# Identity and Instrumentality: History in the Scottish School Curriculum, 1992-2017

Joe Smith
*University of Stirling, UK*

**ABSTRACT:** This paper explores changes in the Scottish history curriculum over the last quarter-century and interprets these in the context of wider debates about Scottish nationhood. By comparing the framing of history within Scotland's two national curriculum documents[1] of this period (5-14 Guidelines and Curriculum for Excellence) it is argued that an implicit narrative of national identity has emerged. This curricular nationalism is not the nationalism of separatism, but rather of a national sense of self which informs both how the past is viewed, and Scotland's future relationship with the world. The paper develops this contention using concepts proposed from Arnott and Ozga (2010) regarding an 'inward-facing' discourse of heritage and citizenship and the 'outward-facing' discourse of employability and global competitiveness While this emergent curricular nationalism has paralleled growing support for self-determination, the paper does not posit a causal relationship between the two. Instead it implies that both are consequences of the discursive spaces opened by devolution and the recreation of the Scottish parliament in 1999.

**KEYWORDS:** History Curriculum; History Education; Nationalism; Scotland.

## Inntroduction

In 2002, Scottish Education Minister, Cathy Jamieson, called for a 'National Debate on Education'. Three years earlier, the Scottish parliament had convened for the first time since 1707 following a s referendum on devolution of powers. Although education in Scotland had always been distinct from the rest of the UK, the existing de facto curriculum – the *5-14 Guidelines* (SOED, 1993) – had been published by the 'Scottish Office' of the UK Parliament, an authorship which implied a somewhat colonial relationship between Scotland and London. The new parliament provided an opportunity for Scotland to assert its autonomy; in the words of Jamieson, The National Debate was to "sharpen the focus of what Scotland wants from its schools in the 21st century" so that the government might "carefully plan how to realise that vision from where we are today" (Scottish Executive, 2002, p. 5). Although focused on education, these debates can be seen as proxies for larger questions about the Scottish nation as a whole: How did a devolved Scotland see itself? What kind of future did Scotland want? What was Scotland's place in the world? As Green reminds us, education is "both parent and child to the nation state" (1997, p. 1).

The curriculum which emerged from the National Debate was titled a *A Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Executive, 2004) and differed markedly from the previous *5-14 Guidelines*. This paper looks closely at the framing of history in the two curricula and explores the nature of these differences and offers an explanation for them. It is argued that *Curriculum for Excellence* was conceived at a historic moment where two powerful (and seemingly

antagonistic) discourses converged. The first of these was the flowering of national self-belief that came with the recreation of the Scottish parliament. The second was a supranational trend for education systems in the west to homogenise and coalesce around an instrumental business-friendly approach to education (Avis, et al., 1996; Ozga & Lingard, 2007; Priestley, 2002). While Green (1997) has argued that the processes of globalisation inevitably diminished nationalism in the school curricula of advanced economies, Scotland stood apart from this: as an emerging nation, its nationalism fused with its globalism.

Following Arnott and Ozga (2010; 2016), it is suggested that these pressures created a form of civic nationalism consisting of an *inward* discourse which emphasises national 'flourishing' and an *outward* discourse which "foregrounds economic growth and references skills, smartness and success' and 'competitiveness'" (2010, p. 344). Although Arnott and Ozga associate these discourses with the Scottish National Party, it is argued that the same national self-image is evident in *Curriculum for Excellence* which aspires to the creation of successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors (Scottish Executive, 2004). These discourses are, in turn, manifested in the changing shape of history in the Scottish curriculum. In the shift from *5-14* to *Curriculum for Excellence*, Scottish history and identity has been given greater prominence but so too have employability skills and citizenship.

The paper will begin with a brief comparison of how History is framed in the *5-14 Guidelines* and *Curriculum for Excellence*. It will then move to an outline description of the kinds of nationalism implicit in the later curriculum, before exploring three dimensions of this nationalism (heritage, employability and citizenship) in more forensic detail.

## History in the *5-14 National Guidelines* (1993-2008)

The 5-14 Guidelines document (SOED, 1993) is sometimes referred to as Scotland's first national curriculum (Kirk & Glaister, 1994), but, unlike the prescriptive English National Curriculum which was conceived at the same time, it had no statutory force. In terms of history, the curriculum largely affirmed the Scottish tradition of an interdisciplinary 'social subjects' approach (McGonigle, 1999). In the guidelines, historical learning was covered by a strand within social subjects termed, 'understanding people in the past'. The social subjects were themselves, in turn, considered a subset of a larger curriculum area called Environmental Studies.

Although the nested position of history implied that it had been accorded a lowly status, the content and framing of the curriculum suggested a sophisticated discipline-oriented approach. As well as the need for "adopting methods of historical enquiry" (SOED, 1993, p. 34), the aims of 'understanding people in the past' were stated, as outlined in table 1.

| |
|---|
| Studying people, events and societies of significance in the past in a variety of local, national, European and world contexts. |
| Developing an understanding of change and continuity over time, and of cause and effect in historical contexts. |
| Developing an understanding of time and historical sequence. |
| Developing an understanding of the nature of historical evidence by using a range of types of evidence to develop and extend knowledge about the past. |
| Considering the meaning of heritage and the influence of the past upon the present. |

**Table 1**: Aims of 'Understanding People in the Past' (SOED, 1993, p. 34).

These aims outlined a procedural definition of the subject: that the purpose of a historical education was not simply to develop a knowledge of the past, but also an understanding of how historians make sense of the past.  In this respect, history in *5-14* shared a common intellectual ancestry in the Schools' Council for History Project (Schools' History Project, 1976; Rogers, 1979) with the contemporaneous English *National Curriculum.*  This can best be seen in the way the 5-14 Guidelines conceived progression in history. In keeping with the approach outlined by Coltham and Fines (1971) *5-14* assumes progression in conceptual understanding across the whole age range. Thus, a focus on 'change and continuity' is emphasised throughout school, but whereas a child of 7 is expected to understand "changes affecting their own and other people's lives"; at 11 this has become "changes which have taken place over a period of time and comparison… with the present"; and at 14 'why some features change while others show continuity' (p. 34).

