary of local schools.

The sister of head teacher Ruth Perry, who took her own life after her school was downgraded, said she was deeply upset by the government's response.

Where did you find the information?

What are the key messages or results/findings?

How has the author/speaker come to their conclusions?

Who has written/said it?

When was it written/said?

Why has it been written/said?

Ofsted single-word school ratings to be scrapped immediately

Labour announces end of high-stakes judgments, to be replaced by report cards that grade schools in four categories

- 'Landmark moment': Ruth Perry family campaign ends single-word reports



Previously, Ofsted awarded one of four headline grades to the schools it inspects: outstanding, good, requires improvement, or inadequate. Photograph: Danny Lawson/PA

Single-word Ofsted judgments for state schools will be scrapped with immediate effect to be replaced by report cards aimed at improving standards and helping parents to better understand schools' strengths and weaknesses.

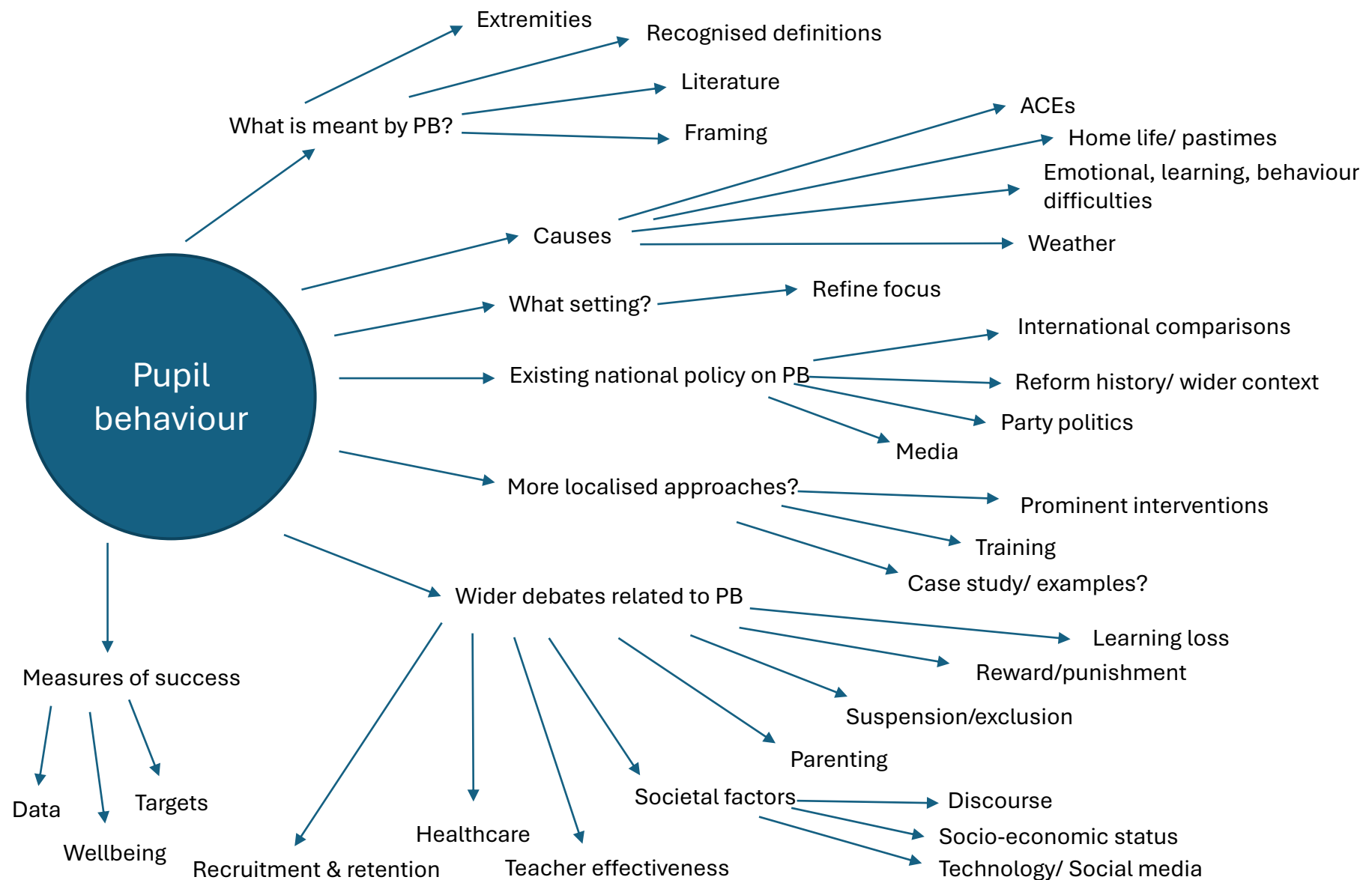
The four headline ratings currently awarded by the inspections watchdog in England - outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate - will go as part of radical changes announced on Monday by the government.

