Well-being and attainment in Scottish education: a capabilities approach

Joann Kirsty Alexander

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Under the supervision of Professor Penny Enslin

School of Education

College of Social Sciences

University of Glasgow

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Abstract

The aim of fostering well-being has become central to Scottish educational policy, in part because of a need to address the impact of inequalities of income, wealth, power and inclusion. But, dominated by a human capital picture of the enterprising, entrepreneurial individual whose well-being is tied to particular socio-economic outcomes desired by the Scottish government focused on developing a competitive economy, current approaches to well-being in Scottish education policy primarily reflect a conception of well-being as approximating a skill to be developed for the benefit of the economy.

This dissertation presents an alternative conception of well-being in education, based on the capabilities approach, mainly as articulated by Martha Nussbaum. It points to the benefits of drawing upon a capabilities approach for re-conceptualising well-being in education understood as fostering human development - rather than human capital - in which autonomy and dignity play a significant role in developing well-being and, ultimately, in human flourishing.

Drawing upon the tools of philosophical inquiry that provide an important clarificatory role in the use of concepts, their implications, and justification in education policy, this dissertation serves as a critique of the current well-being policy agenda in Scottish education. It contributes to the study of well-being as a prominent aim of education in Scotland by examining the relationship between well-being and Scotland's raising attainment agenda in secondary schools, exploring the policies and practices underpinning these two overlapping and, often, competing aims with a view to illuminating and tempering the most damaging, while retaining a qualified place for attainment in education for well-being.

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Finally, my thanks go to my pupils whose experiences of education inspire this work. I hope this dissertation demonstrates that, if they want to, they can learn at any age. I am still learning, and I hope I am a better teacher for it.

Author's declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name:

Joann Kirsty Alexander

Signature:

Joann Kirsty Alexander

Abbreviations

List of abbreviations used in this dissertation:

CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence
CPL	Continual Professional Learning
DYW	Developing Young Workforce
Ed.D.	Doctorate in Education
GIRFEC	Getting It Right For Every Child
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MHFS	Mental Health Foundation Scotland
MSP	Member of Scottish Parliament
NIF	National Improvement Framework
P4C	Philosophy for Children
PEF	Pupil Equity Fund
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RMPS	Religious, Moral and Philosophical Education
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SHANARRI:	Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SNP	Scottish National Party
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
U.K.	United Kingdom

Chapter 1

Introduction

> We *do* need principled educational reflection and we can get into all sorts of practical as well as theoretical trouble without it…
>
> (Carr, 2010:90)

Promoting well-being is a declared policy priority in Scottish schools. However, as I will argue, the concept of well-being in Scottish education is dominated by human capital influences and these influences limit well-being to achieving particular social and economic outcomes and, being conceptually problematic, are unlikely to support the goal of human flourishing. Furthermore, the Scottish government's attainment agenda illustrates the dominance of these influences and outcomes and contributes, contrary to declared policy aims, to a lack of well-being by creating stress, anxiety, insecurity and introduces a tension between different purposes of education. A capabilities approach, with underpinning principles of autonomy and dignity, offers an alternative conception of well-being predicated on fostering pupils' capabilities. By deploying a capabilities approach, primarily that of Martha Nussbaum, in this dissertation I offer an alternative, ethically defensible conception of well-being and of education.

To defend this alternative conception of well-being and of education, I identify a number of problematic assumptions about well-being in Scottish education and show how they reflect a neoliberal ideology - namely of competition, marketisation and individual responsibilisation - which positions well-being and education within an economic model that determines the function and value of human beings. I contest this influential and prevailing model, showing that an alternative way of approaching well-being is both possible and urgent. To develop my argument, I draw upon Martha Nussbaum's version of the capabilities approach and her defence of a liberal education and identify how well-being is conceived within it. I illustrate and apply her capabilities approach by exploring real and imagined pupils experiencing typical raising attainment strategies and I make a moral claim that a capabilities conception of well-being is both humanistic and more likely to lead to human flourishing.

A professional tension

This dissertation is entitled 'Well-being and attainment in Scottish education: a capabilities approach'. Well-being is an educational policy priority of the Scottish government. One of the other central aims of the Scottish government's approach to education is to raise attainment. Political interest strongly shapes conceptions of the purpose of education and there is currently a firm political focus on using education as a preparation for making pupils fit for the future workplace. This is grounded in a belief that 'a good job' is constitutive of well-being and an assumption that attainment as measured by formal examinations is an assured path to employment. The dominance of the raising attainment agenda, particularly the methods used to achieve attainment improvement, do, in my view, inhibit the well-being of pupils. Well-being, attainment and education are each contested and contestable concepts. Preferred and alternative meaning and usage of these three concepts exist and Carr (2010) suggests that some concepts that might seem different or at odds with each other need not necessarily be incompatible. Thus we might claim that seeking ever-increasing attainment outcomes at the same time as enhancing pupil well-being are not necessarily incompatible ideas. To be sure, it is not that policy makers are wrong in seeking academic outcomes for pupils, I am not opposed to this as a broad aim of education but working daily to 'produce' higher attainment and well-being is not plain sailing. In fact, in my experience, these aims are frequently in tension. This tension is evident when we consider questions about how these aims (inter) act with each other. Which is more important? Can both be achieved, or will one be at the expense of the other? What sort of well-being can be promoted? What is meant by attainment?

A recent report of a study of Ontario high schools (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2018) suggests that educational professionals in other countries are grappling with similar questions. Using the term well-being but preferring the term achievement rather than attainment, the findings of Hargreaves and Shirley exemplify how two aims - promoting well-being and achievement - used currently in education policy in Canada are considered important but arouse tension depending on how they are conceived. I illustrate that link here in order to highlight that there can be multiple positions on the relationship between these two concepts which can work in overlapping or competitive ways. Hargreaves and Shirley's four relationships are: 1) improved well-being increases achievement; 2) academic achievement is crucial for well-being; 3) well-being is a complement to academic

achievement; and 4) well-being constitutes a major achievement. Each relationship is underpinned with different assumptions such as, 1) well-being is required in order to increase achievement; 2) well-being is caused by academic achievement; 3) well-being and academic achievement complement each other, and 4) well-being is achieved when pupils are able to live their lives with meaning and purpose (pp.10-11). In Scottish secondary education it is contention 2, well-being is caused by academic achievement, that appears dominant. Hargreaves and Shirley's findings support Carr's (2010:95) argument that contestations of concepts can occur because they reflect 'differences of value' and we can easily see in the four relationships above different values and assumptions. People can use the same words – well-being and attainment – but understand them and conceive of their relationship very differently from one another. My philosophical approach to questions like these will promote clarification of the senses and usage of the concept of well-being and its relationship to raising attainment. This is an important task because of the potential impact on the lives of pupils; the way concepts and their relationships are conceptualised leads to different policy directions and, consequently, to different practitioner actions. In considering the relationship between well-being and raising attainment in Scottish education, I will also draw on some empirical studies regarding the effects of an over emphasis on attainment measured by high stakes exams on the well-being of pupils because empirical studies can assist conceptual and normative clarification.

Contested and contestable concepts

Contested concepts are ones that tend to complexity, as do many of those used in normative discussions about education, and involve competing preferred meanings which different parties can defend as their own, contesting alternative meanings and usages of a term (Collier et al., 2006:212). The idea of contested concepts builds upon a landmark academic work by Gallie who explored the notion of contestable concepts (1965, in Collier et al., 2006). As a verb, contestable means to oppose an action or theory as mistaken or wrong. In this dissertation I argue that there is in Scotland a conception of well-being in education policy which I contest[1] by arguing that it is mistaken or wrong because it rests on some educationally unsound assumptions about well-being. I offer, and defend, a reconceptualization of this key concept.

[1] Gray (1978, in Swanton, 1985:821) suggests that Gallie highlights that 'a concept's essential contestedness is the normative standard embodied by its criteria. This is to say that a concept is essentially contested if its rival uses express competing moral and political perspectives'. It is the idea of competing moral and political perspectives that I draw upon in my contestation of the concept of well-being found in Scottish education.

Claiming that current policy ideas about well-being in Scottish education are influenced by a neoliberal agenda which encompasses a vision of individuals as consumers and human capital, I argue that this agenda reflects a conception of well-being understood as approximating a skill to be developed for the benefit of the state's future social and economic prosperity. To explain what I mean by neoliberal, as understood in relation to the concept of well-being:

> at its core, neoliberal ideology can be summed up thus: a) citizens are consumers and producers, b) the wellbeing of individual citizens is important only insofar as to how it impacts on their contribution (their productivity and their consumption of goods) and c) individuals are, ultimately, responsible for their own wellbeing, and any support provided to ease the suffering of individuals will be aimed at correcting deficits/defects within the individuals themselves[2].

Governed by a belief that economic and social interests are sufficient to promote well-being, I claim that a neoliberal utilitarian vision dominates educational policy and young 'people are (being) reconfigured as productive and economic entrepreneurs' (Kascak and Pupala, 2011:149). Lost in this vision, and what I intend defending, is a liberal conception of a flourishing human being[3] whose well-being is grounded in the concepts of autonomy and dignity.

This dissertation presents a case for a more educationally defensible conception of well-being and from a different theoretical perspective than exists presently in Scottish education. It aims to show that an alternative perspective of well-being exists and then 'taking that idea for a walk and putting it down somewhere else' (Dunleavey, 2015:40), specifically in my own practice. My decision to critique the conception of well-being that prevails in educational policy in Scotland and to propose instead Martha Nussbaum's

[2] 'ACE's and -isms part 1: Neoliberalism', (2019) available online at https://medium.com/@SocialWhatNow/acees-and-isms-part-i-neoliberalism-fdc1275cd358, [accessed 18.08.19].

[3] My conception of what it means to be a flourishing human being is informed by Martha Nussbaum's (2000) argument that human beings ought to be able to function *qua* human, meaning that human beings are using all of their faculties or powers to function as truly human. I say more about this on p.73 and throughout chapter four. In chapter six, p.134, I explain that what a person is able to be and do matters for their well-being which includes making choices about living their own lives.

capabilities conception of well-being is two-fold. Firstly, it is 'rooted in ethical considerations of what matters for good human lives' (Entwistle and Watt, 2013:36) and represents an alternative public policy approach which seeks the improvement of both individual lives and community living. It goes beyond economic and employment indicators to include wider social, cultural and political freedoms which impact on well-being, and it can be used to 'evaluate policies according to their impact on people's capabilities' (Robeyns, 2003: n.p.). Secondly, it is grounded in an Aristotelian tradition that recognises a liberal education as 'fundamentally a moral education' (DeNicola, 2012:37). A capabilities approach presents an understanding of education that promotes well-being as human flourishing. It is not limited to how individuals earn a living or contribute to the economy. A poor experience of the education system can have a potentially lifelong impact, making it important that 'everyone receives an education that provides a good foundation for a happy and fulfilling life - not just one designed to make us fit for the workplace' (YMCA, 2016: n.p.). Similarly, Nussbaum (2010) argues that the purpose of education is to support young people to flourish and she identifies a minimum threshold of basic capabilities as part of a partial theory of justice for all based on a minimum of human entitlements of what people are actually able to do and be (Nussbaum, 2006). This approach, often contrasted with a utilitarian approach, is about leading a life one has reason to value (Sen, 2009). If pupils are viewed as being in the process of developing their capabilities, the purpose of school, then, is not simply to achieve the government's economic or social goals but to contribute to the well-being of pupils by helping them to 'recognise and pursue things that they value' (Spratt, 2017:124). This has implications for the extent to which young people have freedom to be and to do, or put slightly differently, how far education enhances their capability to lead a flourishing life of their own choosing. In her capabilities approach, Nussbaum (2011) promotes the cultivation of the whole person and challenges practices which, according to Spratt (2017), restrict opportunities for people to lead lives they have reason to value.

Values of dignity, autonomy and freedom are central features of a capabilities approach, and are considered constitutive of well-being (Robeyns, 2016). A capabilities approach draws on an Aristotelian view of eudaimonia which describes a way of living that focuses on what is intrinsically worthwhile to human beings. Within a capabilities approach, freedom is about having real opportunities to pursue and achieve well-being. It is about whether value is placed upon pupils developing what they are able to do and be. I contend

that practices within Scottish education, using illustrative examples from my experiences of teaching in Scottish secondary schools, reflect a conception of education that fits with what Duffy (2017) describes as a neoliberal governmentality which, combined with Dewar (2016), reflects an 'educere'[4] conception of education. This governmentality promotes the Scottish government's preferred judgement of the purpose of education, and of a particular conception of well-being it promotes. I contest the Scottish government's conception of well-being and offer Nussbaum's capabilities approach as an alternative conception to pursue.

Research approach

Having used a philosophical approach to exploring concepts of leadership in years one and two of the Ed.D., and of mentoring in year three, the tools of philosophical inquiry, such as analysing concepts and examining normative claims, offer a way to go about an appraisal into well-being and its relationship with raising attainment. Analysing concepts can, for example, clarify overused or vague concepts and so enhance meaning, identify misuse, and facilitate professional development when clear knowledge is linked to practice (McEvoy and Duffy, 2008). To illustrate this, while undertaking a concept analysis of holism in the context of nursing, McEvoy and Duffy found that concepts are often influenced by additional disciplines. They noted holism was influenced by the disciplines of banking and chemistry (p.414). In a similar way, a mix of influences can be found in the concepts of well-being and attainment in education. To use well-being as my prime example here: well-being comprises multiple areas of human life including physical, mental, emotional, psychological and social. It is related to what people want, like and need (Jongbloed and Andres, 2015), and it is influenced by a complex interplay of factors such as family and parenting, school and peer influences, autonomy, happiness and confidence (Bywater and Sharples, 2012), being active in sporting or creative activities, materialism, levels of (in)equality (Unicef, 2011), and the quality of relationships with others (White, 2008). In light of its interpretative nature, well-being is a term that can be used varyingly. Furthermore, how well-being is interpreted will lead to particular indicators of it. Again, to illustrate this point, if using the Unicef source above we are to accept well-being is connected to being active in sporting or creative activities, what would be agreed as an indicator of that? Would the indicator be the amount of time spent on the activities? Would the indicator be how often the activities were undertaken? Would the indicator be specified

[4] An 'educere' conception of education is explained in the following section - 'Research approach'.

forms of sport or creative activities? Conversely, prescribed indicator(s) of well-being, such as Scotland's SHANARRI well-being wheel introduced in chapter two, can influence how a concept is conceived. For Gallie (1956 in Collier et al., 2006:216-218), a contested concept is a concept that is 'variously describable…internally complex…(has) different facets (that) may be emphasised to varying degrees…is open in (its) meaning…and is valued'. Given the range of influences attributed to well-being, some of which are noted above, we can see that well-being fits Gallie's description of a contested concept. It is important to note of concepts, as McEvoy and Duffy (2008) do, that in respect of various different influences which potentially enhance some facets and minimise others, the integrity of a concept risks being lost if there is a lack of clarity of meaning or, as this dissertation argues regarding the concept of well-being in Scottish education, where a narrow, mistaken or misguided understanding and indicators of it dominate.

Contemporary accounts of critical policy analysis tend not to mention the benefits of a philosophical approach so in contrast to analyses of education policy that rely on sociological perspectives (Young and Diem, 2018; Gale, 2001), I demonstrate how a philosophical approach can contribute to critical policy analysis. I broadly follow McLaughlin's (2008:1131) analytical philosophical approach which includes concept analysis[5] as a way to clarify meaning and understand connections between concepts. Clarifying meaning and connections involves uncovering the complexity of concepts, their preferred meanings and relationships to other concepts. Contesting concepts in education policy using concept analysis can contribute to a rupture, or an interruption in thinking that leads to alternative ideas. I anticipate this later in chapters four and six. Also included is a critical evaluation of concepts and how they are used in order to identify hidden assumptions and provide clarity and justification of claims, extending that critical evaluation to educational values, policies and practices and developing and justifying

[5] Concept analysis is not without its critics. Draper (2014), in a context of nursing, dismisses it on the grounds of the assumption that concepts can be clarified. He claims that concept analysis cannot be helpful in elucidating, for example, 'a worldview as rich and diverse as feminism' (p.1207). However, following Myburgh and Tammaro (2013:133-172) I believe Draper takes a rather atomistic stance. Myburgh and Tammaro explain that, using concept analysis more broadly, is 'to discover the narratives that are operationalised in (a) discourse, which is not detectable through the atomising analysis of selected words and phrases, but in those whole-text 'explanations' or 'procedures' through which professionals run their daily practice'. In this dissertation I employ concept analysis in this broad way, highlighting context and emphasising that concept analysis contributes to ethical judgements as well as contestation of concepts, which are part of the daily practice of teachers.

proposals for alternative values in education and in practice and policy. In summary, an analytical philosophical approach emphasises

> matters of meaning and justification…characterised by (amongst other things) the clarification and analysis of concepts, premises and assumptions, the consideration of counter-examples, the detection and elimination of defects of reasoning of various kinds, the drawing of important distinctions (e.g., between conceptual, normative and empirical questions), the use of 'thought experiments', a particular spirit of criticism and the structured development of argument
>
> (p. 1131).