*5-14* also avoided prescribing which periods should be taught. Instead students were required to "experience a broad range of historical study" in "five main historical eras" (i.e. Ancient, Medieval, early modern, 1700-1900 and the Twentieth Century). Students were also explicitly expected to encounter "some studies which trace particular developments across time" (p. 34). The result was a curriculum which afforded considerable autonomy to teachers (although this autonomy was not always recognised (MacDonald, 1994; Priestley & Minty, 2013).  It was also a curriculum which differed markedly from elsewhere in the UK – in their comparison the history curricula in the four nations of the UK, Phillips, *et al.* (1999) suggested that the 'organising principles' of the Scottish curriculum were 'Autonomy, choice, flexibility' in contrast to the English emphasis on 'citizenship' and 'central control'.

Several writers have proposed that interdisciplinary teaching of social studies militates against effective disciplinary history teaching. Osborne (2004) argues that social studies inevitably foregrounds social cohesion, while Levesque (2008) suggests that the existence of a social studies tradition in North America prevented the adoption of a disciplinary approach there until the late 1990s.  The framing of history within 5-14 would seem to stand in opposition to this: combining a sharp disciplinary definition and a social subjects focus.

## History in *Curriculum for Excellence* (2008-present)

The *5-14 Guidelines* underwent review between 1998 and 2000 (LTS, 2000), but no substantive change was made to either the status or content of the history curriculum. The review did contain nods towards greater independence for each subject, including the suggestion that strands (of which 'Understanding People in the Past' was one) 'should be the main organizational features for planning' and that 'pupil attainment should be reported on in a way that aids progression in each of the social subjects' (p. 1).  Despite these suggestions, historical education in Scotland remained under the umbrella of both Social Studies and Environmental Studies, and interdisciplinary planning and teaching was encouraged.

However, the modesty of these changes masked the more fundamental constitutional change arising from Scottish devolution.  In 1999, the first Scottish Parliament since 1707 was formed (then known as The Scottish Executive) and in March 2002, a 'National Debate on Education' was announced by Education Minister, Cathy Jamieson. The consultation process attracted some 1,500 responses (Munn, et al., 2004) and in 2004 the outline document of *A Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Executive, 2004) was published.  The National Debate had shown the Scottish public to be fairly conservative in their aspirations for the new curriculum (Munn, et al., 2004, pp. 440-448), but there was a shared view among policy makers that curriculum review had to mean more than a simple updating of *5-14* (Scottish Executive, 2003; 2004).

CfE was based around four 'capacities' or aims: the development of successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors (Scottish Executive, 2004). Initially, policy makers gave the impression that this approach was incompatible with traditional subject disciplines with Minister for Education, Peter Peacock, saying of history "perhaps we will not be teaching it in the same way in a timetabled slot marked history, but as a contributor to broader forms of learning" (Munro, 2005). However, History's place in the curriculum (albeit under the title 'People, past events and societies') was assured after a campaign by the Scottish Association of Teachers of History (Henry, 2006). History remained a 'social subject', and would be expected to contribute the four capacities. A 2006 document, *Principles and Practice*, defined exactly what this contribution would be in terms of the 'experiences and outcomes' to which a child was entitled. In this way, history was instrumentalised by stealth – permitted to retain its unique identity, but placed in the service of broader educational aims.

## New Nationalism and *Curriculum for Excellence*

Given the narrow defeat for independence (45%-55%) in the 2015 referendum, it is tempting to conflate Scottish nationalism with Scottish separatism. However, although the terms are not mutually exclusive, they are most definitely not interchangeable. In the pre-devolution era, Nairn clarified this when he wrote that politics in Scotland has turned into an orthographic battle between [nationalism in] the upper and the lower cases' (Nairn, 1995). While upper-case Nationalism called for "Scots to abandon their silent way and recover voice and presence as a nation-state", lower case nationalism proposes that culture and identity are sufficient to sustain nationality. As Nairn reminds us, when defined in these terms "almost everyone is some sort of nationalist."

Despite rising support for Scottish independence and electoral victory for the separatist SNP in the 2011 and 2015 Scottish elections, it is this 'lower case' nationalism which has seen the biggest gains. Research by Paterson *et al.* (2001, p. 105) indicated that the 1999 referendum which re-created the Scottish parliament caused a surge in people self-identifying as 'Scottish' as opposed to 'British'. The most recent surveys concluded that that 52% view their identity as primarily Scottish, 29% as equally Scottish and British and just 8% as primarily British (Scotcen, 2016). This weaker form of nationalism pervades *Curriculum for Excellence,* and represents a consensus view of nationhood which crosses party-political divisions: this was a curriculum written under a unionist Labour/ Liberal Democrat coalition which was adopted wholesale by the separatist SNP following their 2007 election victory.