In their place, state schools inspected this year will be graded on quality of education, behaviour, personal development and leadership. Independent schools, early years settings, colleges and children's social care providers will follow.

Education unions and the teaching profession welcomed the changes to the school inspection system, first promised by Labour before the election following the suicide of the primary headteacher Ruth Perry.

Critical thinking means...

- Being forensic in your analysis of a claim/policy/intervention
- Considering a range of views – never rely on a single source; are there alternative viewpoints?
- Careful construction of an argument, based on evidence
- Justifying your position – and providing sound rationale for the decisions you take (feel free to disagree, but must explain why)
- Spelling it out – never assume that your audience knows what you know
- You don't take anything for granted... ask questions and think about the 'bigger picture'



REPORT, DOCUMENT

'Fostering mutual respect' promoting positive behaviours in secondary school: government response

What we plan to do in response to Estyn's report and recommendations.

First published: 13 May 2025 Last updated: 13 May 2025

 [Print this page](#)

In this page

[Report details](#)

[Summary of main findings](#)

[Recommendations 8 to 10 for the Welsh Government](#)

[Publication details](#)

Report details

The (then) Minister for Education and the Welsh Language requested Estyn for advice on learner behaviour in schools in the annual remit letter to Estyn for 2024 to 2025. This was intended to complement a request for advice on learner behaviour in further education colleges.

Summary of main findings

The report highlights the challenges that secondary schools face in relation to learner behaviour and includes effective practice case studies. It suggests approaches to promote positive behaviours in secondary schools. The report draws on information from visits to 24 secondary and all-age schools, discussions with officers from 10 local authorities and findings from national surveys conducted with headteachers, staff and pupils, as well as evaluations of inspections undertaken between 2022 to 2024.

schools across Wales: effective strategies and mitigations, 2025 (summary)

Teachers in Wales have reported a rise in challenging and disruptive behaviours from learners. This report explores effective strategies and mitigations to manage this.

First published: 21 May 2025 Last updated: 21 May 2025

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In this page

[Introduction](#)

[Recommendations](#)

[Methodology](#)

[Limitations](#)

Introduction

This study was commissioned to explore current trends in challenging behaviours, evaluate evidence-based strategies for encouraging positive behaviours, and identify gaps in both research and practice. The need for this work has become even more pressing following the pandemic as schools face increasing behavioural challenges.