In lieu of the kind of thought experiments commonly used in analytic philosophy of education, I make use of vignettes as a technique for exploring perceptions about specific situations (Barter and Renold, 1999). Vignettes are a helpful method of exploring subjective experiences, in situ, capturing perceptions and experiences that occur within complex situations (Barter and Renold, 2000). In chapter five, for instance, I have constructed one of my vignettes around the experiences of my pupils being presented for exams. This vignette paints a picture from the perspective of my pupils and is used to highlight a tension between fostering well-being and of pursuing other purposes of education, namely raising attainment. A second vignette, also in chapter five, paints a picture of what an adult might consider if s/he were to experience a similar tension in her/his workplace.

Philosophical inquiry tends to begin with 'specific questions and problems, seeking their illumination' (McLaughlin, 2008:1132; White, 2003) and is therefore a method that offers space to ask questions that are specific to my practice. McLaughlin's (2008) approach is complemented by Short (1991) who collates the range of tools with which to inquire into practice into three forms of philosophical inquiry: analytical, ampliative and normative (p. 17). Firstly, analytical inquiry (and in common with McLaughlin's account), is a helpful tool for understanding and (re) conceptualising the current policy concept of well-being. This will involve examining its relationship to raising attainment and to overall purposes of education. Secondly, ampliative, to identify the policy norms governing institutions and practices while also offering the means to critique their effectiveness. These norms include the declared intention of the Scottish government to prepare young people aged 3-18 years

old for the workplace (Education Scotland, 2015a); the Scottish attainment challenge of achieving equity in educational outcomes (Education Scotland, 2019a); Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) (Scottish Government, 2008a) which is the national approach to improving the well-being of young people; and of the education of young people to develop four capacities: successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens (Scottish Government, 2006). The sense and usage of concepts (Carr, 2010) that underpin such policy norms require critique. Thirdly, a normative approach; exploring how things should or ought to be by introducing the premises of a proposed alternative view and offering justification for it. This will involve examining and justifying the claims of Nussbaum's capabilities approach and applying them to raising attainment practices in Scottish secondary education. Martha Nussbaum's work as an internationally recognised political philosopher (Crocker, 2008) fits well with these analytical and normative aims. In combination, these three forms of philosophical inquiry are an appropriate approach for an inquiry into conceptions of well-being, the norms governing schools as they attend to both well-being and attainment responsibilities, to understand how these are construed and to offer alternatives or their enhancement.

In deciding to critically analyse and evaluate the concept of well-being in Scottish education policy and its relationship to raising attainment, together with addressing the competing sets of values they present, Bullough's (2011) advice is that there is no single method which is best for solving tensions of this sort in education. Rather, the researcher may respond to her own needs, social and institutional norms[6] , deciding upon an approach that is personally and professionally relevant. Furthermore, whatever the chosen method of inquiry, it should 'be judged by how well it informs research purposes' (Bazley, 2004:145). My research purpose is to critique and present an alternative conception of well-being using the tools of philosophical enquiry. As a professional embedded within this moral tension of fostering well-being within a raising attainment context, it is appropriate to undertake a philosophical inquiry which offers space in which to explore this tension in order to present and defend an alternative perspective of well-being. A philosophical approach asks that we consider deeply challenging questions such as how we

[6] Exploring moral problems in teaching is not new and has historically been undertaken in several ways. For example, in an analysis of articles published by the Journal of Teaching and Teacher Education, Bullough (2011) reviews ten articles in which moral tensions are analysed via interviews, observations, portfolio submissions, student stories, ethical frameworks and philosophical inquiry. He notes that 'conflicts among values, norms and beliefs, pervade teaching' (p.27) and concludes by stressing the value of reflection to enhance teachers' ethical and moral development.

conceive well-being, and also why we ought to value it. It also asks what is its relationship to other purposes of education such as raising academic attainment? The conceptual issues underpinning these terms and their (inter) relationship deserve examination. The American Philosophical Association (as cited in Cavanagh, 2010:25) advances a philosophical approach as a way to

> refine analyses, develop, and advance, or criticise interpretations, explore alternative perspectives and new ways of thinking…and, in general promote new understanding

and it is these sorts of analyses that I undertake in this dissertation to critique the Scottish government's interpretation of well-being and to present and apply a more educationally defensible understanding of well-being. Philosophical analysis can help me in deciding what sort of teacher I want to be and not merely what to do (Frankfurt, 1982:262).

The usefulness of philosophical analysis can be illustrated using two of its conceptual analysis tools, the importance of clarifying meaning and the value of drawing important distinctions. These will now be used to demonstrate that education is a concept that is contested. The term education means different things to different people and is dependent upon what values and beliefs individuals and societies hold. Education tends to be considered by most people as 'good' in that it brings benefits such as new knowledge and skills[7]. What can be 'wrong', and cause confusion, is when its activities, aims or processes lead to unwanted consequences (Ikonen, 1999). Provoking contested values and beliefs about education are two possible etymological origins of the word education leading potentially to different activities, aims, processes and consequences. Firstly, it is possible to conceive of an 'educere' distinction; connoting 'marching…moving from one place to another' (Dewar, 2016:46). In terms of education this could lead, according to Dewar, 'to an understanding of education as a formalised process separate from one's life as a whole, with institutionally determined beginning and ending points' (p.46). This kind of conception invokes a controlled, production-like process. Secondly, it is possible to

[7] The extent to which education should focus on developing knowledge and/or skills is also contested and manifest currently in England in the traditional versus progressive debate, which includes debate around teacher-led/pupil-centred teaching approaches.

conceive of an ‘educare’ distinction which relates to the idea of supporting and cultivating, and can lead to an understanding of education based on or uncovering our

> authentic… selves, instead of the pre-packaged institutional selves assigned…by standardised education…To educate, then in this more ontological sense suggested by educare, is to help uncover and nurture a more meaningful way of being, that is, well-being.
>
> (p. 57).

These etymological distinctions do not of course fully capture the aims or the purposes of education, but they do complement my argument by distinguishing distinctive differences of meaning and speak to the benefit of philosophical analysis.

Finally, while acknowledging that a philosophical approach is a helpful tool in illuminating educational questions (McLaughlin, 2008), I also draw upon empirical evidence from sources such as University College London (2019), Scotland’s Mental Health Foundation (2018) and the Royal Society of Edinburgh (2015) in order to contend that policy based on particular conceptual assumptions can produce destructive practices in schools.

Setting the scene

I love teaching. I have been teaching for twenty-one years and although my career in teaching was unplanned, (at sixteen years old I wanted to be a vet), I have for the most part been very happy in the classroom. Recognising fairly quickly that my talents did not lie in biological science after all, my unplanned career began after three years joyously immersed in a liberal arts degree. I asked around, ‘what can I do with a degree comprising theology, philosophy and Celtic studies?’ A friend noting a common thread of my interest in how people live their lives, suggested, ‘teach religious education’ and I have been doing that ever since. Now called religious, moral and philosophical studies (RMPS), I spend my days discussing an amazing array of fundamental and unusual questions about human existence and meaning. I love those moments when a pupil says ‘my brain is fried’ or other such expression connoting wonder and puzzlement as a new idea is grasped but slips away, as so often happens in philosophy. I love the startled silence that occurs when within my social anthropology unit, pupils are confronted with an example of a matriarchal society. I

love simply sitting among a class of pupils and connecting our thoughts on the big questions of life and its meaning. Teaching RMPS affords a glimpse into the heart and soul of young people, their thoughts on the world, life, and themselves. A glance around my classroom walls will communicate the normative issues - the rights and freedoms - my pupils care about: human rights, animal rights, mental health, social isolation, body conformity, bullying, exam anxiety, consent, politics, nuclear weapons and even the ticket prices of football matches – apparently this is a moral question for the fan, also known as the twelfth person in the team! (Appendix A). RMPS[8][9] is a subject that explores some of the deepest questions human beings have about ourselves and the world we live in and I am profoundly moved when pupils invite me into discussions about who they are now and what is important in their lives. Some, for example, question their identity such as a first-year boy who is a Muslim at home but speaks up in class to say he does not believe in Allah. Others reveal challenges they are experiencing such as a fourth-year girl who wants to settle into her latest foster family but her tendency to self-destruct threatens her current placement. Some pupils reveal their anxieties such as a fifth-year pupil who needs to hear that there is more to life than exam results. Personal revelations and reassurances such as these have been frequent throughout my twenty-one years of teaching. They remind me that the issues young people face are complex and that there is more to education than exam results and performative outcomes.

I work in one of the highest attaining comprehensive secondary schools in Scotland. Parents pay a premium on house prices to live in the catchment area of my school (Bank of Scotland, 2016). While key de-motivators such as poor behaviour are infrequent, there is relentless pressure to raise attainment: after-school revision, lunch-time revision, Easter school and Saturday classes sit alongside bi-monthly monitoring plans and pre-prelims (exams before the preliminary exams before the final exams). In May 2019, my school introduced a further diet of exams, called transition exams, to track the academic attainment of pupils moving between S3 and S4.

[8] RMPS as a subject has been explicitly linked to well-being by, for example, Pett (2012:447) who claims 'the teaching of RE (RMPS) contributes to pupils' awareness and understanding of questions of meaning and purpose, exploration of which plays a significant part in ideas of happiness and well-being as transcendent. RE (RMPS) does not teach or develop happiness, but it opens up the kinds of thinking and understanding that may start pupils on a path to a life of purpose and meaning'.

[9] Similarly, Clack (2012:508) comments that RMPS is a subject 'which offers the possibility of opening up rather different discussions about how well-being might be understood and the strategies offered for its cultivation'.

This dissertation exists because my kind of education, with broader purposes of human flourishing and self-fulfilment, is under threat from what feels like an overwhelming emphasis on exam performance and prescribed outcomes of young people to fit them for the workplace. Such an emphasis poses a threat to pupils' well-being. The excessive drive to improve exam results rests on an instrumental view of education that values measurable numerical outcomes. Some things, in my view, are intrinsically valuable. I hold a socially critical perspective on the purpose of education (Kemmis et al., 1983 in Hicks, 1998) which is summed up as education 'designed to heal, connect, liberate, empower, create and celebrate' (Orr, 1992:x in Hicks, 1998:515). My kind of education promotes the cultivation of the whole person where education is an end in itself, not a means to an end. It is an education that helps young people to flourish and live a good life, not just get a good job. It incorporates Levinson's characteristics of an ideal liberal education through which young people can 'express themselves in terms others will understand, be imaginative, learn to think critically, (and) gain the skills and knowledge to put their beliefs and values into practice' (1999:60 in De Ruyter, 2004:218). It is in defence of my kind of education that I find myself undertaking an Ed.D. in the hope of finding a theoretical kindred spirit who can offer solace and ideas to guide me through the next twenty-one years of my career.

In year two on my Ed.D. journey I was introduced to the ideas of Michel Foucault and I thought then his ideas might become my main focus. A Foucauldian analysis of power and discourse has taught me that spaces may appear creating new possibilities for human agency. Foucault (1984:388) says that these spaces offer a chance to

> step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and question it as to its meanings, its conditions and its goals. Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem.

With this illumination I have been invited to open up to different possibilities, or 'to ways of seeing (myself) and practices differently' (Pignatelli, 1993:417). In a context of a neoliberal conception of education, this prospect of altering my thinking, being and doing is promising. But, further along my journey, I sadly find that although

Foucault's ideas of power and regimes of meaning can help me to understand how government policies can be regarded as disciplinary technologies where power is expressed through language and practices, overall, they offer me no new grand narrative, no hook that I can hang my values on securely. Foucault's ideas lead me to understand that while there are 'practices of subjection', there are also 'practices of liberation' (Patrick, 2013:6). But what are those practices of liberation? And how, precisely, should they be approached?[10]

A year later I was introduced to the ideas of Martha Nussbaum and I found myself drawn to what I interpret as a humanistic vision of education, a moral concern for and analytical philosophical approach to human well-being. Within a capabilities approach, education is positioned as a site for developing autonomy and of determining one's own life conduct (Otto and Ziegler, 2006) and this position is in concert with the aim of human flourishing. Reading further, I recognise that the concept of well-being has received some critical attention in educational research in Scotland, though not in terms of its specific relationship to raising attainment. I am intrigued, for example, by Spratt's (2017) analysis of well-being policy in Scottish education. She identifies several dominant discourses that converge around well-being and she focuses on well-being and its relationship to learning, noting that a philosophical approach to well-being, known as eudaimonia or human flourishing, is largely absent from the policy documents. I extend the breadth of Spratt's work in this dissertation by considering, philosophically, well-being and its relationship to raising attainment. MacAllister (2018), too, urges 'teaching for well-being' and is sympathetic to the broad aims of a capabilities approach to education and particularly a need for research into well-being that is more qualitative than at present. However, beyond writing generally about broad notions of potential links between capabilities and performativity (p.103), I find little in educational literature that attempts to connect a capabilities approach directly to real strategies used in schools to raise attainment.

[10] It might be claimed that Foucault's later works in bioethics offer practices of liberation. For example, if the body takes control of its own environment and forges its own identity through processes of self-formation, then the self, previously hidden by mechanisms of repression, will be revealed (Besley and Peters, 2007). However, for me, Foucault's work tends not to address normative questions such as why and which forms of domination ought to be resisted, while Nussbaum's blueprint in the form of ten capabilities offers a clear, normative, actionable framework for well-being.

Thorburn (2018), who, like Spratt, also contributes to debates about the nature of well-being in Scottish education, suggests that ‘a greater conceptual awareness of well-being may help educators ensure that young peoples’ lives are more fulfilling and meaningful’ (p. 47). I agree and find that I cannot ignore the challenge to explore these areas. A greater conceptual awareness extends, in my view, also to attainment and so I critique the relationship between well-being and raising attainment. Nussbaum’s capabilities approach may not offer a complete alternative to current policy and practices. It is unlikely that any one idea could. I am, however, hopeful it may illuminate and temper those that are arguably the most damaging. Writing and thinking through the tensions of pursuing well-being within a raising attainment context will, hopefully, contribute some new perspectives for myself as a practitioner, and for policy makers, about well-being in Scottish education.

I proceed cautiously because philosophical inquiry means not looking for a quick fix or a rush to overhaul current practices. It is important that our reflection is principled (Carr, 2010) and careful. Yet I also proceed with optimism because the theoretical researcher, as Dewar (2016) notes, is involved in an on-going interpretative process with a view that theory illuminates ‘a more meaningful re-immersion into, and participation in, our lives’ (p. 102). Through such an approach, my tensions between fostering well-being and raising attainment may be resolved. This is a path that I must tread sensitively as a ‘tempered radical…who identifies with a vision that is fundamentally different and probably at odds with the dominant culture of their organisation’ (Meyerson and Scully, 1995:586). This description fits my situation perfectly. I am working within the system, and will continue to do so, but I am working for change (Hilson, 2005, in Herr and Anderson, 2015:159).

How far can a capabilities approach illuminate the kinds of actions a teacher might undertake in her practice to help pupils to live a full and flourishing life while also bearing the pressure of improving attainment outcomes? This dissertation is my journey of finding out.

Parameters of the research

Approaches to well-being in schools have tended to focus on 'incorporating ways of equipping children to lead flourishing lives' (Brighouse, 2008 in Wolbert et al., 2017:1) or 'changing the traditional curriculum to better fulfil the ideal aim of equipping children to lead flourishing lives' (Reiss and White, 2013 in Wolbert et al., 2017:1). While my educational values tend to the latter and find articulation in ideas such as Reiss and White's (2013) aims-based curriculum, this dissertation will focus on the former. This is, firstly, due to the focus of this dissertation which is to draw upon Nussbaum's capabilities approach to reconceptualise well-being as it is reflected in Scottish educational policy and, secondly, to the limited means to alter the traditional curriculum that my working position affords. Sen argues that 'the actual world should have primacy when constructing a theory of justice' (2006 in Wolbert et al., 2017:2) and this has more practical value than simply picturing an ideal. In this respect, I am therefore concerned with realistic idealism, or 'what is ideal given the possible constraints of (my) world' (Schmidtz, 2016:2 in Wolbert et al., 2017:3) rather than pursuing a notion of utopian idealism, irrespective of the constraints of the actual world (p. 3). I cannot alter the Scottish government's current conception of attainment, which is largely exams based, however within the constraints of my position I will be seeking ways to meet the demand for raising attainment[11] but, at the same time, will promote the well-being, particularly the dignity and autonomy of pupils, more than is presently the norm. Simultaneously, by examining the Scottish government's current neoliberal conception of the purpose of education, though dominant, this conception will be shown to be contestable.