As Billig (1995) has argued, nationality is usual a 'banal' characteristic, taken for granted much of the time and which is only becomes overwhelming in certain circumstances (such as migration or war). However, nationalism, even in Nairn's lower case, is underpinned by a view that there is something unique and valuable about a particular country. In the case of Scotland, a distinctive language, culture, landscape and traditions buttress national identity. Scotland's education system offers a good example of this distinctiveness. Supposedly underpinned by values of inclusivity (Paterson, et al., 2001) and breadth (Davie, 1961), it is often contrasted with the narrow elitism of England by proud Scots (McCrone, 1992). Like all national myths, it is debateable whether these principles are reflected in reality, but it is, nevertheless, part of the narrative which shapes Scottish identity.

However, the nationalism which guides *Curriculum for Excellence* is something more than nostalgia, it is coupled with a belief that Scotland and its people have a unique contribution to make to the world. The education system, therefore, is both a site of identity construction and the vehicle through which this identity can be mobilised. It is the self-confidence conferred by

nationhood and patriotism which enables Scotland to take its place on the global stage.  The remainder of this paper will substantiate this argument by analysing the way in which three themes (heritage, employability and citizenship) are treated differently by *5-14* and *Curriculum for Excellence.*  A comparison of the two curricula will show a considerable shift in emphasis: heritage moves from something to be critiqued to something which is to be appreciated, while employability skills and citizenship move to the forefront.

## Curriculum Change in Focus – Case Study 1 –Heritage and identity

As McCrone (1997) has argued, "Heritage has uncommon power in Scotland because it is a stateless nation" (p. 43). However, heritage in Scotland is more than a mystical component of national identity, it is also a source ofconsiderable income.  The Scottish brand has extensive global recognition both in its tangible produce (whiskies, salmon and shortbread) and the intangible 'Scottishness' of moorland, tartan and bagpipes.  Scotland has marketed its national identity effectively, and vies with Ireland for the title of small country with greatest global reach.  Heritage is not in itself harmful, but it is not to be confused with history; instead, it is the use of history to support an aim in the present (Lowenthal, 1996).

The presence (or absence) of Scotland's own national history in its curriculum has long been a cause for debate (McLennan, 2013; Hillis, 2010; SCCC, 1998).  As in many other countries, young people's perceived ignorance about the historical canon of their nation has been interpreted as *prima facie* evidence of the inadequacy of the curriculum. The only major empirical Scottish work in this area (Wood & Payne, 1997) is now some twenty years old, but it revealed misconceptions about Scotland's past which Wood was later to blame on the lack of core content in the *5-14 Guidelines* (1998; 2003).  Wood argued that the absence of a coherent core of Scottish history had allowed a narrative of English dominance and Scottish subjugation to develop.  Consequently, Wood argued, children's ignorance of the past was not random, but followed a pattern of powerlessness and victimhood, which fostered resentment towards Scotland's southern neighbour. Wood also argued that this identity also pervaded the media and many heritage sites (Wood, 2003, p. 76).

Writing about *5-14*, Wood argued that "The school curriculum should play a crucial part in enabling future citizens to recognise media images of the past for what they are: at present the evidence suggests that it is failing to do this" (1998, p. 214).  Wood's proposed solution was a common core of Scottish history which would enable Scots to be more critical of everyday representations of historical events. However, whatever the value of a common core, perhaps this is a cure for a misdiagnosed disease. As McCrone argues, "being able to show that heritage is not 'authentic'… is not the point. If we take the Scottish example of tartanary, the interesting issue is not why much of it is 'forgery' but why is continues to have such cultural power" (McCrone, 1997, p. 51).

McCrone provides a neat summary of the value of a focus on historical interpretations in the school curriculum; that is, the need to teach children how the past is mediated for consumption. Seixas (2000) has been particularly insistent on the need for children to engage with questionable accounts of the past in order to provide a 'resource' from which children can construct multi-layered identities.  In the context of the Scottish curriculum, the answer is not to wish away heritage or dismiss it as frippery, but to induct children to an intellectual community which assesses heritage in its own terms: as a creative industry with frameworks and aspirations very different from academic history.

A brief anecdote might serve to contextualise this.  In 2008, the Scottish Nationalist Education Minister, Fiona Hyslop, turned her attention to the history curriculum, describing *Flower of Scotland* (the unofficial national anthem) as "a wonderful combination: a stirring

anthem and a history lesson. What a marvelous achievement it would be to arouse the same passion in people about the rest of this proud nation's history" (Hyslop, 2008). While it is not uncommon to hear a politician speak of using the history curriculum 'to arouse passion' for 'this proud nation's history', Hyslop's choice of example is curious. Although *Flower of Scotland* is superficially about the 1314 Battle of Bannockburn, it contains no account of the battle itself. The song, in fact, bemoans the loss of the spirit of national resistance which motivated the Scots at Bannockburn – it is not a song about Bannockburn, but a song about the *spirit* of Bannockburn. The song is, however, an important historical artefact in another regard: written in the 1960s when Scottish separatism was a minority view, it evokes a Scotland of 'hill and glen' and calls on Scots to 'rise now and be the nation again'. If *Flower of Scotland* is a history lesson as Hyslop claims, it is surely an object lesson in how interpretations of the past can be used to foment ideas of nationhood.

*Curriculum for Excellence* provided the opportunity to introduce this kind of critical awareness of interpretations. However, the context of rising nationalism in the post-devolution era meant there was little popular demand for such a change. Instead, the Scottish Association of History Teachers (SATH) seemed ambivalent on this subject with its President writing,

> Let me say, unequivocally and unashamedly, that SATH will continue to advocate the central importance of history in the curriculum… because we believe that as Scotland develops as a country with its own Parliament in the twenty-first century, it is essential that its young people have a sense of their heritage and identity (Henry, 2006, p. 35).