Fostering mutual respect – Promoting positive behaviours in secondary school

May 2025

Boy in court charged with attempted murder after teacher stabbed at school



PEMBROKESHIRE HERALD

Police said there would be more officers in the area in the days following the incident

'Close to zero impact': US study casts doubt on effect of phone ban in schools

Researchers say findings are not reason to shy away from restrictions as MPs consider ban in England's schools

5 May 2026 17:49 BST



'Defiance' from parents over bad school behaviour



GETTY IMAGES

Backchat and disrespect from pupils is one of the biggest issues they face in class, according to school staff

Bethan Lewis

Education & family correspondent, BBC Wales News

The Troubling Impact of Online Culture on School Behaviour

By Sara Spinks

EDUCATION | ONLINE SAFETY | MISOGYNY | BULLYING | SOCIAL ISOLATION | TEACHING



Don't make us security guards, says teacher stabbed by pupil



Liz Hopkin was stabbed by a student during break time in April 2024

Bethan Lewis >

W > News > Education > Wales Schools

Teacher kicked, bitten and pelted with shoes three times a week quits job

The assistant headteacher said she had 'walked away from the profession' for her own health, adding: 'I didn't go to work to be hurt'



Comments 22

NEWS By **Abbie Wightwick** Education Editor

00:01, 29 Jan 2026

Teachers told not to use the word bullies to describe children who torment their classmates - in case it upsets them

See more Daily Mail on Google - save us as a Preferred Source

By GRAHAM GRANT, SCOTTISH HOME AFFAIRS EDITOR

PUBLISHED: 07:19, 14 November 2024 | UPDATED: 08:09, 14 November 2024



Teachers have been told not to use the word 'bullies' to avoid upsetting them – and ordered to call in police when pupils are suspected of hate **crime**.

Latest guidance from the **SNP** government aimed at cracking down on bullying highlights the importance of tackling prejudice – including misgendering – and 'microaggressions'.

This is the term given to an intentional or unintentional casual slight based on race

W > News > Latest Wales News > Education

Headteacher says mobile phones causing serious increase in bad behaviour as school warns parents

Hugo Hutchison, a headteacher in Wales, says poor conduct has been escalating and is mirrored in the growing number of exclusions across both primary and secondary schools



Comments 11

NEWS By Twm Owen

13:40, 29 Jan 2026 | Updated 14:05, 29 Jan 2026

A 'masculinity crisis' is brewing in UK schools, union says

Misogynistic abuse of female staff is increasing, leaving teachers feeling 'traumatised' and 'humiliated'



Theory:

- Behaviourism e.g. Skinner - operant conditioning; Pavlov – classic conditioning
- Social learning theory – Bandura
- Humanistic approaches – Maslow – Hierarchy of Needs; Carl Rogers – positive relationships
- Cognitive and Developmental theories – Vygotsky, Piaget
- Ecological systems theory – Bronfenbrenner
- Assertive Discipline – Canter
- Choice Theory – Glasser
- Restorative approaches
- Behaviour, power and performativity (Ball, 2003)
- Trauma-informed/relational
- Self-Determination Theory – Deci and Ryan – motivation/autonomy