Outline of the argument

In brief, using analytical, ampliative and normative tools of philosophical inquiry, I contest the concept of well-being as it is expressed in Scottish educational policy and critically evaluate its relationship to raising attainment. I will examine the neoliberal influences underpinning and dominating the concept of well-being highlighting how these influences, and the practices in schools that support them, are likely to inhibit pupils' well-being. Despite the contestable nature of these terms and their relationship, it is possible to judge some articulated meanings of concepts as better than others because their interpretative

[11] I refer to attainment in this dissertation as primarily the academic qualifications achieved by pupils at secondary schools and I examine this in detail in chapter 3. Although my own conception of attainment is considerably broader, the constraints of my position and the real world of my practice is dominated by exam results.

breadth and depth make them more useful (Swanton, 1985 in Mikkelsen and Clegg, 2019) and so, drawing primarily upon Nussbaum's capabilities approach, I contend that its underpinning basis of autonomy and dignity offers a more educationally defensible, and normatively moral conception, of well-being than presently exists in Scottish education policy. For teachers and middle leaders like myself who work in schools negotiating the policy priorities of raising attainment and fostering well-being, I demonstrate some practical changes of practice that could better foster well-being. For policymakers, I offer a changed perspective on well-being policy aims that could help pupils to flourish.

Outline of the dissertation

In this first chapter I have outlined my area of professional concern, my research approach and my professional context and values. The introduction presents an important foundation to understanding that concepts in education are contested and contestable. The Scottish government promotes a particular narrow picture of well-being grounded in a utilitarian economic model. Progress in society is often measured using economic indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, happier, healthier and more equal societies exist alongside our own (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009) and there is growing consensus that material consumption is not equal to well-being (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009; Krishnakumar and Nogales, 2015). Economic measures are therefore relevant to an extent but an over emphasis on these measures can distract attention from other ways of assessing well-being and undermine possibilities for promoting them, confirming the need to consider an alternative policy conception of well-being. I have also introduced a second educational priority of the Scottish government, which is to raise attainment in schools. The relationship between raising attainment and fostering well-being is presented un-problematically in education policy yet these are overlapping yet often competing aims. Examining the conceptual bases and assumptions of these aims using philosophical tools identifies a dominant and harmful narrative of human capital theory which is unlikely to support the idea of fully flourishing human beings. In contrast, I present in this dissertation Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach, with constituent elements of autonomy and dignity, as a better and more ethically defensible conception of human well-being.

In chapter two, I set out the legal and policy initiatives that place teachers at the heart of supporting pupil well-being. Situating well-being within a context of education, I explain that well-being is refracted through discourses of care, psychology and individualism. I

demonstrate that these discourses are embedded in a human capital model of well-being which supports the social and economic interests of the Scottish government, and that these approaches limit conceptions of well-being to prescribed utilitarian outcomes and the development of the ideal citizen. Arguing that a human capital influenced conception of well-being is dominant yet damaging, this chapter examines the consequences of a neoliberal conception of individuals, a theme further developed in chapter three.

Chapter three sets out the Scottish government's attainment challenge and raising attainment strategies. Continuing the argument that these strategies are also dominated by a neoliberal conception of the competitive individual, I draw on two sources to demonstrate the limitations of those strategies. I explain that the dominance of pursuing ever-increasing attainment outcomes can lead to ontological insecurity and contribute to pupils' stress and anxiety. The consequences of prioritising school improvement based on exam results leads to the enumeration of pupils because they are conceived of as data, rather than potentially flourishing human beings. This chapter argues that the Scottish government's raising attainment agenda is, firstly, more likely to undermine than enhance pupils' well-being and, secondly, the conception of raising attainment as reflective of a good standard of education presents an impoverished view of the purposes of education. Furthermore, the Scottish government's focus on aspiration as a means to raise attainment is shown to be embedded in human capital ideology, controlling and governing pupils' aspirations toward the Scottish government's preferred economic goals.

Chapter four introduces well-being theories and explores in particular the theory of the capabilities approach, distinguishing the complementary but distinct readings of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. Locating the capabilities approach within the sphere of education, the chapter proceeds to outline a capabilities conception of well-being as flourishing, tracing the place of autonomy and dignity within this description. It then explains differences between functionings and capabilities by drawing upon examples from Sen and Nussbaum. The chapter considers the distinction Nussbaum makes between combined and internal capabilities and recognises these distinct but complementary concepts as conceptually helpful tools with which to work. The overall purpose of the chapter is to set out the theory of a capabilities approach before considering how it might inform approaches to raising attainment discussed in chapter five.

Chapter five explores a range of raising attainment strategies used in Scottish secondary schools to increase exam results and discusses them with reference to Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach. The aim of the chapter is to highlight how these strategies negatively affect well-being, particularly by constraining the autonomy and dignity of pupils. The chapter begins with a vignette of 'Isabella' an imagined S5 pupil undertaking Higher[12] qualifications for the first time and who experiences typical raising attainment strategies. The chapter proceeds to a discussion of those strategies illuminated by Nussbaum's capabilities approach and its underpinning emphasis of autonomy and dignity. The chapter concludes that a capabilities approach can inform the discourse of well-being so that it is not just well-being for the economy that schools prioritise but well-being as human flourishing. If promoting autonomy and dignity is valued as inherent to achieving and experiencing well-being, a capabilities approach can help to reconceptualise well-being in a way that offers a clear picture of practices that currently are likely to inhibit pupils' well-being and which need to change.

Chapter six identifies insights and implications for policy and professional practice and demonstrates that the tools of philosophical inquiry can play a key role in critical policy analysis. The chapter contends that pupils should not be treated as means to policy ends and that any interventions schools make to reduce the attainment gap or improve exam results should not frustrate or ignore pupils' capabilities for autonomy or their own views of living a valuable life. This chapter also considers what approaches to raising attainment might be possible for middle leaders and teachers like myself who are accountable for exam results yet committed to supporting the well-being of their pupils. The chapter concludes that while the conception of well-being assumed in key policy instruments in Scottish education is highly problematic and hinders the achievement of well-being for Scottish pupils, it is possible to contest this conception of well-being and to reconceptualise well-being as human flourishing.

[12] Scottish Higher qualifications (known as Highers) are subject-based qualifications that can lead to university, further study, training, or work (UCAS, 2020).

Chapter 2

Well-being and Scottish education

> If we were *really* aiming at fulfilment and had a blank sheet about how we went about it, schools, especially secondary schools, would become very different places. As things are, too many are dominated by totems – academic rigour, no-nonsense discipline, hard work, examination star-rating, places gained at university. Theirs is a self-justifying enterprise. Examined microscopically, its parts cohere together; but seen as a whole it lacks a convincing rationale (P.8).
>
> Is this insane competitiveness our only option? (P.28).
>
> (White, 2011)

There is in Scottish education a renewed emphasis on the subject of well-being and recent legislation and policy initiatives place teachers at the heart of supporting pupil well-being. Post 1999 devolution, Scottish education policy is unique in the UK in that pupil well-being is now a statutory responsibility of all teachers. In 2010, Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) was introduced across secondary education and along with subject specialist knowledge, all secondary school teachers gained a responsibility for developing pupils' literacy, numeracy, health and well-being. A number of key legal acts and policy documents supported this change, including but not limited to, 'Being Well, Doing Well' (SHPSU, 2004), the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007, 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC) (Scottish Government, 2008a), Curriculum for Excellence: health and wellbeing across learning: responsibilities of all (Education Scotland, n.d). In 2009 eight indicators of health and well-being were published by Learning and Teaching Scotland which quickly became known as SHANARRI: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. More recently, a National Improvement Framework (NIF) includes wider measures to assess pupils' health and well-being (Scottish Government, 2015a). Underpinning this emphasis on well-being is the belief that schools can and do make a difference in the lives of young people. While this will be true of many, schools are not the only influence in the lives of young people. Parental input, peer relationships and wider societal inequalities also affect their lives. However, the raising attainment agenda, experienced by most pupils as the exams-based priority of secondary school, a central experience of most young people in Scotland is, I argue, contributing negatively to their well-being.

This chapter focuses on this recent emphasis on well-being in Scottish education. It will draw upon two of Spratt's (2017) five discourses of well-being in Scottish education policy. These discourses are disparate but include care and psychology that cohere around a notion of competitive individualism - one of four social evils highlighted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. It will also draw upon Thorburn and Dey's (2018) policy perspectives on well-being to present the argument that a psychologised, politicised and economised interpretation of well-being is dominant in Scottish education. My aim is to paint a picture of the current situation to demonstrate that an alternative discourse of well-being, that of human flourishing, is both important and possible.

Connecting well-being and education

A cursory glance through academic research will point to plural conceptions of well-being: it is represented variously as values education (Lovat et al., 2010); spirituality (Seaward, 1991); outdoor learning (Pryor et al., 2005); pursuing interests or hobbies and the quality of personal relationships (White, 2008); promoting mental health (Wyn et al., 2001); as well as well-being achieved through the provision of basic needs such as housing (Statham and Chase, 2010). For a secondary school subject specialist like myself, a subject specific focus to promoting well-being can be found in articles such as 'Music, health, and well-being' (MacDonald et al., 2013) and 'Mathematics education and student values: the cultivation of mathematical well-being' (Clarkson et al., 2010). Thorburn et al. (2011) suggest 'Thinking differently about curriculum: analysing the potential contribution of physical education as part of health and well-being during a time of revised curriculum', and Humes (2011:10) advises that 'the most effective contribution teachers can make to the welfare and development of their pupils might be to impart as much competence as possible in their own area of specialism'. Such themes and articles, plus many others, contribute to the conversation on well-being and confirm its prominence in debates about the aims and purposes of education.

Exploring the concept of well-being as human flourishing also results in a myriad of articles on topics such as self-determination (Deci and Ryan, 2000); positive health (Ryff et al., 2004); psychological well-being (Ryff and Singer, 1996); and subjective vitality (Ryan and Frederick, 1997). Well-being, it appears, is an appealing term, and a multi-faceted and complex concept. Michalos (2017:337) describes well-being as a term that has

been ‘psychologised, medicalised, economised, geneticised, socialised and politicised’. If the plethora of references listed above are indicative, it is tempting to claim that it is also a term that has been educationalised. More accurately, however, would be to understand education itself as psychologised, economised and politicised and thereby to understand that ideas within it, such as well-being, are too. White and Petit (2004:2 in Anderson and Graham, 2016: 350) describe concepts like well-being ‘as like a “hurrah word” – contested and confused, diffuse in meaning, and uncertain status’. However, well-being and its connection to education has been around since at least the time of Aristotle, who argued for a life well-lived, so well-being and its connection to education is clearly not a new topic. It is challenging, then, to pinpoint exactly how a preoccupation with pupils’ well-being has so recently become a concern. Pupils today are more likely to live longer than previous generations and have greater access to health care and education, which might tempt us to assume that their well-being is being successfully fostered. Yet anxiety and behavioural difficulties are on the rise (Layard and Dunn, 2009) implying there is more to well-being than simply accessing health care and education. Harris notes that because young people’s lives centre around competition, monitoring and achievement they live with elevated levels of anxiety (2017). These trends begin at an early age and follow pupils as they move through formal education. The pace and nature of change in twenty-first century society with increasing exposure to commercialism and technology also appear to contribute to their difficulties (JRF, 2008:4), as does a decline of community spirit, a decline in shared values and an increase in consumerism and individualism. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) describe these latter four areas as today’s social evils that impact well-being negatively (p.4).

While the concept of well-being is frequently discussed, it is useful to pause briefly to consider what is usually assumed by the concept of ‘education’. Most people aged over five years old in Scotland will have some experience of formal education through their experiences of school. Sociological theories have tended to dominate academic discussions about what education is for. These theories include schools as places that prepare children for life in wider society (Durkheim, 1972); and Bourdieu and Passeron particularly acknowledge that schools can be places where wider societal inequalities are reproduced (1990). Biesta (2015), who has a background in philosophy, continues a sociological theme by suggesting education has three general purposes, these are qualification, socialisation and subjectification. Qualification is the skills and dispositions that young people learn in

order to be able to do things; socialisation encultures young people into traditions of society; and subjectification is the way education impacts on young people's lives (p.77). These three purposes interact indeterminately. This chapter is not an examination of sociological theories nor of Biesta's work, but it is possible to see that, for better or worse, well-being is refracted through several sociological perspectives and the interaction of different purposes. This can be seen, for example, in the way young people are being prepared in school for their future in the workplace. And a human capital influence is evident in the purposes of education purported by policymakers. A philosophical approach, on the other hand, can help challenge the hegemony of sociological theories by showing that 'philosophy provides resources and methods useful for shaping a richer account of well-being than that which currently informs aspects of this agenda' (Clack, 2012:497). The philosophical tools that can help shape that richer account include examining how language is used to influence a preferred understanding of a concept.

In the following section, I begin with an examination of the discourse[13] of care. I then explore a discourse of psychology and connect both to a discourse of individualism. Thereafter, I consider what approaches to well-being are found in Scottish education policies, including aiming for equity, before concluding that a human capital influenced conception of well-being is both dominant and damaging.

A discourse of care

Foundational to many articulations of well-being is the notion of care. Any subset of words with which well-being is associated is likely to include care, caring about and caring for. Care can be conceived as both a noun and a verb; it has characteristics and is something that we do (Watson et al., 2012). It is relative to other concepts and contexts such as looking-after or having a professional duty of care towards others. Ontologically, the idea of care takes us further than these beliefs about looking-after or having professional duty; care is fundamental to human beings because human beings care about their own existence. To educate and care can mean to 'open and make more explicit the recognition of and care for our possibilities for being' (Dewar, 2016:59). In light of Dewar's philosophical

[13] A discourse can be described as a way of understanding or interpreting the world. It is not a neutral understanding but influenced by any number of perspectives such as gender or political class. Crucially, this understanding can be subject to discourse analysis or, in other words, the identification of the exercise of power in relationships. The tools of philosophical analysis such as how language is used to characterise concepts can help to identify, for example, a language of control that could be being used within a discourse.

position, in what way(s) do we care in Scottish education? I answer that care is conceived of as a professional duty rather than as a concern about human existence.

A connection between care and education is found in approaches to education in centuries past, such as by Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852) and Maria Montessori (1870–1952). As pillars of the kindergarten movement, and in contrast with the rationalism of the scientific method, they regarded feelings and experiences as important aspects of children's development (Aslanian, 2015). In the 1980s, an ethic of care gained precedence in the ethical theories of Carol Gilligan (1982) and Nel Noddings (1984). It is found in the work of Virginia Held (2004) for whom care is a foundational principle of social justice. Current approaches to pedagogy in Scottish education reflect an ethic of care. There is emphasis on developing the whole child and for education practitioners to see themselves in relationship with the child (Petrie et al., 2009). Care and its relationship to professional duty is clear in Scottish education policy, for example, in the SHANARRI well-being wheel which focuses 'on the duty of professionals and other adults towards the care of children' (Spratt, 2017:78). A prominent aspect of Scottish education policy, the SHANARRI well-being wheel exemplifies an approach to caring in a professional context which is based on 'the intellectual and ethical capacity to care which one performs…' (Aslanian, 2015:161). To care in a professional context does not need to reflect a personal notion of care that might be between parent and child, in other words, 'care is not something that you give; it is a verb and is concerned with doing' (Watson et al., 2012:197). The SHANARRI well-being wheel (figure 1) is offered in Scottish education policy as a resource which provides different professional groups 'shared understanding, consistent approaches and a common language' (Spratt, 2017:78) towards the care of children.