The need to ensure young people had a 'sense of heritage and identity' meant that teaching of heritage became *less* critical in the transition from *5-14* to *CfE*.

| 5-14 Guidelines (1993-2008) | Curriculum for Excellence (2008 – present) |
|---|---|
| "the meaning of heritage and ways of preserving selected features of the past' and 'the background and issues in preserving an aspect of local or national heritage" (SOED, 1993, p. 35).<br><br>Make informed judgements about the value for themselves and others of respecting and preserving particular aspects of community heritage. (SOED, 1993, pp. 44-45) | "develop my understanding of the history, heritage and culture of Scotland, and an appreciation of my local and national heritage within the world" (Scottish Government, 2006, p. 1). |

**Table 2**: References to teaching of heritage from 5-*14* to *CfE*

In *5-14*, heritage was not assumed to have an intrinsic value. Instead, value was to be judged by the child, not only in terms of its worth to the child himself, but its potential worth to other communities or individuals. In other words, children had to engage with questions of what aspects of the past matter to which people and why; the historical concept of significance (Seixas & Peck, 2004; Wrenn, 2011). While no empirical data survives to recount how this was enacted in the classroom, the notion of exploring 'the issues in preserving an aspect' of heritage opens the door to intriguing questions about what it means to preserve something, how heritage ought to be contextualised, the appropriate balance between conservation and restoration. In short, there existed in the *5-14 Guidelines*, a basis upon which a more sophisticated idea of historical interpretations could have been built.

Instead, in *Curriculum for Excellence* the idea of heritage shifted from one which children were expected to interrogate, to one which they were supposed to 'appreciate'. Furthermore,

there is a linguistic slip which implies 'my' national heritage is interchangeable with 'the heritage and culture of Scotland'. In this formulation, heritage is a feature of place, not a feature of identity and leaves confused the position of new arrivals who might find that 'my national heritage' is different from that of the country in which they now live.

In one sense, this parallels the view espoused by pro-independence campaigners that Scottish nationality is civically, rather than ethnically determined. However, as Hearn (2000, p. 194) writes:

> 'nationalism's civicness is culturally determined… This is not to say that it is irrational, but simply that its rationality… is culturally embedded, transmitted and sustained'. Inevitably, this cultural and linguistic capital are more readily accessible to 'ethnic' Scots, than to the recently arrived – perhaps undermining the sharp ethnic/ civic distinction.'

Paterson et al. (2001, pp. 156-157) make a similar point:

> cultural transmission is both a means by which incomers are brought into the national community and a way in which that community's values are sustained… But by the very fact of being associated with Scottish national identity, that community becomes an ethnic fact about Scottishness. And therefore, potentially excluding those who – despite the open invitation to do so – refuse to identify with Scottishness.

In other words, an emphasis on heritage can inadvertently become a kind of assimilationism.

To be clear, my argument is not that the treatment of heritage in *Curriculum for Excellence* is regressive or exclusionary, but simply that it is less critical than in the curriculum it replaced. In part, this is because learning about the past in *Curriculum for Excellence* is not simply studying history, but an aspect of the development of the 'responsible citizens' and 'effective contributors' demanded by the curriculum.

## Curriculum Change in Focus – Case Study 2 – Employability

*Curriculum for Excellence* has been subject to considerable academic attention as an archetype of twenty-first century curriculum design (Priestley & Biesta, 2013). Of particular interest are the aims of the curriculum, the so-called four capacities, which aspire to develop children: as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors (Scottish Executive, 2004). These capacities have been criticised variously for their epistemic vacuity (Priestley, 2011); their narrow conception of citizenship (Biesta, 2013b); their individualisation of learning (Biesta, 2006); and as social control (Watson, 2010). Clearly Scotland is not unique in this respect, competencies have become the dominant model for framing curricula all over the world and, as Moore and Young (2001) have argued, demonstrate a shift towards a utilitarian instrumentalist conception of knowledge in advanced economies.

It is not the intention to repeat these arguments here, but to consider the case of Scottish children's historical education in this regard. Just as the shift from *5-14* to *CfE* saw changes in the way national history was presented, so the wider purpose of history in the curriculum changed too. Where *5-14* had emphasised a disciplinary understanding of the subject, in *Curriculum for Excellence* historical learning is conceived as just one of many areas in which children can demonstrate generic skills or competencies which affirm their work-readiness or good citizenship.

The employability discourse has become so hegemonic in Scottish education, even history educators are held in its thrall. In a chapter on the current state of history education in Scotland, the former president of the Scottish Association of History Teachers (SATH) wrote,

> Foremost in the minds of History educators is that the study of history develops young people with the essential, skills, knowledge, attributes and personal dispositions to succeed in learning, life and work (McLennan, 2013, p. 574).

In this short extract, the key tropes of modern technical-instrumentalist discourse are evident: education is a private good which allows the individual to succeed economically. However, the statement gives no indication of the distinctive and unique contribution that an understanding of the past might confer. Even if one agrees with the stated aims, we might very well ask whether these skills ought to be 'foremost' in the mind of history educators. Or why such generic skills must be developed through a specifically historical education?