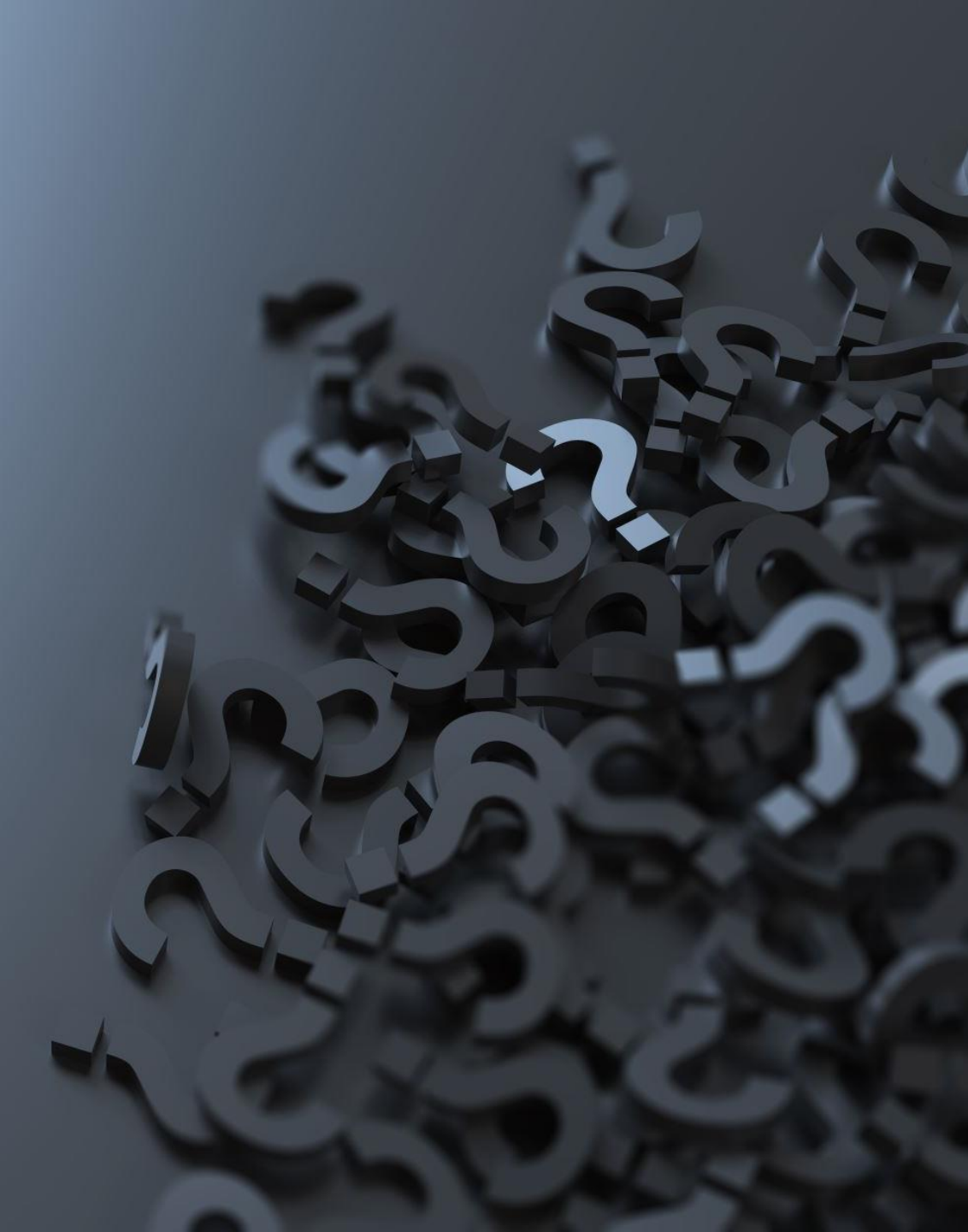
Create your own spider
diagram on an area on
interest to you



Activity:

Criticality and critical thinking

1. Choose an issue and discuss with your partner using the previous slides on 'Criticality and critical thinking' (10 mins)
2. Individually take notes (10 mins)



Ask yourself:

- Are there any hidden assumptions or agendas?
- Is there a political motivation?
- Does the evidence provided support the conclusions made?
- Is the analysis fair? (subjective vs objective)
- Why was something done – and what was its significance?
- Is the timing significant?
- How does one interpretation compare to another?
- Why might authors agree/disagree?
- Do opinions change over time?
- What is the weight of evidence and how convincing is it?
- Are the sources reputable?
- What are their strengths/weaknesses?

Task: consider
how your chosen
educational issue
is presented in the
media



A pile of dark, 3D question marks on a dark background, creating a sense of depth and mystery.

Ask yourself:

- Are there any hidden assumptions or agendas?
- Is there a political motivation?
- Does the evidence provided support the conclusions made?
- Is the analysis fair? (subjective vs objective)
- Why was something done – and what was its significance?
- Is the timing significant?
- How does one interpretation compare to another?
- Why might authors agree/disagree?
- Do opinions change over time?
- What is the weight of evidence and how convincing is it?
- Are the sources reputable?
- What are their strengths/weaknesses?

Be prepared to present
your critical insights in
our next session...





Any questions?

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