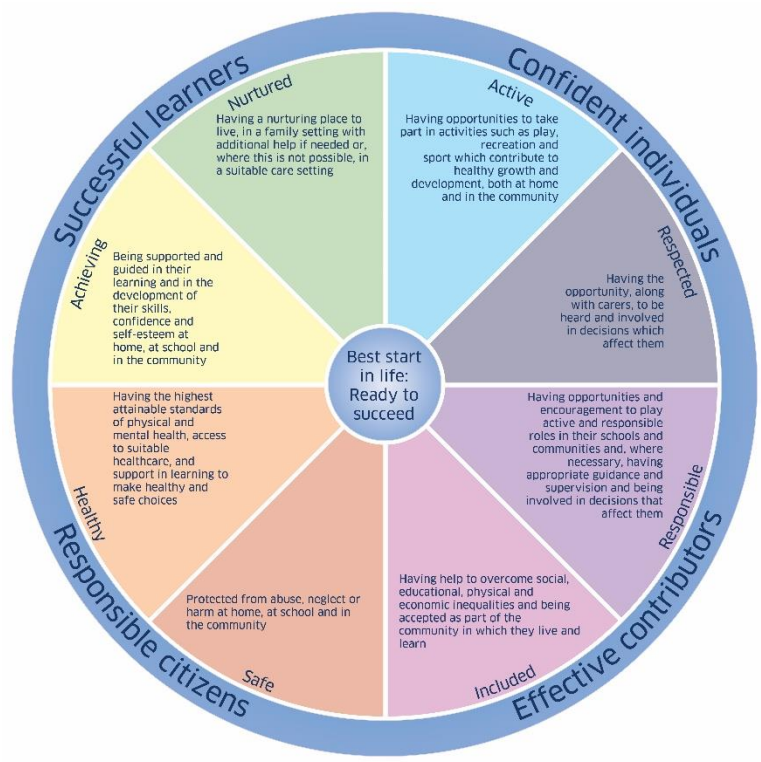


Figure 1: The SHANARRI well-being wheel (Scottish Government, 2017a)

The SHANARRI well-being wheel functions as a guide for working professionals. It reflects what Streuli (2015, p. 179) would describe as a 'best interest' approach to promoting the well-being of a child. Although based on a presumption of consensual values and practices of what Hass (1992) describes as epistemic communities, a 'best interest' approach is nonetheless likely to result in variability because of the competing values and perceptions adults hold of the child herself. These include perceptions of children as 'vulnerable people', or as a 'future person', or as a 'subject of parental authority' (Streuli, 2015, pp.180-183). Inspected closely, the eight indicators of well-being could lead to a limited or skewed conception of what is normal or acceptable. Moreover, a slightly Foucauldian picture emerges if children are conceived as being objects of care being moulded into an ideal norm. Reflecting Biesta's (2015) purposes of education, Spratt (2017:84) cautions it may contribute to an 'agenda of socialisation' reinforcing a limited picture of well-being which omits its complexity. It becomes a possibility that the child is evaluated rather than the processes which contribute to the child's well-being.

Following Nussbaum (2011), I would argue that missing from the SHANARRI well-being wheel is pupils' own evaluations of their lives and their own self-definition, choice and

freedom to define well-being, which will be different in quality for each individual and cannot be standardised. What matters for well-being is not that all outcomes for children are the same but that their autonomy and dignity is recognised and respected. Watson (2018) explains that the importance of autonomy lies not in undertaking one course of action or another, but to value the notion that the 'person who will be most affected by a decision retains the authority to make that decision for themselves' (p.11). Yet, an obvious criticism of the notion of autonomy is to claim that as we are dealing with young people, adults, and particularly specialists in childcare and education, should make decisions about children's well-being. Children, it might be assumed, are as yet ill-equipped by age or maturity to identify and provide what is needed for their own well-being. But this would only be partially true. Children certainly need adults to provide many things that contribute to well-being: shelter, food, a safe environment, and so on but children are remarkably good at identifying other aspects that contribute to their own well-being and there are compelling arguments for including their voice; including recognising the convention on the rights of the child (1989) and in valuing children as active participants in society (Ben-Arieh, 2005). Following Betzler (2015), to exercise autonomy in this way can be described as moving from a state of caring to a state of valuing. This move presents a conceptual switch (Watson, 2018) highlighting a distinction between empirical and normative approaches to well-being. To value well-being, I argue, is to agree with Dewar (2016) that this involves nurturing children's ontological selves, their very being.

Continuing with this closer inspection of the SHANARRI well-being wheel, we note it fits what Dahlberg et al. (1999:1) describe as a 'language of quality'. In other words, what can be predicted, controlled and measured. Within a language of quality all gets appropriated, even care. The language of quality identifies, rather than asks, what is meant by quality; it evaluates rather than seeks answers to why and by whom quality has been defined (Dahlberg et al., 1999). By examining the language of policy, it is possible to draw out policy premises and assumptions. When applied to the language of the SHANARRI well-being wheel, it is noticeable that care is premised on a managerial rationality in part because it is simplified by a set of eight indicators. Written in a language of audit and performance it contributes to the idea of self-improvement where young people are expected to accept help in conforming to a predetermined standard. In seeking reassurance of quality, questions of value, diversity and uncertainty are overlooked in favour of what can be standardised. Underpinning the language of care is the assumption of control. As

part of Scottish education policy, the SHANARRI well-being wheel defines a vision of well-being for all children in Scotland which is now enshrined in legislation. It prescribes collective responsibility and accountability for the public care of children and provides a framework within which effective practice can take place. Despite this legal benefit, there is still a place for critically considering and reflecting on ideas which challenge it. Decrying the language of quality so often found in education, Dahlberg et al. ask, 'what other languages can we choose to speak'? (1999:2). And we do require another language – one that does not interpret human beings as economic investment or as human capital. We can reject the language of "quality", "high returns" and "markets" (Trevarthen et al., 2018:315) and talk about education in terms of "wonder", "surprise", "uncertainties" and "possibilities" (p. 315). I contend that the language of well-being as human flourishing is the language we should speak.

A discourse of psychology

The role of well-being is explicit in CfE policy statements such as 'learning through health and well-being promotes confidence, independent thinking and positive attitudes and dispositions' (Scottish Executive, 2006:1). Here we can identify a discourse of psychology relating to, among other elements, self-esteem and resilience. If a child is positive and confident, it is assumed s/he will learn better and cope better with adversity.

Social, mental and emotional elements of well-being are a dominant part of positive psychology and have a wide-ranging place in schools. Linked, as in the quote above, to learning well, psychology is also linked to feelings of happiness, having good relationships and being able to solve problems (Watson et al., 2012). These help children address issues such as bullying or anxiety. Dominant in this discourse is a picture of self-reliance which in Scotland, as in the UK as a whole, reflects a wider cultural shift towards neoliberal individualism. However, following Gilligan (1982 in Watson et al., 2012), a discourse of psychology can rest on gendered assumptions of objectivity and scientific reliability, and Miller (2008:592, in Peters and Tesar, 2019:3) warns that positive psychology, in particular, often associates with a particular personality type: the cheerful, outgoing, goal-driven, status-seeking extrovert. The basis of criteria such as those found in the SHANARRI well-being wheel, and judgements relating to it, also reflect influences such as neoliberal individualism: the eight indicators of well-being sit within a framework of four competitive individualistic capacities. The overall message is that schools, charities and health groups will work with an individual and their family to support their well-being

needs but the terms and end points are set. It is an approach that individualises and locates well-being as a personal responsibility. To illustrate, to be included (Figure 1) individuals will have help to overcome social and political inequalities but this does not address modifying those wider social and political changes that would minimise the inequalities and barriers that young people face; the SHANARRI well-being model distracts from one of the key areas contributing to poor well-being, which is poverty.

Approaches to well-being illustrated by models such as the SHANARRI well-being wheel overlook the agency and complexity of young people and fail to represent an understanding of the complexity of power. In this model, children are envisioned as passive recipients of others' interventions rather than viewed as active and interactive agents of their own lives. Typically, the model fits a neoliberal view of controlling and managing outcomes. In this case, the child is a product moulded into a prescribed condition overarched by four capacities. The well-being wheel incorporates a neoliberal perspective of individual responsibilisation by providing a check list of well-being and is 'undergirded by a saviour narrative that says "the problem is you and what you need is … (an) expert to modify your behaviour / change the way you think"'[14]. We see, again, an educere perspective (Dewar, 2016) in that there are prescribed outcomes some children are judged as not meeting. Similar to a notion of care, a notion of psychology presents a double-edged sword. On the one hand social, emotional and mental well-being is important now in the life of a child and not just at some future point. On the other hand, these positive psychological elements may also reflect what Bernstein (2000) describes as generic pedagogical modes; prescriptive or narrow criteria that can be audited, and Spratt (2017:84) cautions that to respond to life's difficulties children are being encouraged to 'look inwards and change the self' as opposed to seeking change externally.

Socio-emotional and mental well-being is important. As a teacher, I am willing to accept the policy rhetoric that claims schools should be full of happy, positive and confident children. At the same time, I am aware that because I teach a subject which deals with fundamental questions about human life, the limitations of taught responses and strategies such as developing positivity, confidence or resilience may lead to a false promise of well-

[14] 'ACEs and -isms part I: Neoliberalism' (2019) available online at https://medium.com/@SocialWhatNow/acees-and-isms-part-i-neoliberalism-fdc1275cd358, [accessed 18.08.19].

being or an incomplete picture of it. Human life is more fragile than these strategies suggest, and questions of meaning may not be so easily answered. It is with concern that Ecclestone and Hayes, for example, note that focussing on developing well-being dispositions such as being emotionally happy may lead to pupils becoming dependent on school support programmes for their well-being (2009, in Thorburn, 2018). As others note, well-being is more than happiness, positivity and confidence. In a liberal conception it is associated with meaningfulness, self-realisation and 'fulfilling one's sense of purpose in life' (Estola et al., 2014:931). Importantly, this does not mean to reflect only inwardly, personally and emotionally, but to connect outwardly, rationally and compassionately with the external world too (Clack, 2012). This suggests a need to change social arrangements for children because to focus on children's agency and capabilities means to consider what cultural conditions support their well-being. I contend that an emphasis on flourishing can help to refocus our understanding of well-being 'away from promoting emotional well-being…informed by behavioural psychology' (Clack, 2012:497-499), towards a richer understanding of a flourishing life in which children are active agents. In contrast to what Nussbaum would call 'coerced functioning', a flourishing life within a capabilities approach encourages individuals to actively imagine, think and reason with 'freedom to choose and act' (Nussbaum, 2011:24).

A discourse of individualism

Individualism posits

> that there are no intrinsic barriers to individual success, and that failure is not a consequence of systematic structure but of individual character. It also conveys that success is independent of privilege, that one succeeds through individual effort, and that there are no favoured starting positions that provide competitive advantage.
>
> (Flax, 1999 in DiAngelo, 2010, n.p.)

Written in a context of education and race, this quote makes a useful point about features of a discourse of individualism: individual effort, merit and competence are upheld as the normative standard. Success and failure are a result of individual effort. It promotes the individual as entrepreneur and overlooks many influences that contribute to success and failure that are out-with the control of the individual such as parental input, access to

available opportunities and so on. Individualism stresses that everyone is in competition with others.

Of the myriad of potential aims of education and accepting that it should have an aim, defining well-being in terms of positive psychology 'draws gaze towards the individual… and attention inward' (Clack, 2012:502). This focus on the self to compete and succeed can be observed in education which is considered a marketable commodity and academic success or failure is the responsibility of the individual (Rassool and Morley, 2000; Pimlott-Wilson, 2015). It reflects what Thorburn and Dey (2018) describe as an asset-based approach to learning where learners are responsible for their progress. Commensurate with success and failure are the consequences for well-being: success is considered positive for well-being, whilst failure is not (Lerner and Steinberg, 2004). Well-being, as described by Clack (2012:502) has come to be 'something the individual can control through correct management of their…life'. By promoting well-being as an individual responsibility, politicians can avoid wider 'necessary economic, political and social solutions to issues of human discontent' (Clack, 2012: 503). Here we see an example of the responsibilisation of the individual beginning to work as a technology of governance deflecting criticism away from the state on to the individual (Besley and Peters, 2015). Furedi argues that 'schools should not be used as places "where the unresolved issues of public life can be pursued"' (2009:51 in O'Brien, 2018:156). Nonetheless, the difficulties of tackling factors such as social inequality of income, wealth, power and inclusion that impact on well-being has resulted in the idea of personal responsibility for well-being gaining traction in education policy. As Clack (2012:502) puts it, 'education becomes the arena for addressing by the backdoor a whole host of societal ills'.

In Scottish education, conceptions of well-being are refracted through discourses of care, psychology and individualism. These discourses are based on outcomes and are predominantly future-focused. Following Griffiths (2012:661) ideals such as 'confident individual' and 'effective contributor', which are two of the four capacities overarching the purposes of Scottish education, reflect the 'primacy of future outcomes on present experience'. I contend they also reflect Dewar's etymology of education as 'educere' rather than 'educare' (Dewar, 2016) and fit the current agenda of the Scottish government

which has a keen interest in promoting such perspectives and the conception of well-being they express. We turn to this interest in the next section.

The Scottish government's interest and control over education

A key political aim of the current Scottish government is to develop both an internal and external national identity based on a desire to achieve Scottish independence and become a nation which is prosperous and aware of its global responsibility (Scottish Government, 2008b). Ideologies such as national and cultural identity can be achieved 'through the reproduction and maintenance of particular discourses and language' (Macrine, 2016:345), and can be seen in the Scottish government's (2015b:8) aim: to 'invest in Scotland's people at all stages of life to ensure that we have a well-skilled, healthy and resilient population and an innovative, engaged and productive workforce'. This view of a productive workforce is complemented, although with a slightly different emphasis, by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) who claim that 'raising and maintaining education standards is an economic imperative' (CBI, 2015:6). Furthering a workplace relationship with education, the CBI believes business–oriented aspects such as, 'enterprise should be at the heart of the school curriculum, running across academic subjects for all year groups' (CBI, 2005:2). The ultimate destination for young people in education is successful transition into work. Links to well-being are overt in the use of the terms such as 'healthy' and 'resilient', with resilience coming from a discourse of psychology as previously discussed. The Scottish government's vision of a successful and independent Scotland requires positive international comparisons (Arnott and Ozga, 2008) and can be seen in statistical comparisons and benchmarking with other countries, notably through the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Similar to other nations, Scotland has been drawn into an international dialogue about school improvement (Ward et al. 2016) keen to know how its schools perform relative to other countries. It is fair to say that comparative school performance is relative to a wider interest and awareness of education systems and economic performance globally and this trend gives insight into the dominance of performativity as a measure of success. Multiple authors (Dale, 2005; Down et al., 2006) position education in a global culture of performativity, marketisation and managerialism where corporate values of efficiency, targets, and entrepreneurialism have become a dominant force. Indeed, Harvey (2009, in Ward, 2016) describes these values as being accepted as common sense, as readily accepted hegemony. Education, subsequently, becomes a neoliberal technology, part of a 'hegemonic

network…that promotes neoliberal discourses and practices' (Macrine, 2016:346). Chopra (2003:419 in Macrine, 2016) goes further, claiming that these values are beyond hegemonic. He describes them as a doxa, 'an unquestionable orthodoxy that operates as if it were an unquestionable truth' (p.343).

The Scottish government has extensive interest and control over education. It desires both a 'wealthier' and 'fairer' nation (Scottish Government, 2011 in Spratt, 2017:17) yet inequality and ill-health are increasing (BBC, 2013; JRF, 2019). This is likely to continue under the current approaches to well-being found in Scottish education, which is well-being focused on securing economic development. As has been indicated, well-being appears dominated by the desire to produce a certain kind of citizen: a citizen with four capacities, high academic attainment and fit for the workplace. It is based on the individual's responsibility to achieve skills and qualifications and achieve well-being through self-management and work, rather than a political-economic responsibility of fairer distribution of resources (Spratt, 2017) or by promoting approaches to well-being as human flourishing. Well-being is, by contrast, promoted within CfE as having the inner resources to succeed and is applied as a generic set of 'I can' or 'I am' statements (Education Scotland, n.d.) assumed to be achievable by all. By implication, if 'I cannot', then it is my own fault. If education has multiple purposes such as the three described by Biesta, it also has multiple values such as those described by Griffiths. These purposes and values are discussed in more detail in chapter three and so for the purposes of this chapter, it is enough to say that Griffiths describes these values as instrumental, inherent and integral. Instrumental values relate to jobs, status and extrinsic reasons; inherent values pertain to the desired outcomes of a liberal education, such as autonomy and citizenship; while integral values relate to education as being part of what makes a good life good (Griffiths, 2012: 656-657). She highlights that Scotland's CfE 'might be interpreted as including learning for…integral learning' (p. 667), including as it does statements such as learner enjoyment and curiosity. Her hesitancy (as suggested by the phrase 'might be') is possibly due to integral value being overshadowed by instrumental outcomes. Personal fulfilment and human flourishing are, as this chapter suggests, neither a dominant part of the policy rhetoric nor adequately articulated.