*Curriculum for Excellence* proceeds on the basis that education confers competence rather than conceptual understanding; in other words, it focuses on what children should be able to do rather than on what they should know (Biesta & Priestley, 2013b). However, while competency-based education might be effective in professional and vocational learning (where there is a close correlation between knowing and doing), these linkages do not hold true when applied to more conceptual learning and create distorted progression models. In *5-14*, teachers were told what children's 'studies should involve'; however, in *CfE* this approach is replaced with learner-centred 'I can' statements. Priestley & Humes (2010, p. 353) have described this approach as "an artifice devised by the planners, rather than a true reflection of the learning process" (2010, p. 353). But it is an artifice that is far from neutral in effect.

The effects can be seen in the way the two curricula treat 'evidence'. In *5-14* children were expected to "develop an understanding of the nature of *historical* evidence"; however, in CfE evidence is not something that is *understood* but something that children show they can *do*. Consider the following progression which is to take place between the ages of 7 and 13 in *CfE*:

- I can use primary and secondary sources selectively to research events in the past. SOC 2-01a

- I can use my knowledge of a historical period to interpret the evidence and present an informed view. SOC 3-01a

- I can evaluate conflicting sources of evidence to sustain a line of argument. SOC 4-01a

As I have argued elsewhere (Smith, 2016), these competencies are in reverse order of historical complexity. Level Four has nothing uniquely historical about it, while Level Two describes the day-to-day work of a researcher in a university history faculty. Indeed, Level Four embodies a common fallacy, that an ability to use evidence is a generic competence to which history can contribute and that what counts as 'evidence' – or, by extension, proof - means the same thing in different disciplines. Ashby (2011) is clear that this reconceptualisation of evidence as a 'skill' has been detrimental to history's disciplinary integrity in school curricula,

> Treating evidence as a skill, focusing only on the routine interrogation of sources and limiting historical enquiry to the construction of personal opinions have left history justifying its place on the curriculum in ways that underplay its value as knowledge (p.137).

In the *5-14 Guidelines*, evidence was understood as a concept in relation to history as a discipline, in CfE *using* evidence is a generic skill that history can help improve.

The borrowing of 'I can' statements from vocational education has a further effect: it elevates the demonstration of understanding above the understanding itself. The result is a performative curriculum: one which asks children to show that they can *do* things, rather than showing they can *understand* things. The range of verbs used is impressive: children must present, assess, use, express, describe, explain and investigate. But while understanding can be shown through demonstration; demonstration does not in itself necessarily imply understanding. By reframing understanding as competencies, the continuum of superficial to complex understanding is replaced by the binary can/can't. Consider the following:

> I can present supported conclusions about the social, political and economic impacts of a technological change in the past. (SOC 4-05a)

As a fourth level competency, this is considered the highest level that a child aged 13 might achieve, but it contains no suggestion that conclusions might be more or less sophisticated. Furthermore, the emphasis here is not on understanding change as a concept but a specific instance of change in the singular. Ormond (2016) has shown how similar formulations in the New Zealand curriculum have had unintended consequences, encouraging teachers to concentrate on smaller and smaller units of the past so that they can demonstrate that they have met the competence without reference to broader contextual knowledge which, while crucial to understanding, are 'superfluous' in the pursuit of showing what one can do.

The emphasis on singular instances rather than broader understanding has an even more distorting effect when CfE specifies substantive concepts. Haenen and Schrijnemakers (2000) propose three kinds of substantive concept: everyday (e.g. 'fashion), unique (e.g. D-Day) and inclusive (e.g. king, parliament), of which the last is the most complex. Inclusive substantive concepts are complex because, although kings and parliaments can be found throughout history, the precise nature of these differ by time and place. Children can only develop sophisticated understandings of these concepts by encountering them in a range of geographical and temporal contexts and by assimilating these examples into a general schema, a process which van Drie and van Boxtel (2003) call "negotiation of the meaning of concepts." *Curriculum for Excellence*'s reliance on 'I can' statements leads to the use of single examples to stand for the inclusive concept: for example, students should investigate *a* meeting of cultures (SOC 4-05c); attempts to resolve *an* international conflict (SOC 4-06c) and *a specific instance* of the expansion of power (SOC 4-06d). In this way, instances come to stand for the conceptual – power becomes an example to be learned, rather than a mutable historical concept. The danger with exempla is that they can become *exemplum*, morality tales which make a universal claim. But when history becomes parable in this way, the moral of the fable determines the examples that are chosen.

## Curriculum in Focus - Case Study 3 – Citizenship

The employability agenda exerts a distorting influence on the presentation of history, but so too does the emphasis on citizenship which emerged between the *5-14 National Guidelines* and *Curriculum for Excellence*. Citizenship as a curricular aim is often distinguished from with 'civics' or 'political literacy'. While civics education develops a familiarity with the institutions of the state and civil society, citizenship education implies an induction into this society. Citizenship education therefore, is inherently uncritical; it assumes the rationality of existing practices and socialises the student to conform to these. As Osborne (1991) pointed out, it is noticeable how frequently the word 'responsible' occurs in citizenship education discourse as a synonym for obedient.

In *5-14*, civics education was wholly contained in a strand called 'People in Society' which covered topics such as 'social rules, rights and responsibilities' and 'economic organisation and structures' (SOED, 1993, pp. 36-37). In *Curriculum for Excellence*, the purview of 'People in Society' was extended as it was reframed 'People in Society, Economy and Business.' Alongside this, a greater integration of social subjects was pursued – citizenship education would not be siloed in a single curriculum strand, but would be an overarching aim for all social subjects.