One of the benefits of concept analysis is the identification of relationships between concepts (McLaughlin, 2008) and we see that the Scottish government repeatedly links economic success to education. This is a typical interpretation of the purpose of education reflected in the OECD PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) project. To illustrate, in 2011, it published a report called 'Teaching Scotland's Future' (Scottish Government, 2011a). The report's introduction explicitly entwines education and economic success and its dominant focus on education as an economic imperative is clear in statements such as, '...human capital in the form of a highly educated population is now accepted as a key determinant of economic success…' (Scottish Government, 2011a:2). Thus, we can see that the Scottish government aligns itself to ideals of increasing the country's economic competitiveness by means of education. Following Sjøberg (2019:34) the OECD perspective is oriented towards an 'instrumental role of education (which is) the development of skills for the labour market'. This presents ethical challenges, including a challenge to my own values pertaining to human flourishing which are in tension with:

> a philosophy that assumes childhood education is merely a preparation for employment is one where economic policy rather than social policy becomes the epistemological driver of policy… social justice and social welfare are sacrificed to global economic competition
>
> (Lea, 2014:18).

Values pertaining to well-being understood as human flourishing are overlooked in the report in favour of the values of human capital theory which are rooted in neoliberal thinking. Well-being, it is implied will be found within a strong economy, rather than merely as part of it. Human flourishing and human capital distinguish the importance of the human being, but they do so in different ways. Focussing, then, on human development could help us to break away from the current paradigm of human capital.

Human capital and human capability

With an underpinning emphasis on economic and social development respectively, human capital and human capability appear to be two sides of the same coin, but a more accurate analogy would be to understand them as a different currency. Sen provides an example of the distinction: human capital 'concentrates on the agency of human beings – through skill and knowledge as well as effort – in augmenting production possibilities' (Sen, 1997:1959). In contrast, human capability 'focuses on the ability of human beings to lead

lives they have reason to value' (p.1959). Both theories value human beings but emphasise a distinction: human capital values the skills and knowledge which provide economic value while human capability values enriching lives, where economic prosperity is but one way of doing so. Connecting these theories to the purposes of education: a human capital approach seeks to develop marketable skills fit for purpose in the workplace while a human capability approach seeks to develop capabilities to live a flourishing life. The different conceptions of these approaches lead to two different pictures of well-being. These conceptions will be examined in relation to Scottish education policy in the following paragraphs.

Human capital can be defined as 'the knowledge, skills, competences and attributes that allow people to contribute to their personal and social well-being, as well as that of their countries' (Keely, 2007:3 in Campbell-Barr and Nygard, 2014). Human capital theory proposes that education is an investment and a means to an end. As Scotland's CfE seeks to develop successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors (Scottish Executive, 2004b), a vision of a particular citizen emerges. This vision is influenced by both a supranational expectation regarding economic growth and a national expectation of participation in society (Biesta, 2008): each citizen will be highly educated and become part of a skilled workforce leading to the economic prosperity and social cohesion of the country. In this vision, young people will be emotionally stable, having 'been taught ways of regulating and managing (their) emotions, and, importantly, of how to ameliorate negative ones' (Clack, 2012:499). The four capacities seem benign - after all, who would not want successful learners and confident individuals and so on? Yet there is a myopic element to advancing four capacities which tell people how to turn out, instead of allowing pupils to develop in ways which might be unexpected but suitable for what they themselves value.

If human capital 'is conceived as the attributes of a person that are productive in a given economic context, and education is seen as an investment' (Lanzi, 2007:425), it results in a conception of well-being being 'as a function of economic utility' (Bessant, 2014:138), not taking account that well-being is linked to more than attainment or earning power. Carter (2009) argues that neoliberal and knowledge economy discourses lead to individuals being viewed as '…fodder…who represent capital for personal and social and

economic prosperity alike' (in Kascak and Pupala, 2011:151-152). Moreover, if as is found in Scotland's CfE, well-being is considered to be attributes, dispositions and skills that can be taught, 'children are construed as malleable creatures, whose feelings, subjectivities and their very being are available as a resource for government use' (Spratt, 2017:84). In this utilitarian vision 'people are reconfigured as productive and economic entrepreneurs' (Kascak and Pupala, 2011:149) where the benefits of education are measured in terms of material goods and estimated income (Bessant, 2014). In this conception, well-being is dominated by employment and economic independence (Duffy, 2017). If we further apply Scheper-Hughes and Lock's (1987) multiplicities of bodies theory, the governance is clear: we see the well-being of the social body is dependent on the well-being of the individual body. 'The relationship between individual and social bodies is also one of politics…(leading to) the correct body (society) should achieve' (Watson et al., 2012:31-32).

In contrast, a human capability conception values socio-economic improvement not as an end but as a means to an end, providing conditions in which human beings can flourish. It presents a more positive ontology of well-being because it incorporates not just the idea of a part of a person's well-being, for example their economic or labour potential, but encompasses a broader conceptualisation of their whole being. Promoting productivity or economic growth is reasonable according to Sen (2003) but the purpose is to 'help people lead freer and more fulfilling lives' (Sen, 1997:1960). Sen illustrates with the following example:

> If education makes a person more efficient in commodity production, then this is clearly an enhancement of human capital. This can add to the value of production in the economy and also to the income of the person who has been educated. But even with the same level of income, a person may benefit from education, in reading, communicating, arguing, in being able to choose in a more informed way, in being taken more seriously by others, and so on. The benefits of education, thus, exceed its role as human capital in commodity production. The broader human capability perspective would record – and value – these additional roles. The two perspectives are, thus, closely related but distinct.
>
> (Sen, 1997:1959)

Here we see a vision of education valued as more than a means of production or valued only for its economic usefulness. A human capability conception goes further than a human capital one because a human capability approach recognises that education has a role in supporting a flourishing life: the skills and knowledge that children learn would 'enhance their freedoms to recognise and lead a life of value' (Spratt, 2017:125), and not seek, as has been argued earlier in this chapter, to normalise their emotions (p.124) or operationalise their care (p.120) to serve their community. A human capabilities conception of well-being therefore recognises a more fruitful relationship between education and well-being than does a human capital conception.

In 2013 the Scottish government established an independent commission to investigate ways in which Scotland's young workforce could be developed. Led by the prominent businessman Sir Ian Wood, the result was a series of recommendations 'which built upon the Scottish government's Economic Strategy, the introduction of CfE and the extensive reforms of Post 16 Education' (Scottish Government, 2014, n.p.). Setting out what colleges, apprenticeships and employers might do to encourage immediate and future employment, the role of schools is to develop work-relevant learning from ages 3-18. This developing the young workforce (DYW) strategy is an example of a policy which emphasises that a 'good life' is to be found in employment and economic success (Duffy, 2017). It is embedded in the psychological and neoliberal individualistic notions of well-being where success in the job market is dependent upon how flexible, self-reliant and resilient an individual can be. Reiterating Spratt's concerns of emotional governance, Sparks (2014 in Duffy, 2017) comments that public policies which construct and regulate young people as of future-orientated use to the state, as DYW overtly does, manipulate young people into believing and accepting a narrow picture of success.

In Scottish education a human capital conception of pupils dominates. The totems described by White (2011) in the epigraph to this chapter dominate: success is found in comparing exam results and school ranking with real and even virtual schools (Education Scotland, 2018a)[15]. Schools are under pressure to raise attainment and present qualified

[15] 'Insight' is a tool used in Scottish education that allows like-for-like comparisons based on a school's unique characteristics. For each school leaver, the virtual comparator takes ten matching school leavers randomly selected based on gender, additional support needs, stage of leaving school (S4, S5 or S6) and the social context in which they live. Further information available online at https://www.schoolguide.co.uk/about/school-guide, accessed [09.03.19].

and skilled young people ready for employment. These young people should be healthy and resilient, fitting the ideal vision of well-being of a kind that Gewirtz and Cribb (2008) would describe as discursively produced. However, in doing so schools, and by implication my actions as a teacher, may be exacerbating inequality and diminishing well-being. Spratt (2017: 84) cautions that the current well-being policy agenda is Foucauldian, deliberately shaping the personal lives of children now 'towards a new emotional norm, favouring a particular type of person'. Also sounding a note of caution is Dewar (2016: xvii) who warns that well-intentioned educators can 'reinforce the reduction of student's value to a market value', overly concerned with what students can do, and thus continue to commodify education and pupils.

Spratt concedes that the overt human capital message present in Scottish education policies may not be deliberate, but she acknowledges that these well-being policies can be manipulated 'to serve purposes other than the best interests of children' (2017:92). The view that education has valuable economic returns is, as we have seen, prevalent and powerful and this education-economic model is the current vision of the Scottish government.

A United Kingdom view of well-being

As described in chapter one, well-being is not only influenced by experiences in education but by wider societal issues too. Judith Robertson, head of Oxfam Scotland, has pointed out that the existing economic model is not working (BBC, 2013), that Scotland's physical and mental ill-health, and economic disparity are increasing. In response, the Scottish government has directed blame at the UK Government and claims independence will be the opportunity to create a fairer and more equal Scotland (BBC, 2013). In 2017 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a report about students' well-being in which 15.6 per cent of 15 year-old pupils in the UK said they were unhappy with their life, putting the UK 38th out of the 48 countries from which data was collected (Ward, 2016). Anxiety about testing and pressure to perform well in order to gain better jobs or go to university are included as challenges to pupils' well-being. This concern is echoed in both a report by the think-tank Demos (2015, in YMCA, 2016, n.p.) in which final year school pupils feel that their school is more 'focussed on preparing them for exams, rather than to succeed in life more generally'; and in a response to Scotland's

NIF which warns that a focus on testing can undermine pupils' well-being (Watson, 2015). Choices for schools are limited: constant improvements in exam results is part of the comparative global picture. The insane competitiveness captured by White in the epigraph is a warning of its potentially damaging impact. If secondary schools continue to privilege exam results as its main measure of success, it may produce better test-takers (Noddings, 2006: xxvi) but may not address increasing pupil anxiety nor help pupils to flourish.

Linking the purpose of education to such narrow outcomes of maximising human capital, both in Scotland and in the UK as a whole, highlights that there is a gap in developing a more full and broad understanding of well-being related to human flourishing and of valuing this as an aim of education. It reflects an impoverished picture of who young people are and of what they can become. This narrow view is summed up by Gasper (2004 in Spratt, 2017:84) as 'well-being conceptualised as well-feeling rather than well-living', and, following Ball et al., (2012:76) reflects well-being in performative terms as something to be 'delivered' rather than realised. For educators like myself, there is a question of justice: 'the health and well-being, the life chances, life choices and life courses of … young people… are currently being shaped and remade in the moral economies of neoliberalism and austerity' (Kelly and Pike, 2017:19). As Denis Shirley notes, 'human capital matters but it isn't everything' (2016:2).

Despite the somewhat bleak picture painted above, it is not the whole story. Young people do not want a future in which they are configured as human capital. Their sense of self is not limited to this view. Research in the UK is illustrative of this point. Hicks (1998) has found that teenagers' worries about the future include living in an uncaring and divided society which is, in part, influenced by economic drivers. Their preferable future would be more equitable. In terms of well-being, this theme of equity can also be found in Scottish education policy. Yet equity, like any concept, can be understood and emphasised in different ways.

A theme of equity

Between 2016 and 2021 the Scottish government is providing a £750 million Attainment Scotland Fund, part of which is allocated as a Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) (Scottish

Government, 2015c). The aim is to close what is known as a poverty related attainment gap. Research shows that there is an attainment gap associated with poverty in Scotland: 'over one in five children lives in poverty. It affects their health, their education, their connection to wider society and their future prospects for work' (Sosu and Ellis, 2014:7). The Sosu and Ellis research followed an OECD report commissioned by the Scottish government which identified a need to raise standards of achievement[16] as a national priority (SEED, 2007:16) and to especially address underachievement in low socio-economic groups (p.15). Since publication of this report and the research of Sosu and Ellis, a raft of measures to tackle the poverty related attainment gap can be identified in Scottish schools, for example, the introduction of nurture bases and PEF. Nurture bases are places in schools where pupils identified as requiring support work with an adult to improve their engagement with school in a warm, supportive environment that provides structure, high expectations and a focus on achievement and attainment (Education Scotland, 2019b). With an eye to seeking favourable international comparisons, the Scottish government has sought answers to the variation in effectiveness between schools by turning attention to the contexts in which schools work. By referencing attainment as poverty related, the Scottish government is acknowledging a wider issue of poverty in society. However, in less than two years since the introduction of the Attainment Scotland Fund, it is not uncommon in conversations with colleagues, and more widely, to hear of 'the attainment gap' (Scottish government, 2015c), the poverty related part going unmentioned. The focus is on schools to improve attainment. The assumption of the Scottish government appears to be that a reduced attainment gap will ameliorate socio-economic inequalities. In revealing this assumption, a philosophical defect of reasoning becomes clear; a poverty related attainment gap is simply beyond the scope of schools to address.

The approaches of introducing nurture bases and PEF which target initiatives and resources to individuals who are disadvantaged are reminiscent of Clack's concerns that these kinds of solutions 'avoid addressing the structural problems of the societies we inhabit' (2012:502). She argues that cultivating well-being requires that politicians address socio-economic inequality rather than use schools as places 'where what has gone wrong or might go wrong in socialisation or upbringing can be put right' (p.502). Additionally, the research by Sosu and Ellis (2014:1) notes that 'parental socio-economic background was more important for children's attainment than the school they attended' but this finding

[16] The conflation of the concepts of achievement and attainment is addressed in chapter 3.

appears lost as schools search for means to improve attainment. The approaches which foreground schools as the solution to minimising the poverty-related attainment gap maintain a dominant human capital view of well-being, emphasising education as an economic and social investment. Scotland's NIF, designed to improve attainment overall while also closing the gap between the most and least disadvantaged children, has been criticised for focussing too heavily on introducing additional measures of summative assessment while ignoring the need for 'a better understanding of the gap and how poverty and other factors lead to poorer educational outcomes' (RSE, 2015, n.p.). It appears, following Lingard et al.'s (2014) analysis of equity in Australian education, equity in Scottish education is being conceptualized as neo-social. This means equity is being interpreted as 'facilitating social well-being, but primarily for the sake of fostering greater economic productivity and economic competitiveness within the global community' (p.715). Rose calls this sort of conflation of social and economic agendas the 'capitalization of citizenship' (1991:481 in Lingard et al., 2014:714) in which equity is articulated as educational investment which produces better comparative scores on national and global tests (p. 725), and which 'recasts all aspects of human life in terms of an individual's potential for self-capitalisation in a market society' (p. 711). Yet a neo-social conception of equity is only one possible interpretation. Overlooked are other potential conceptions of equity such as 'equality of opportunity' or 'redistribution' (p.713). Espinoza (2007:359) offers a number of conceptions such as equity for equal needs, or equity for equal potential', but as will be explained in chapter three, the subtleties, nuances and different possible interpretations of concepts such as equity are ill-defined in Scottish education. It seems to suit the Scottish government's purpose to conceive of equity in economic terms, reflecting the origins of the language in which it arose (Lingard et al., 2014:715).

And what of flourishing? Spratt (2017) notes that there is a theme of flourishing present in Scottish education policy, but it is so minimal she describes it as 'quiet' (p.82). Amounting to little more than a line here and there, Spratt accounts for its presence as an example of policy bricolage (Ball, 2007) where different authors of documents emphasise themes that are important to them but which do not reflect an overall dominant message. I contend that the quiet note of human flourishing is one which should become louder.

Conclusion

It is now clear that the Scottish government's understanding of the overall usefulness of education is tied in policy to specific economic and social outcomes and that a model of well-being in the human capital conception serves this purpose. Education is viewed as predominantly beneficial in securing extrinsic and instrumental aims (Griffiths, 2012). The message that pupils' social, emotional and mental well-being is developed because it is important now, is tempered with the longer-term view that pupils have to be economic and social contributors in the future. In contrast, a human capability conception has much more to offer but is not a crucial part of Scottish education policy[17].

Global competitiveness and an imperative of raising attainment dominates. If continued improvement is achieved and recognised internationally, it will achieve a key Scottish government (and SNP) goal, which is to be recognised as being able to make the right political decisions for the country and of Scotland being able to succeed as a prosperous and independent nation. The role of schools is regarded as central in achieving this aim. In such a vision 'well-being is not valued intrinsically…its place in the curriculum is…in terms of the contribution it makes to the wider purposes of schooling' (Spratt, 2017:91). A human capital conception of well-being is taken to be economically and socially useful.