> The promotion of active citizenship is a central feature of learning in social studies as children and young people develop skills and knowledge to enable and encourage participation (Scottish Government, 2006, p. 3).

In this example, citizenship is not something that one learns about, but something one embodies – active citizenship is to be promoted and participation is to be encouraged, not just in

citizenship lessons, but in all social subjects. This extract exemplifies Watson's (2010, p. 99), argument that CfE "is concerned with setting out not what children are expected to know, but how they should be" and that "CfE is aimed at producing the 'good subject', the 'entrepreneurial self', for and within the control society."

History can only be turned towards this kind of socialisation, if its disciplinary integrity is compromised. Consider the following outcome which is specified within the domain of 'People, Past events and societies' (History),

> I can make reasoned judgements about how the exercise of power affects the rights and responsibilities of citizens by comparing a more democratic and a less democratic society. SOC 4-04c (Scottish Government, 2006).

The phrasing here is tortured because of the need to frame historical learning in terms of the genericised 'rights and responsibilities of citizens'. The problem, of course, is that the rights and responsibilities of citizens throughout history have been influenced by factors far larger than the prevailing constitutional arrangements, not least time, wealth and geography. It is difficult to see what children could profitably learn from comparing the participatory democracy of the Iroquois with Stalin's Russia. Furthermore, the curriculum assumes that ideas of 'more and less democratic' are settled concepts, but 'democracy' has no fixed definition: was ancient Athens more democratic than Victorian Britain? How democratic were the United States before 1865? Was Britain a democracy during World War Two as elections were suspended, newspapers censored and soldiers conscripted? The overarching curriculum aim to promote active citizenship and encourage participation, overrides the need to ask these difficult, but vital questions. Again, the idea of democratic is treated - like power in the earlier example - as an unproblematic universal concept. *Curriculum for Excellence* calls history into service when it is perceived to be of use in bolstering its societal aims.


## Conclusions

Scottish education has long conceived of history in terms of 'social subjects', but the implications of this definition has changed over time. Under the aegis of the *5-14 National Guidelines*, 'social subjects' was a curriculum organiser which meant little in practice – history had a clear disciplinary identity which defined educational outcomes in terms of conceptual historical understanding. Although *Curriculum for Excellence* continued the language of social subjects, history became something of a *socialising* subject. History is now used variously to assert national identity, promote an employability discourse and to socialise children as responsible Scottish citizens. This is not to say that the curriculum has become a sinister exercise in behaviour modification, but that the curriculum embodies widespread assumptions about the kind of society modern Scotland sees itself as, and the kind it aspires to be. In this sense, Scotland is far from unique. As Priestley and Biesta (2013) have shown, governments around the world have adopted competency based curricula as a policy which both invests in individuals and facilitates economic growth. In Scotland, however, this discourse of growth must be reconciled with the fact that Scotland is not an independent sovereign nation (at least, not yet).

In this respect also, Scotland is not unique; studies of history teaching in sub-national jurisdictions are commonplace (for example in Flanders (Van Havere, et al., 2017), Quebec (Levesque, 2017) or Catalonia (Sant, 2015)). However in each of these jurisdictions, there exists a strong linguistic dimension to national identity. In contrast, only 1.1% of the Scottish population reported an ability to speak Gaelic in the 2011 census, while Scotland's other native language, Scots, struggles for linguistic recognition. Scotland, therefore, reaches for other

markers of identity and finds them in its history curriculum.　In the process, the unique contribution of history has been lost.

In *5-14*, Scotland possessed a curriculum which defined history as a way of knowing about the past; in doing so, it made few assumptions about what should be taught and why.　Clearly, this approach is not perfect and relies on skilled interpretation by teachers, but it was at least a curriculum which understood something of the complexity of learning about the past. In contrast, an ahistorical confidence pervades *Curriculum for Excellence*: history is presented instead as preparation for the challenges of the twenty-first century.　In the curriculum, history has value insofar as it supports children's ability to contribute to Scotland's development as a dynamic economy on the global stage.

The historical method provides a route to minimising presentism in our thinking and to making our claims about the past cautious and contingent. Children learn a vital lesson from history: that just as what seems strange now once felt familiar, so today's familiarities will one day seem strange. Ironically, it is precisely *Curriculum for Excellence's* appeal to the discourse of modernity which has already begun to date it.

## References

Arnott, M. & Ozga, J. (2010). Education and Nationalism: the discourse of education policy in Scotland. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education,* 31(3), 335-350.

Arnott, M. & Ozga, J. (2016). Education and nationalism in Scotland: governing a 'learning nation'. *Oxford Review of Education,* 42(3), 253-265.

Ashby, R. (2011). Understanding Historical Evidence: Teaching and Learning Challenges. In: I. Davies, Ed. *Debates in History teaching.* Abingdon: Routledge, 137-147.

Avis, J. et al. (1996). *Knowledge and Nationhood: Education, Politics and Work.* London: Cassell.

Biesta, G. (2006). *Beyond Learning: Democratic Education for a Human Future.* Boulder CO: Paradigm.

Biesta, G. (2013). Responsible Citizens: Citizenship Education between Social Inclusion and Democratic Politics. In: M. Priestley & G. Biesta, eds. *Reinventing the Curriculum: New trends in Curriculum Policy and Practice.* London: Bloomsbury, 99-116.

Biesta, G. & Priestley, M. (2013). Capactities and the Curriculum. In: M. Priestley & G. Biesta, eds. *Reinventing the Curriculum.* London: Bloomsbury, 35-49.