In the next chapter I will return to and extend the notion of raising attainment as one of the most significant drivers of secondary school education. Revisiting Biesta (2015), the qualification outcome of secondary school education dominates. Where this chapter has analysed well-being and Scottish education and concludes that well-being is refracted through discourses of care, psychology and individualism, which are themselves influenced by human capital ideals, chapter three will examine attainment and Scottish education, searching for the origins of Scotland's attainment challenge and demonstrating

[17]In 2015, Brunner and Watson produced a document for 'What Works Scotland', an initiative that worked from 2014 to 2020 to improve the way local areas in Scotland use evidence to make decisions about public service development and reform. The document sets out 'early thinking' (p. 2) on how a capabilities approach could be applied to public service reform. The authors have argued that by applying their findings to a capabilities approach it could 'help in achieving a paradigm shift in service delivery from one that promotes welfare to one that is enabling and using evidence to transform public services for all of Scotland's communities to flourish, ensuring that citizens and communities are shifted from object to subject' (p. 18).

that aspiration, an additional concept frequently linked to raising attainment is used as a tool of governance to achieve the Scottish government's aims.

Chapter 3

Attainment and Scottish education

> Policies do not normally tell you what to do, they create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed, or particular goals or outcomes set.
>
> (Ball, 1994:19).

> Some policies are formulated 'above', and others are produced in schools or by local authorities, or just simply become fashionable approaches in practice with no clear beginning.
>
> (Ball et al., 2012:7)

This chapter will explore how the Scottish government appears to be interpreting and emphasising attainment. It will, in contrast to the final point in the epigraphs above, identify the origins of Scotland's attainment challenge and highlight the influence of the language of quality and psychology discourse that underpins it. Undoubtedly formulated 'above', Scotland's raising attainment challenge is shaping practices in schools and the lives of pupils, as the way attainment is defined, whether explicitly or in assumptions about its meaning, determines the interventions that are put in place. In brief, educational attainment usually refers to the highest level of education that an individual has completed and is based on perceived benefits such as the earning potential of individuals to economic growth (UNESCO, 2018). In practice, for most secondary school pupils, this means undertaking exams and gaining academic credentials to evidence their level of education. My scrutiny of attainment is not to suggest rejecting exams or academic credentials totally. To do so would be to ignore the situated reality of my practice. It is, firstly, to demonstrate that the current conception of attainment is too narrowly focused on gaining exam passes, which represents attainment as predominantly exams-based, and, secondly, to open up as we would a Russian nesting doll, other issues that may be at stake but are hidden in the current attainment agenda. Following Watson's (2018) idea of master-plots and counter-narratives in public discourse, evident in the Scottish education attainment agenda is a master-plot that school is about measured academic success and that life will be much more unfulfilling without exam passes: the more exam passes the better chance of a good life. But, as Watson notes, 'a master-plot takes a story that is true for some and makes it the only story we can tell…the only story that counts' (p.40). A variation of this master-plot is that pupils will regret not attaining good exam results at school. As with contestable

concepts, counter-narratives alert us to other possibilities and alternatives. The attainment conversation is an important conversation to have but other conversations are important too.

To consider questions as to the nature and value of attainment, this chapter will draw on two sources. These sources are firstly, a poem by Liz Lochhead, the Scots Makar[18] (2011-16); and secondly, a quote attributed to Lord Kelvin, British scientist (1824 -1907). A brief commentary introducing the relevance of each source to the chapter is provided following each. The chapter will demonstrate that current raising attainment approaches actively constitute a range of practices in schools designed predominantly to secure exam pass rates. These approaches, using a broad concept analysis lens, form a narrative of professional practice (Myburgh and Tamarro, 2013) of teachers. For pupils, this narrative, as Ball puts it, constitutes their 'living a performative and entrepreneurial existence of calculation that involves organising themselves in response to targets, indicators and evaluations' (2003 in Keddie, 2016:4). The measures of success that count are high-stakes exams and academic credentials. The measures used to achieve that success, detailed in chapter five, are potentially damaging to pupils' well-being. The chapter will then delve further into what Muller (2018) calls the tyranny of metrics and it will explain some of the drawbacks of focusing too heavily upon an attainment-as-exam results conception, and argue that the dominance of performance metrics constitutes an educationally misguided approach to enhancing attainment and is likely to undermine pupils' well-being, despite the declared aims of policy. Woven throughout the chapter, some of the agendas hidden inside the Russian nesting doll of attainment will be revealed. Finally, the chapter will introduce a relationship between attainment and aspiration before concluding that aspiration is also appropriated in Scottish education by a human capital model.

Source 1

> The Choosing
>
> We were first equal Mary and I
> with the same coloured ribbons in mouse coloured hair,
> and with equal shyness
> we curtseyed to the lady councillor

[18] A Makar is a poet. In Scotland it refers to an eminent poet appointed by an official body, especially one appointed by the government as the national poet of Scotland.

for copies of Collin's *Children's Classics*.
First equal, equally proud.

Best friends too Mary and I
a common bond in being cleverest (equal)
in our small school's small class.
I remember
the competition for top desk
at school service.
And my terrible fear
of her superiority at sums.

I remember the housing scheme
where we both stayed.
The same house, different homes,
where the choices were made.
I don't know exactly why they moved,
but anyway they went.
Something about a three-apartment
and a cheaper rent.

But from the top deck of the high-school bus
I'd glimpse among the others on the corner
Mary's father, mufflered, contrasting strangely
with the elegant greyhounds by his side.
He didn't believe in high school education
especially for girls,
or for forking out for uniforms.

Ten years later on a Saturday –
I am coming home from the library –
sitting near me on the bus,
Mary with a husband who is tall
curly haired, has eyes for no one else but Mary.
Her arms are round the full-shaped vase
that is her body.
Oh, you can see where the attraction lies
in Mary's life – not that I envy her, really.

And I am coming from the library
with my arms full of books.
I think of the prizes that were ours for the taking
and wonder when the choices got made
we don't remember making.

Liz Lochhead (2011)

In this poem, the narrator ponders the differences present ten years later between two girls who had been 'first equal'. What lead to the differences? The poem points to conscious and unconscious choices made on behalf of the girls during their lives. In the poem, there is a

comparison of values, background, encouragement and environment. Equal becomes unequal. In this chapter, the poem will be used as an analogy for examining assumptions underpinning approaches to reducing Scotland's poverty-related attainment gap.

Source 2

> When you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind…
>
> Attributed to Lord Kelvin, British scientist (1824-1907)[19]

Originally part of a lecture about electrical units of measurement, this quote has become well used outside of its traditional domain. From effective working teams to successful business practices, it has been taken to speak to the importance of measurement and numerical benchmarking as indicators of success. Values associated with measuring, standardising and quantifying can be at odds with those associated with broader purposes of education, such as human flourishing and this, inevitably, has repercussions for educational practices.

Each of these sources plays a different role in the analysis within this chapter. The poem is complex, opening up reflection on choice and aspiration, whereas the Kelvin quote will be used as indicative of a culture in Scottish education that denotes numerical school exam results as evidence of success.

The origins of Scotland's attainment challenge

Between 2006 and 2011 the Scottish government published a series of documents providing advice, guidance and policy for different aspects of Scotland's educational curriculum, known as Curriculum for Excellence or CfE. In the fifth and final document published in 2011 the then Cabinet Secretary for Education and Life-long Learning, Mike Russell MSP, stated 'working together we will achieve our common ambition: ensuring that Scotland has an education system that promotes and supports the highest possible

[19] Lord Kelvin quote available online at https://archive.org/stream/popularlecturesa01kelvuoft#page/72, [accessed 14.04.2020].

standards of attainment and achievement' (Scottish Government, 2011b:1). Following this, in 2013 a new centre for educational change was unveiled at the University of Glasgow. Responding to the OECD's concerns of an achievement gap in Scottish education, the new centre was envisioned to 'strengthen the relationship between research, policy and practice' (University of Glasgow, 2013:2) and promote, using 'international thinking and best practice' (p.1), better life chances for Scotland's young people. In the opening keynote address, the cabinet secretary announced that the new centre would address the 'attainment gap in Scotland's education system' (p.2). The OECD report noted concerns regarding an achievement gap; yet the cabinet secretary emphasised an attainment gap. The SNP-led Scottish government, with Nicola Sturgeon as First Minister, subsequently committed itself to raising attainment in education and to be judged on its record of doing so (Hepburn, 2015). This shift towards emphasising attainment is significant. It appears that increasing attainment is the means by which the Scottish government is prepared to measure success in education. But what does the Scottish government mean by attainment? The following passages are indicative:

> Attainment refers to the measurable progress which children and young people make as they progress through and beyond school. This progress is in relation to curriculum areas and in the development of skills for learning, life and work.
>
> (Education Scotland, 2015)

> Curriculum for Excellence aims to ensure that all young people in Scotland achieve the high standards of achievement, including attainment, needed for life and work in the 21st century. The knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities that children and young people will need for the future will be different to those in the past and within a more challenging environment.
>
> (Scottish Government, 2011b)

The Scottish government annually measures

> school leavers by highest SCQF Level achieved, by SIMD decile[1], 2009/10 to 2016/17
>
> (Scottish Government, 2018a)

From these passages the Scottish government understands attainment as outcomes, as standards, and as measurable. Openly acknowledged is that these outcomes are said to be needed for work and life and are based on a belief that the future will be more challenging than the past and so require skills and attributes the Scottish government endorses. It is clear the Scottish government is prepared to measure these outcomes which then situates them in a comparative framework. It is also clear that the Scottish government is interested in measuring the highest outcomes achieved by SCQF level. In a secondary school these outcomes are usually qualifications in Highers and, to a lesser extent, Advanced Highers. A primary indicator of a school's success is how many five A-C grades at Higher level it achieves. It is unsurprising, therefore, that if attainment is to be comparative and measured by outcomes such as highest qualification, it is easy to see why exams and practices which contribute to exam results have risen in prominence in Scottish schools. Schools are to understand increasing attainment as increasing exam results at their highest levels.

Noticeable, too, in just three short quoted passages above, is the use of a conglomeration of concepts: attainment, progress, skills, learning, life, work, achievement, standards, attributes, and capabilities. Concepts such as these are woven throughout Scottish education policy documents. They appear palatable because it is difficult to argue against them – we may agree, for example, that certain skills for life are important, and so on – but the questions we should be asking are which skills and who is deciding them? Questions such as these apply to all of the concepts being promoted. Following Watson (2018) we must also uncover the issues hidden within these concepts. In this chapter, an analysis of the concept of attainment will help to uncover its relationship to other beliefs and practices, not least an understanding of the reality of performativity in Scottish schools and why this might be harmful.

One of the reasons that it is difficult to clarify the distinctions between some of the concepts used in Scottish education policy is because they tend to be used simultaneously and, at times, interchangeably. For example, inspection reports of Scottish secondary schools' bracket raising attainment and achievement together, noting

> This indicator (3.2 Raising attainment and achievement) focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation

> to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator.
>
> (Education Scotland, 2020)

The simultaneous use of attainment and achievement as concepts makes it difficult to distinguish between them and so it is easy to understand why they are often conflated. In the (2011b) passage quoted above, for example, high standards of achievement are to include attainment. What is achievement?

> Achievement refers to the totality of skills and attributes embedded within the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence and developed across the curriculum in school and through learning in other contexts[20].

What emerges is a similar description to attainment. Like attainment, achievement is outcome-based. It is noted as skills and attributes pre-determined by the four capacities. While it is difficult to distinguish between these two concepts, it is easy to identify the power regime that underpins them. Discussed in chapter two, was how predetermined skills and attributes contribute to the development of the Scottish government's image of an ideal citizen. Particular attributes such as being enterprising[21] reflect an onus on the self and supposedly how the self is expected to respond to problems. Brunila and Siivonen (2014) describe the enterprising self as part of a neoliberal interpretation of the individual; the enterprising individual is 'necessarily competitive…maximising one's own human capital' (p. 56). Therefore, in the discourse presented in Scottish government education policy, these prescribed achievement and attainment outcomes are intended to produce the ideal individual which, following Brunila and Siivonen, is simultaneously subjectified and competitive (p.57). In this discourse, the narratives of attainment and achievement that are operationalised (Myburgh and Tammaro, 2013) are portrayed as standards or outcomes delivered by schools and learned by children. In this type of narrative, mental health and well-being, too, according to Heinemeyer (2018:3) are being 'converted into goals which young people must individually achieve'. In my experience, the effect of these directed outcomes on pupils is pressure, not flourishing.

[20] Education Scotland (2015b) 'How good is our school? 4th ed, available online at https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/24496/1/HGIOS4_tcm4-870533_Redacted.pdf, [accessed 02.12.19].
[21] Education Scotland (2015b) 'How good is our school?' 4th ed., available online at https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/24496/1/HGIOS4_tcm4-870533_Redacted.pdf, [accessed 02.12.19].

Continuing with the theme of conflation, the Scottish government conflates different possibilities of why an attainment gap exists in Scottish education. Kintrea (2018:9) distinguishes place-based inequality, socio-economic inequality and institutional (school) inequality as three possibilities and argues that each inequality can have an impact on attainment and therefore requires a different policy response. However, the subtleties and nuances required of specific responses appear to be badly understood (Kintrea, 2018). To highlight an attainment gap between socio-economic groups, the Scottish government has introduced a place-based index of socio-material deprivation (SIMD) (Scottish Government, 2016) applicable across all schools. This is certainly a generic response and may not adequately capture the nature of the inequality being experienced. In my own school, for example, department records of attainment do not just include the name and exam result of pupils; pupils' records include the additional data of a SIMD number. This is to allow teachers to check for attainment gaps between the poorest and most well-off pupils. As a PT who analyses results across and beyond my department, frequently there is no pattern of SIMD to results achieved. A well-off pupil can perform poorly in exams just as equally as a poor pupil can perform well. Of course, the SIMD applies more broadly than the limited number of postcodes of pupils who attend my school. Kintrea's (2018:9) argument is that a place-based measure of an attainment gap is a 'pragmatic choice' of a Scottish government that has little other relevant data to draw on. He highlights that the Scottish government has chosen a cohort comparison approach to define the attainment gap (p.27). My argument is that the SIMD subjects each individual to a narrative of comparison which has its roots in a culture of neoliberal individualism. A neoliberal conception of the individual demands constant improvement and self-investment. It means pupils are tracked and monitored, not for their own sake but for future benefit to the state. Contributing to concerns regarding neoliberal influences in education, Enslin and Horsthemke state,

> This is schooling not for its own sake, aimed at well-being or flourishing, at promoting individual autonomy, democracy, social justice, community or citizenship, but at individual and national competitiveness, aided by high stakes testing and league tables. It is aimed at preparation for employability and work…
>
> (2016:189)

As suggested in chapter two, if education has various purposes, it will lead to various objectives. Within these objectives, specific outcomes or attainments, can be inferred, such

as what knowledge and skills pupils should develop (Chen, 1996 in Scheerens, 1999). Attainment can be any manner of things deemed worthwhile or important to have and it can be assumed that the effort and investment of 11-13 years of school education would be expected to lead to various attainments, not all of which can be assessed via exams. It is, however, exam results, which are a record of qualifications attained, that tend to be used as an overall measure of success in the education system (Feinstein and Symons, 1999). The focus on educational attainment as academic qualifications means that educational outcomes tend to be quantified as exam data and trusted as if it is an objective reflection of reality. Further, by use of comparison, such measures 'provide a mechanism to govern' (Hardy, 2015:469). To illustrate, one of the biggest influences on European educational policies is the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and its data is increasingly used by national governments to justify reforms. As explained in chapter two, it entwines education and politics and underpins developments in Scottish education: 'PISA is the major international study of pupil performance in which Scotland participates' (Scottish Government, 2015d. n.p.). Scotland's average-to-declining results for maths, science and reading (OECD, 2015), are cited by the current Education Minister, John Swinney MSP, as justification for education reform, including introducing new national assessments (tests) in 2017-18. He is quoted, 'it is by carrying through on these reforms – no matter how controversial – that we can make Scottish education world-class again' (Seith, 2016). PISA data is selective in curricular coverage (Gillborn et al., 2018) and its assessment items do not necessarily reflect the cultural norms of countries undertaking the tests. Moreover, it is unclear how motivated students are by PISA assessments and what effort they put into completing them (Andrews, 2019), all of which calls into question its reliability. In seeking to improve its educational outcomes via comparative performance of schools in other countries, the Scottish government is promoting the idea that PISA data and exam results data per se, accurately represents a good education. However, by inquiring analytically we can observe that, overlooked, is a conversation about whether the data measures what it claims to; what dubious practices might be put in place to achieve an increase in exam results; and what valuable experiences may be lost or omitted because schools focus on a limited measure of numerical output (Muller, 2018). Furthermore, it is concomitant to understand that data such as 'statistics and indicators do not just describe reality, they construct and shape reality' (Sjøberg, 2019:43). This is skillfully illustrated in the book 'Kids these days: human capital and the making of millennials', by Harris (2017:13) who cites an example of a New York kindergarten that drops its school show in order to spend two further days on 'preparing children for college and career'. These

kindergarten-age pupils are already being engineered to invest in their future; they are being prepared to compete for future employment. In Scotland, too, we note a similar direction in the early years of education where a child's right to play is governed by perceived future social and economic benefits (Scottish Government, 2013) and where preparation for the workforce begins at age three (Education Scotland, 2015). In America, Harris bemoans the implication that children are perceived as already not good enough (2017) and in Scotland Cassidy bemoans such a deficit view of young people who have limited voice, power and influence in determining their own future economic and social lives (Cassidy, 2018 in Thorburn, 2018). Via education, the neoliberal influence of the OECD is likely to continue to extend into the lives of very young children. 'Starting Strong' is, according to Sjøberg (2019:46-47), 'one of several OECD programs to address preschool/kindergarten level…by comparing attainments and competencies and the return of investments in early childcare'. If this is so, the future well-being of young people looks worrying because they will be judged through an accountability system that frames very narrowly what attainment is and what definition of success matters.