Billig, M. (1995). *Banal Nationalism.* London: Sage.

Brant, J., Chapman, A. & Isaacs, T. (2016). International Instructional Systems: social studies. *The Curriculum Journal,* 27(1), 62-79.

Bruner, J. (1960). *The Process of Education.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Chancellor, V. (1970). *History for their Masters: Opinion in the English History Textbook 1800-1914.* Bath: Adams and Dart.

Coltham, J. & Fines, J. (1971). *Educational Objectives for the Study of History.* London: Historical Association.

Crawford, K. (1995). A History of the Right: The Battle for Control of National Curriculum History. *British Journal of Education Studies,* 43(4), 433-456.

Davie, G. (1961). *The Democratic Intellect: Scotland and her universities in the Nineteenth Century.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Department for Education,. (2013). *Proposed Programmes of Study for 2014 National Curriculum,* London: Crown Copyright.

Green, A. (1992). *Education and State Formation* (1st ed.). London: MacMillan.

Green, A. (1997). *Education, Globalisation and the Nation State.* Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Haenen, J. & Schrijnemakers, H. (2000). Suffrage, feudal, democracy, treaty… history's building blocks: learning to teach historical concepts. *Teaching History, 98*, 22-29.

Hallam, R. (1970). Piaget and Thinking in History. In: M. Ballard, ed. *New Movements in the Study and Teaching of History.* London: Temple Smith, 162-178.

Hansen, J. (2012). De-nationalize history and what have we done?. In: M. Carretero, M. Asensio & M. Rodriguez-Moneo, eds. *History Education and the Construction of National identities.* Charlotte, NC: Information Age, 17-31.

Hearn, J. (2000). *Claiming Scotland: National identity and Liberal Culture.* Edinburgh: Polygon.

Henry, S. (2006). 'Bruce! You're History.' The Place of History in the Scottish Curriculum. *Teaching History,122*, 34-36.

Hillis, P. (2010). The position of history education in Scottish schools. *Curriculum Journal, 21*(2), 141-160.

Hyslop, F. (2008). Learning about Scotland's past will help to shape our future. *The Scotsman*, 20 January, Retrieved from: http://www.scotsman.com/news/learning-about-scotland-s-past-will-help-to-shape-our-future-1-1074700 Accessed [6th May 2016].

Kirk, G. & Glaister, R. (1994). *5-14: Scotland's National Curriculum.* Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.

Lévesque, S. (2008). *Thinking Historically: Educating Students for the Twenty-First Century.* Toronto: Toronto University Press.

Levesque, S. (2017). History as a 'GPS': On the uses of historical narrative for French Canadian students' life orientation and identity. *London Review of Education,* 15(2), 227-242.

Lomas, T. (1990). *Teaching and Assessing Historical Understanding.* London: The Historical Association.

Lowenthal, D. (1996). *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History.* London: Viking.

LTS,. (2000). *The Structure and Balance of the Curriculum: 5-14 Guidelines.* Edinburgh: Learning and Teaching Scotland.

MacDonald, A. (1994). 5-14: Themes and Subjects. In G. Kirk & R. Glaister (Eds.), *5-14 Scotland's National Curriculum.* Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 50-68.

McCrone, D. (1992). *Understanding Scotland: the sociology of a stateless nation.* London: Routledge.

McCrone, D. (1997). Scotland - The Brand: Heritage, Identity and Ethnicity. In R. Jackson & S. Wood (Eds.), *Images of Scotland.* Dundee: Northern College, 43-54.

McGonigle, J. (1999). An Integrated or Discrete Approach. In P. Hillis (Ed.), *History Education in Scotland.* Edinburgh: John Donald, 157-169.

McLennan, N. (2013). History Education. In T. Bryce, W. Humes, D. Gillies & A. Kennedy, (Eds.), *Scottish Education: Referendum.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 573-579.

Moore, R. & Young, M. (2001). Knowledge and the Curriculum in the Sociology of Education: Towards a Reconceptualisation. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 22*(4), 445-461.

Munn, J. (1977). *The structure of the curriculum in the 3rd and 4th years of secondary school.* Edinburgh: HMSO.

Munn, P., Stead, J., McLeod, G., Brown, J., Cowie, M., McClusky, G., Pirrie, A., & Scott, J. (2004). Schools for the 21st Century: The National Debate on Education in Scotland. *Research Papers in Education, 19*(4), 433-454.

Nairn, T. (1995). Upper and Lower Cases. *London Review of Books, 17*(16), 14-18.

National Curriculum History Working Group. (1990). *Final Report.* London: Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office.

Ormond, B. (2016). Curriculum Decisions - the challenges of teacher autonomy over knowledge selection for history. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 49*(5), 599-619.

Osborne, K. (1991). *Teaching for Democratic Citizenship.* Toronto: Our Schools, Our selves.

Osborne, K. (2004). History and Social Studies: Partners or Rivals. In A. Sears & I. Wright (Eds.), *Challenges and Prospects for Canadian Social Studies.* Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press, 73-89.

Ozga, J. & Lingard, B. (2007). The emergence of a global education policy field. In B. Lingard & J. Ozga (Eds.), *The Routledge Reader in education policy and politics.* London: Routledge, 65-83.

Paterson, L., Brown, A., Curtice, J., Hinds, K., & McCrone, D. (2001). *New Scotland, new politics?.* Edinburgh: Polygon.

Peterkin, T. (2009). Field Trips spark new Battle of Bannockburn. *The Scotsman*, 9 September, Retrieved from: http://www.scotsman.com/news/field-trips-spark-new-battle-of-bannockburn-1-774157 Accessed [16 May 2016].

Phillips, R. (1998). *History Teaching, Nationhood and the State.* London: Cassell.

Phillips, R., Goalen, P., McCully, A. & Wood, S. (1999). Four Histories, One Nation? History teaching, nationhood and a British identity. *Compare: A journal of Comparative and Internaional Education, 29*(2), 153-169.

Priestley, M. (2002). Global Discourses and national reconstruction: the impact of globalization on curriculum policy. *Curriculum Journal, 13*(1), 121-138.

Priestley, M. (2011). Whatever happened to curriculum theory? Critical realism and curriculum change. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society, 2*, 221-237.

Priestley, M. & Biesta, G. (2013). *Reinventing the Curriculum: new trends in curriculum policy and practice.* London: Bloomsbury.

Priestley, M. & Humes, W. (2010). The Development of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Amnesia and deja vu. *Oxford Review of Education, 36*(3), 345-361.

Priestley, M. & Minty, S. (2013). Curriculum for Excellence: 'A brilliant idea, but…'. *Scottish Educational Review, 45*(1), 39-52.

Rogers, P. (1979). *The New History - Theory into Practice* (1st ed.), London: The Historical Association.

Sant, E. (2015). How do Catalan students narrate the history of Catalonia? *McGill Journal of Education, 50*(2/3), 389-412.

SCCC. (1998). *Scottish History in the Curriculum.* Dundee: Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum.

Schools' History Project. (1976). *A New Look at History.* Edinburgh: Homes MacDougall.

Scotcen. (2016). *Scottish Social Attitudes Survey: From Indyref1 to Indyref2? The State of Nationalism in Scotland,* Retrieved from: http://natcen.ac.uk/media/1361407/ssa16-2fr8m-1ndyref-2-1ndyr8f-tw0-two.pdf. [Accessed 24th May 2017]

Scottish Executive. (2002). *The National Debate on Education: Briefing Pack,* http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/158359/0042897.pdf [Accessed 5th May 2016]: Scottish Executive.

Scottish Executive. (2003). *Educating for Excellence: Choice and Opportunity.* Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

Scottish Executive. (2004). *A curriculum for excellence – The curriculum review group.* Edinburgh: Scottish Executive

Scottish Government. (2006b). *Building the Curriculum 1.* Retrieved from: http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/building_curriculum1_tcm4-383389.pdf. [Accessed 11th September 2015]

Scottish Government. (2006). *Social Studies: Principles and Practice,* Retrieved from: http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/curriculumareas/socialstudies/principlesandpractice/index.asp [Accessed 29th September 2015]

Scottish Government (2008). *Building the Curriculum 3.* Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Seixas, P. (1996). Conceptualizing the growth of historical understanding. In D. Olson & N. Torrance (Eds.), *The Handbook of Education and Human Development.* Oxford: Blackwell, 765-83.

Seixas, P. (2000). Schweigen! die Kinder! or, Does Post-Modern History Have a Place in Schools. In P. Stearns, P. Seixas & S. Wineberg (Eds.), *Knowing, Teaching and Learning History.* New York: New York Univeristy Press, 19-37.

Seixas, P. & Peck, C. (2004). Teaching Historical Thinking. In A. Sears & I. Wright (Eds.), *Challenges and Prospects for Canadian Social Studies.* Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press, 109-17.

Slater, J. (1995). *Teaching History in the New Europe.* London: Cassell.

Smith, J. (2016). What remains of History? Historical Epistemology and Historical Understanding in Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence. *The Curriculum Journal 27*(4), 500-517.

Smout, T. (1994). Perspectives on the Scottish Identity. *Scottish Affairs 6*, 101-113.

SOED. (1993). *National Guidelines: Environmental Studies 5-14.* Edinburgh: Scottish Office Education Department.

Trevor-Roper, H. (2008). *The Invention of Scotland: Myth and History.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Van Drie, J. & Van Boxtel, C. (2003). Developing conceptual understanding through talk mapping. *Teaching History 110*, 27-31.

Van Havere, T., Wils, K., Depapepe, V. J. & Van Niewenhuyse, K. (2017). Flemish students' historical reference knowledge and narratives of the Belgian national past at the end of secondary education. *London Review of Education,* 15(2), 272-285.

Watson, C. (2010). Educational Policies in Scotland: inclusion and the control society. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education 31*, 93-104.

Wood, S. (1998). Issues of National Identity and the School Curriculum in Scotland. In J. Arnold, K. Davies & S. Ditchfield (Eds.), *History and heritage: consuming the past in contemporary culture.* Shaftesbury: Donhead Publishing, 213-221.

Wood, S. (2003). The School History Curriculum in Scotland & issues of National Identity. *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research 3*(1), 75-80.

Wood, S. & Payne, F. (1997). In search of a Scottish identity? Pupils' knowledge of and attitudes towards Scottish History. *Education in the North New Series 5*, 11-15.

Wood, S. & Payne, F. (1999). The Scottish school history curriculum and issues of national identity. *The Curriculum Journal 10*(1), 107-121.

Wrenn, A. (2011). Significance. In I. Davies (Ed.), *Debates in History Teaching.* London: Routledge, 148-158.

## Endnotes

[1] The 5-14 Guidelines, while never a statutory curriculum, were the first attempt to standardise the curriculum across Scotland and were widely implemented in schools. It can therefore be considered a de facto national curriculum, if not strictly de jure.