Attainment and its relationship to equity

International comparisons of national academic attainment levels (OECD, 2015) and a desire to improve its international standing, has resulted in a range of policy interventions in support of the Scottish government's declared commitment to raising attainment. Part of the Scottish government's strategy of raising attainment focuses on equity. Equity is defined as:

> ... treating people fairly, but not necessarily treating people the same. Equity in education means that personal or social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin or family background are not obstacles to achieving educational potential…
>
> (Education Scotland, 2015b)[22]

As noted in chapter two, Scotland's raising attainment strategy includes a National Improvement Framework (NIF) which prioritises achieving excellence and equity using

[22] Education Scotland (2015b) 'How good is our school? 4th ed, available online at https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/24496/1/HGIOS4_tcm4-870533_Redacted.pdf, [accessed 02.12.19].

data-collection as a driver of improvement. Supporting this aim is an Attainment Scotland Fund (Scottish Government, 2015c), which is money available to schools to introduce measures which might narrow the poverty-related attainment gap, such as introducing attainment advisers (Scottish Government, 2015c). These measures show that the Scottish government conceptualises the poverty-related attainment gap as a school-based problem and focuses on the school as an agent of change (Kintrea, 2018; Mowat, 2018). This is despite research that demonstrates that 'the school effect' in tackling socio-economic problems is limited to between 8 -15% (Bangs et al., 2011 in Mowat, 2018:301). The OECD identifies 'top-performing education systems as having… a clear focus on equity' (OECD, 2015:301) and so following this, part of the Attainment Scotland Fund is a Pupil Equity Fund, known as PEF. Within the OECD, equity is articulated as a moving ratio (Lury et al., 2012) between academic performance and background and is defined in terms of minimal thresholds of performance. PEF, therefore, based on calculating how much of a variance in academic performance is attributable to background factors, is a fund which targets initiatives and resources to individuals who are disadvantaged in order to improve their educational attainment. PEF money is distributed directly to schools from the Scottish government and by-passes Local Authorities who are normally in charge of education budgets. This is an interesting development because, in Scotland, education is a devolved area but employment law is not. Targeting money directly to schools enables the Scottish government to influence the working practices of schools while avoiding legal challenges to changes in employment. Within the Scottish Attainment Challenge, the important target that the Scottish government is trying to influence is the chance of pupils' succeeding in raising their attainment.

Having outlined the origins of Scotland's attainment challenge and of how it is conceived as a school-based problem, one of the assumptions of the Scottish government's approach to reducing the poverty-related attainment gap can now be illustrated through use of Liz Lochhead's poem, 'The Choosing'. In an attempted reversal of events from the poem and in seeking to address the poverty-related attainment gap by providing additional funding for schools, the Scottish government is recognising that inequity exists and is seeking to redress this through its policies for schools. Its policy initiatives are an attempt to remedy the situation. It can be argued, then, that in recognising a link between poverty and attainment, the Scottish government is conceding that individuals are contextualised and influenced by their surroundings, including deprivation. In the poem, at an early age both

girls appear to have a similar level of attainment and we can perhaps assume similar aspiration. What causes a difference in outcome between both girls are values, background, encouragement and environment. Following Pykett and Cromby (2017) this may at first appear to contradict the discourse of the individualisation and responsibilisation of citizens for their own performance (or of well-being outlined in chapter two). By acknowledging the issue of deprivation, it also appears to counter the criticism of Clack (2012) who argues that politicians are ignoring wider socio-economic conditions. However, further examination would return us to these concerns. Despite the Scottish government's index of socio-material deprivation which acknowledges differences between socio-economic groups, the attainment gap is positioned as a problem for schools to tackle. It is assumed that interventions a school puts in place will decrease the attainment gap between different socio-economic groups. This approach involves various assumptions that can be illustrated using the poem. For example, just as both girls seem to acquiesce to 'the choices (that) were made' over their lives, so it is assumed that those in SIMD deciles 1-3, determined as the most impoverished post codes in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2016), will acquiesce and be amenable to the actions of others. In this case, they will acquiesce and be amenable to the interventions of the school. Notwithstanding the question of how to evidence impact of PEF interventions within a matter of mere months[23], the onus remains firmly rooted on the individual who it is assumed will, with targeted input, eventually fit the picture of the ideal citizen and go on to play a productive part in achieving the Scottish government's wider social and economic goals. By reducing the poverty related attainment gap to a cause and effect process, the solution appears to be for schools to dip into a ready-made toolkit of interventions[24] which will, it is assumed, result in equity, while wider socio-economic concerns that are indicative of the index are given less precedence. The pursuit of measurable attainment-gap reductions in this way reflects a pre-occupation with process over people where instrumental outcomes are valued and pupils' lives are managed in order to achieve externally imposed outcomes. Embedded within the parameters of how PEF should be spent and on whom it should be spent are numerous assumptions. Firstly, as we have seen, there is the assumption that the poor are amenable to the actions of others. To this we can add the assumption of being somehow deficit, that the poor do not have capacity to cope or that there are not contradictions to a deficit model. Thirdly, we can say

[23] PEF money is allocated on an annual basis. Schools must have plans in place to measure the impact of the funding. If plans 'are not achieving the results intended, these plans must be amended' (Scottish Government, 2018b:1).

[24] Education Scotland (2018c) 'Interventions for Equity' is a range of ideas and approaches schools can use to support the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Further information can be found online at https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/Interventions%20for%20Equity, [accessed 21.09.18].

that if equity is visualised as comparative exam performance, it is likely to continue to lead to continued competition between schools and the individuals within them. Finally, we can conclude that where a whole-school aggregate of post-code SIMD might be a valuable tool for distributing resources to a school, to apply an individual SIMD number to every pupil is an unethical misuse of the measurement. Such application is an example of conveying a 'deficit mind-set which attributes student failure to factors within the student' (Jayawickreme and Dahill-Brown, 2016:481), while ignoring other causes that may be preventing learning.

By opening up the Russian nesting doll of attainment and inquiring with a philosophical lens, it becomes clear that there is a dominant conception of attainment as exam results. The associated practices aimed at ameliorating the Scottish Attainment Challenge remain firmly fixed on governing the individual. A discourse of individual responsibilisation and a language of quality provide the means by which to 'codify, supervise and maximise the level of functioning of individuals' (Rose, 1996:115). Revealing the influence of a language of quality and a discourse of individual responsibilisation can help to explain how statistics and number are used to problematise schools and exams. It explains why current discourses of equity are based on number and measurement. It explains why, in schools, pupils are sorted into different categories such as an index of material deprivation (Scottish Government, 2016). They reflect a Foucauldian discourse of power and of how power operates because they entwine external technologies of governance with internalised beliefs and behaviours to produce a particular desired outcome. As Rose (1996:167) puts it, we 'assemble ourselves' in relation to others[25]. Moreover, relevant within the parameters of this dissertation, it constitutes pupils in a neoliberal ideal; 'in terms of measurement and diagnosis rather than status and worth' (p. 115).

Attainment as numbers

In Scottish secondary schools, and in society more broadly, exam results are accepted as indicators of educational success. Numerically, they are easy to measure and compare. Following Hardy (2015:21), they also form part of an audit culture which contributes to the 'quantification of education'. Producing numbers and subsequently comparing them,

[25] For a more in-depth analysis of how psychology has contributed to the creation of the observable and measurable individual, see Rose, 1996.

'produces effects' on school practices (p. 22): it is common, for example, for Scottish secondary schools to offer pupils after-school supported study or Easter school revision, as measures which are believed to contribute to better exam results. These and other practices are examined in chapter five. Thereafter, comparing results locally, nationally and internationally, forms 'new modes of governance' (p.24) within an audit culture. Constant numerical comparisons between schools, areas and nations (p.25)[26] contribute to the power of numerical data in exerting influence (p.23) on school practices. By prioritising exam results as an indicator of improved attainment, the assumption prevails that numerical evidence is proof of rational knowledge of the kind elaborated by Lord Kelvin. In fairness to the Scottish government, it no longer directly produces league tables that compare Higher passes in one school with another. Instead it publishes data on national qualifications and awards as provided by the Scottish Qualifications Authority. This change has not prevented schools in each Local Authority from ranking themselves on pass rates[27] and the available attainment data is still used by major newspapers and websites to rank Scottish schools by percentage Higher exam passes[28].

The dominance of conceiving attainment evidence as primarily numerical is now so ingrained that alternative methods of gaining or having knowledge of how pupils are developing are not privileged. Instead, in the scientism of Lord Kelvin's era, true knowledge is numerical: 'deemed impersonal, universally established, objective' (Polyani, 1958:5) and that, by contrast, other measures of knowledge are subjective and therefore unreliable. In Scotland, there is emphasis in policy on teacher professional judgement, but this is usually considered reliable in practice only if based on exam-style assessment data such as a series of test results or performance-graded work produced by pupils[29]. In the reality of teaching practice, the evidence that counts is the evidence that can be easily

[26] Sahlberg and Doyle (2019) make a similar point in their book, '*Let the children play'*, where they discuss comparative school performance with district or national performance as an objective for governments delivering 'world class education' (p. 137).

[27] A comparison and ranking of school results across my Local Authority is presented annually to staff as part of my school's analysis of exam performance.

[28] See for example 'In full: how every secondary school in Scotland ranks in exam league table' (Denholm, 2019) available online at https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17514133.revealed-how-every-secondary-school-in-scotland-ranks/ [accessed 22.05.2020] or https://www.best-schools.co.uk/school-types-scottish-schools/ or 'Revealed: Scotland's best 50 schools for Higher exam passes' (Denholm, 2013) available online at https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/13137093.Revealed__Scotland_s_best_50_schools_for_Higher_exam_passes/, [accessed 22.04.2020] and so on.

[29] 'Ongoing and periodic assessments are, and will continue to be, the main basis of teachers' professional judgement' (Scottish Government, 2017b), https://standardisedassessment.gov.scot/, [accessed 28.12.18].

numerically measured. In my own school for instance, much professional judgement – or the means by which pupils are judged - is exam results based. Pupils sit a plethora of exams: senior pupils sit pre-prelims in October, prelims in January and final exams in May. S3 pupils sit transition exams as they begin S4. S4 pupils sit prelims in February and final exams in May. This exam assessment data is collated within an electronic tracking and monitoring system. If used as internal analysis, such as to support professional development, such exam-based evidence can be helpful to a teacher who is measuring the impact of one teaching strategy over another. However, it is asking questions about attainment that opens up hidden issues and consequences: firstly, for example, we might note that learning and performance are distinct (Soderstrom and Bjork, 2015) and secondly, used to measure and judge pupils - or a credentialing of the fittest, as House (2020) describes – this type of attainment data also has an effect of standardising and quantifying pupils. To illustrate, in a study in an Australian school, Hardy (2015) found that pupils were named as numbers, such as in a reading level. This sounds odd outside of a classroom environment but is also found in Scotland in PEF when teachers talk of pupils in deciles and make judgements because of which decile a pupil is in, for example, 'she's decile 2' or 'he's decile 1'. This is known colloquially in Scotland as 'being peffed'. Hardy's study also found a futures aspect to using numbers in the forms of predictions of attainment. This is another similarity found in Scottish schools with predictions of percentages of pupils likely to attain particular levels or grades in exams and can be seen in language such as 'he's a 5-A pupil'. Labelling pupils by SIMD and prioritizing short-term improvements in exam performance at the expense of addressing wider socio-economic issues point to some obvious ethical tensions within this approach. In summary, then, approaches to Scotland's NIF, including the Attainment Scotland Fund and PEF, which psychologise and responsibilise pupils, as examined in chapter two, also enumerate them, and following Hardy (2015) 'the conditioning effects of such processes' (p.36) is deeply problematic for pupils' conceptions of themselves. There is evidence in research that pupils' self-value is linked to their exam results (Brown and Carr, 2019) and, from my own experience, I would add that these conditioning effects are also problematic for pupils if they begin to view themselves as 'passes and fails'[30].

[30] In the UK, 'numbers are increasingly used to justify policy priorities and to label teachers, schools, districts and even entire countries, as educational successes and failures. National testing programmes…have popularized the idea that numbers can be used to expose (and change) failing schools' (Gillborn et al., 2018:161). Its therefore realistic to make the point that pupils can feel like successes and failures too.

Having noted one assumption of approaches to Scotland's attainment challenge using the poem, The Choosing, I will now revisit this source in order to highlight a second assumption underpinning it; that is the limited picture of what success looks like. Firstly, it is worth noting that research into the impact of an audit culture in schools over the last 30 years points to the increasing commodification and responsibilisation of the individual[31]. Pupils and teachers have been 'reduced to auditable commodities…held to account and assessed against quantifiable standards of success' (Keddie, 2016:109), and the ideal neoliberal subject 'crafts their identity to be worthy against these parameters of success' (p.109). In other words, becoming defined and self-defined as a winner or loser. This 'crafting of identity' is reflected in how the narrator of the poem is positioned. She has bought-in to the ideal picture of success. Her 'arms full of books' suggests her continuous self-improvement, comparing and evaluating her own worth driven by her fear of not being good enough. Her fear begins at a very young age when she recognises Mary's superiority at sums. One of the consequences of living within and up to continual competition is what Keddie (2016:110) describes as 'ontological insecurity', which is 'uncertainty, guilt and dissatisfaction about whether (we) are doing enough or as well as others'. As the narrator ponders which life is better, her own or Mary's, her ontological insecurity is shown in the question of the valuation of a human being. The profound worth of caring for family, which the married and pregnant Mary represents, is contrasted with the narrator's life. The narrator claims she is not jealous of Mary's life, although perhaps she is a little. As we have seen, the Scottish government is measuring the success of its schools by ever-increasing exam results. This means both more exams[32] and more exam passes for all pupils. This already produces ontological insecurity (Jenkins, 2018), and is likely to continue to do so. Further, if one revealed agenda of the Scottish Government's emphasis on this conception of attainment is to produce highly qualified workers for the workplace, a hidden agenda is the power of the state over children's lives. The Scottish government's own inspection of schools judges success by increased exam passes and measures how many pupils proceed to destinations it has deemed 'positive'.[33] Returning to Mary, marriage is not one of the Scottish government's positive destinations[34]. The value placed

[31] See Keddie (2016)

[32] In 2017 the Scottish Government introduced Scottish National Standardised Assessments for all pupils in P1, P4, P7 and S3. More information can be found at https://standardisedassessment.gov.scot/, (2017b) [accessed 28.12.18].

[33] Scottish Government (2018a) 'Scotland Performs', available online at https://www2.gov.scot/topics/archive/About-Archive/scotlandperforms/indicators/schoolLeavers, [accessed 28.12.18].

[34] The definition of positive destinations is described by Jim Thewliss, general secretary of School Leaders Scotland as 'very, very woolly'. It includes zero-hours contracts that tend to be insecure and low-paid.

on these measurable and comparable outcomes masks conversations we could have about other possible attainments and about an intrinsic rather than extrinsic value of education.

Attainment-as-exams data dominates the lives of pupils in schools and judging one's self-worth to calculable standards of exam results can result in pressure to continuously perform. This pressure sits alongside an ontological insecurity of uncertainty, anxiety and doubt. The poem introduces one final assumption that is relevant to the Scottish attainment challenge; that is the underpinning belief that individual success is self-determined. In the poem, the narrator clearly articulates to 'choices we don't remember making' and this points to the situated reality of pupils: at school-age they have very little control over their own lives. The myth is that working or studying hard will lead to success but the reality is that it may not, nor will it necessarily change the extent of familial support a pupil receives or any privileges s/he has access to. By basing its policies on a discourse of individual responsibilisation, the Scottish government creates an environment in which pupils judge themselves as successes and failures within the very narrow parameters of exam performance.

The consequences of focusing on attainment as exam results continue in one of the dominant ideas shaping educational practices in Scotland and the wider UK: the idea of evidence-based practice[35]. Evidence-based practice can include a variety of data such as the results of external research or collaborative enquiry and is based on the belief that scientifically collected evidence can lead to improvement. This belief joins a long tradition which began during the scientific enlightenment, in which Lord Kelvin was a clear voice. It is upon this tradition that PISA is built (Zhao et al., 2018). Like other practices, evidence-based practice will have its advantages and disadvantages. Zhao (2018:1) uses the analogy of medicine and its associated warnings of side effects. Where medicines usually identify their potential side effects, Zhao claims this is not the case in educational practices. PISA emphasises high stakes exams and comparative performance which have numerous side effects. Some of these side effects are positive such as increasing test scores in some subjects (Zhao et al., 2018) or identifying inefficient practice (Muller, 2018), but it is also the case that there are negative consequences when performance in exams becomes

Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, has described zero-hours contracts as contracts that 'demean and exploit' workers, Seith (2017).

[35] For further discussion on the development of evidence-based practice in education, see Biesta (2007).

the measure by which pupils are judged. Some of these negative consequences are increased anxiety, diminished creativity, and narrow educational experiences (Zhao et al., 2018). A focus on performativity, dominated by exam results, narrows a school's purpose to qualifications and creates a culture in which pupils judge themselves to be successful or not. This can have a life-long impact on a pupil's self-worth and value (Keddie, 2016). Evidence-based practice which relies heavily upon exam results, such as comparative PISA rankings, highlights that competitive values drive current practice. It compels pupils to continually strive to meet a narrow range of targets. A language of measured attainment prevails in Scottish education despite much evidence and argument of the destructive side effects of this prevailing conception of attainment, which include an impoverished understanding of what education is for.

Another potential consequence of practice which magnifies the importance of exam results and comparative ranking is a narrowing of the school curriculum. Analysis of data available 2012-17 shows that at middle secondary school level in Scotland, known as National 5, there is a declining number of qualifications taken (Priestly, 2018). This decline is more likely to be notable in schools in deprived areas where a focus on core subjects such as Mathematics and English is prioritised over breadth of curriculum:

> One might argue that we are serving these students well, if we enable them to attain grades that get them into positive destinations, including further and higher education, and that a loss of breadth is an acceptable compromise. But this is to take an instrumental view of education as merely a route in qualifications and positive destinations [….]. Put bluntly, are decisions to raise attainment through narrowing the curriculum about providing young people with better qualifications, or are they more about raising attainment to boost the image of the school within a highly performative education system?
>
> (Priestly, 2018, n.p.)

This quote, residing within the larger political debate about attainment, returns us to the question of the purposes of schools and points to education being valued only as a means to an end. In such practices education is situated within an audit mind-set of a return on investment that views human activity as economically calculable. Simultaneously, it introduces the question of what opportunities are available to pupils and this, in turn, introduces the notion of 'adapted preferences' (Nussbaum, 2000:31). Adapted preferences are the way human choices and preferences are shaped by political and social

circumstances. Reminiscent of the 'choices …we don't remember making', Lochhead's poem, The Choosing, asks the ethical question of 'unequal chances and unequal capacities to choose' (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007:6). Pupils in deprived areas might experience this if their school narrows the curriculum on offer to secure higher attainment figures. Such a move by those schools assumes employability will follow and limits learning to measurable outcomes. This is a view that reflects the unjust idea that the materially deprived have to limit their expectations about what they can access (Miles, 2014). Returning to Griffiths (2012), who holds a wider conception of attainment than exam results or other performative outcomes, such a move privileges the purposes of education as extrinsic which, as Watson (2018) reminds us, is part of but not the only story. Education, this dissertation argues, has other desired purposes such as developing the cultivation of the whole person, of respecting individuals as ends in themselves (Enslin and Horsthenke, 2016) and learning for enjoyment or fulfilment. These purposes provoke different possible conceptions of attainment. Peering, philosophically again, inside the Russian nesting doll, are questions of education such as what good and who's good? While not every pupil wants to learn for enjoyment, it would equally be a mistake to assume every pupil attends school simply as a prelude to a job. Going further than Biesta (2015) in his purposes of education: qualification, socialisation and subjectification, Griffiths (2012:656) argues there is an integral good of education as well as its outcomes. This good pertains to present pupil experiences, not necessarily future outcomes, and includes joy and delight as experiences which connect to living a good life. Education is part, now, of living a good life (p. 663). A similar point is made by Cope who has argued that 'a performative culture of testing is sucking the joy out of schooling for children' (2016:12 in Brown and Carr, 2019:259). Cope continues,

> happiness is sold as the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow… Kids are told: 'if you work hard in Year 11, you'll get really good results and when you get those results you'll be happy'.
>
> (Cope quoted in ATL Report 2016:12 in Brown and Carr, 2019:259).

The question of what and how to live a good life is surely contested but in a liberal perspective[36] is likely to include valuing individuals for their own sake. Neoliberalism does not value individuals, only what individuals produce. Relying on a future promise, neoliberalism presents myths that getting a job and employability will follow exam

[36] I outline my understanding of a liberal perspective in chapter 1.

success; that human meaning and flourishing is found in the future in the workplace, but not in the present at school[37]. Prioritising exam-based attainment and promoting the purpose of education as being made ready for work presents an impoverished reason to educate pupils and following Griffiths (2012), it is also unjust.

McLaughlin's (2008) analytical philosophical approach extends critical evaluation to educational values, policies and practices and so it is possible to note two further consequences of an accountability system that dominantly frames attainment as exam results. Firstly, a further consequence of evidence-based practice and comparative performance has been the promotion of a 'what works' approach to education, with countries engaging in policy-borrowing in order to secure the highest outcomes for their pupils. Using, again, Zhao's (2018) analogy of medicine: just as some medicines should not be mixed with certain conditions (p.4), so too we can say some policies will not work when mixed with certain circumstances. If they are used, then we should expect side effects. In itself, introducing policies which seek the best for pupils is commendable, but policies also govern behaviour and 'steer practice in the direction of what Barker calls "the relentless pursuit of the unattainable"; that is, constant improvement in examination results and other performances' (2010:100 in Ball et al., 2012:9). The consequences are serious for schools that fail to improve. Furthermore, such practices reflect a Foucauldian lens if pupils are objectified as productive or unproductive. The 'compulsory visibility' (Foucault, 1991:187) of continual measuring and monitoring, using data collection systems that represents pupils as numbers can be wielded as a disciplinary technology (Foucault, 1991). A 'what works' approach is now so insidious it can be found at a micro level in schools whereby teachers who gain the best exam results disseminate their teaching techniques around all departments in what is known as 'in-house continual professional learning' or CPL. The continual tracking and monitoring and techniques of repetition (Foucault, 1979:180 in Ball et al., 2012:85) work together to reimagine schools as 'centres of calculation' (Latour, 1986:235 in Ball et al., 2012:86) and reduces teachers to technical professionals.

[37] The Gallup (2017) 'State of the Global Workplace' survey underscores how destructive this ideology of work as success can be. The reality of work for most people is far from ideal (Danaher, 2018). Furthermore, the implications of the current Covid-19 pandemic bring further into question the idea that preparing young people for employment will ensure their well-being when it is likely that many will face unemployment. I say more about the Covid-19 pandemic in chapter 6.

If one consequence of a 'what works' approach to education is, as noted above, a lack of diversity in curriculum choice, a second consequence is the reiteration of testing and examinations as the supposedly most valid means by which to evidence knowledge and skills. It homogenises the methods by which pupils can display what they know and can do, which will suit those who are good at test-taking but exclude those whose talents lie in other areas. While seeming to benefit those who are good at tests, research also suggests that a short-term pursuit of highest academic results can lead to a long-term disinterest in learning (Sjøberg, 2012). Such a consequence impedes the Scottish government's declared vision of 'life-long learning'[38].

What is evident throughout the Scottish government's approaches to raising attainment is that the development of human beings in schools focusses on advancing their future social and economic productivity. The arguments presented so far in this chapter explain that raising attainment is a central pillar of Scottish education policy and, that in a globally comparative climate, how pupils perform in exams matters in terms of the perceived success of the education system. This has led to a governing-by-numbers approach by which pupils and schools are compared to each other. Schools are at the heart of the Scottish government's desire to reduce a poverty-related attainment gap and the focus on the economic and social potential of pupils underpins many of the approaches taken to increase pupils' attainment. The longer-term impacts of NIF and PEF will be revealed in due course but already several consequences are emerging. In the concluding part of this chapter, the concept of aspiration will be discussed, noting its relationship to attainment as conceived within Scottish education policy.

Aspiration and its relationship to attainment

> What are aspirations? Are they akin to hopes, wishes, dreams, ambitions and goals? Do they signal optimism for the future or pessimism about the present? Do they portray longings and yearnings for that which we are not, or cannot do, or do not have? Are aspirations grounded in rationality, emotion, idealism or pragmatism?
>
> (Hart, 2016: 325-6)

[38]Education Scotland (2015b) 'How good is our school?' (4th ed.) available online at https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/24496/1/HGIOS4_tcm4-870533_Redacted.pdf, accessed 02.12.19].

These questions capture some of the complexity of the concept of aspiration. Like the term well-being, aspiration as a term can be politicised, socialised and economised. In concert with this opinion, Ladwig (2014:140 in Hart, 2016) argues that aspiration can be used by policy makers as 'a diversion from the reality of increasing social exclusion and inequality'. And, as we will see, it can be used as a form of governance rather than empowerment. Aspiration can be presented as a solution to present difficulties, offering to the Scottish government another tool by which to close the poverty-related attainment gap. With multiple possible interpretations and applications of the concept of aspiration, one useful starting place to comprehend how aspiration is conceived within Scottish education policy is to examine some of the uses of the term in the policy documents. Setting out its own policy aspirations the Scottish government claims:

> Our aspiration is to enable all children to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society
>
> (Scottish Executive, 2004b:3)

> Scottish Ministers are committed to a high-quality universal careers service for people in Scotland no matter their age or stage. The Career Education Standard (3-18) has been developed in light of the recommendation of starting careers advice and guidance earlier in schools. This will help young people understand their capabilities and develop their aspirations to make informed learning and careers choices as they progress through their learning journeys.
>
> (Education Scotland, 2015a:4)

> We want every child in Scotland to experience the wonder and excitement of STEM and one of the key aspirations announced in this week's Programme for Government is for Scotland to be a leader in the invention and manufacturing of digital, high tech and low carbon innovations that will shape the future.
>
> (Scottish Government, 2017c: n.p.)

Such visions of aspiration filter into the practices of schools:

> Raising aspiration and attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing at Canal View Primary School, City of Edinburgh Council.
>
> (Education Scotland, 2018b: n.p.)

The Scottish government is currently preoccupied with raising attainment and so, unsurprisingly, it positions aspiration positively, and in relationship to raising attainment and achievement. This is despite research evidence of an assumed causal link between aspiration and achievement, known as the aspiration-achievement paradox, which finds that it is not possible to predict school achievement on the grounds of aspiration alone (Khattab, 2015). Khattab (2015) argues that an understanding of the relationship between aspirations, achievements and expectations is required in order to predict future success. The complexity of the relationship of aspiration to other influences is also acknowledged by Hart (2016). In the conflation of concepts used within the Scottish policy documents, this nuanced understanding of aspiration is omitted. Regarding aspiration, the quotes above reflect assumptions about the ideal citizen: one who has achieved the four capacities; a high level of academic attainment; and is a valuable asset for future employment. Research by Hart (2016) concludes that where the aspirations of young people are guided towards academic or economic success, it reflects a narrow understanding of aspiration and belies the diversity of aspirations that young people tend to have. And Marjoribanks notes that 'aspirations are idealistic values that do not necessarily reflect specific socio-economic realities that might be relevant in determining future mobility' (1998 in Khattab, 2015: 731). There is no shortage of references to aspiration in Scottish education policy and the Scottish government declares that it is not a poverty of aspiration that contributes to an attainment gap between the poor and those living in more affluent areas (Education Scotland, 2018). Congruent with studies of aspiration in low socio-economic groups, it is evident that young people and their parents in low socio-economic circumstances do aspire to 'a good life' (Bok, 2010:166). However, following Kintrea's (2018) three dimensions of attainment gap: place, socio-economic and school, so there might also be place, socio-economic and school-related differences in aspiration. This is evident, for example in the poem, The Choosing, where it appears that Mary's aspirations match the expectations of her family background. Bok (2010) makes clear that aspiring to increased attainment of the kind that might lead to higher education has to be resourced not just in school terms but in cultural terms too (p.176). That means tackling transgenerational experiences of school and improving resources available in deprived communities (p.176). In the Scottish education policy documents, there is an approach to developing aspiration which is congruent with its

approaches to developing both well-being and attainment: it is a means to narrowly specified ends. What we find is a is a governing of aspiration; identifying and cultivating what pupils should aspire to. This governing of aspiration is toward the social and economic goals of the Scottish government. And, as we have seen in approaches to raising attainment, it is evident that developing and governing aspiration is focused at the level of the school, suggesting 'a similar reluctance to address the underlying social causes of poor educational attainment and achievement'[39] (Pirrie and Hockings, 2012:9) that are external to a school. The approach reflects, again, the onus on individuals: the message is that having the right kind of aspiration should make attainment changes possible but the reality is that it does not necessarily result in change, especially if the barriers of material circumstances are unchanged. It fails to acknowledge the diversity and dynamism of aspiration or that aspiration can be short, medium and long-term (Hart, 2016). What is required as a precondition for aspiration to create positive change is for material conditions of existence to improve alongside the provision of genuine possibilities to put changes into practice (Nathan, 2005).

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the Scottish government's approach to conceptualising a successful education system as exam-based attainment reflects a neoliberal view of human beings as human capital that has led to practices in schools dictated by an overemphasis on securing exam results and presenting pupils as useful for the workplace. Such a conception presents an impoverished view of attainment and of education. Furthermore, it increases the insecurities and worries of pupils and offers limited means by which pupils can be successful, never mind flourish. The policy aspirations of the Scottish government that impose outcomes on schools relating to future economic growth results in limited, not enhanced, freedom of pupils to pursue a valuable life of their own choosing. In uncapping the Russian nesting doll of attainment and using the tools of philosophical analysis, we observe the state's control over the current and future lives of its pupils. Furthermore, we note the Scottish government's power in imposing its own preferred, if conflated, conceptions.

[39] Pirrie and Hockings (2012:29) do distinguish the terms attainment and achievement conceptually. They define achievement as 'success, particularly where it represents a great personal accomplishment'. They add that achievements are 'often wrongly conflated with attainment, which refers to level of achievement and often also unhelpfully narrowed to success in terms of academic assessment'.

Human attainment is more varied and diverse than that currently promoted in Scottish education policy. Schools can foster other conceptions of attainment, not necessarily measured by exams yet valuable for living a good life. Exams are part of the reality of school life, but their dominance is to the detriment of pupils' well-being. There needs to be a recognition of young people in school as more than their exam results, more than predictions based on their postcode and more than their future social and economic contributions. In contrast to the narrow neoliberal view of both the individual and of aspiration quoted in Scottish education policy documents, chapter four will propose that Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach, in which each individual is an end in herself/himself and not a means to the purposes of others, presents a richer account of the individual, one that embraces a greater range of possibilities of each human being, rather than the human capital conception currently reflected in education policy. Based on the idea of a flourishing autonomous individual, this richer account, encompassing much broader notions of attainment and aspiration, such as engaging in planning one's own life (Nussbaum, 2011), is challenging to the Scottish government and organisations like the OECD because it presents the potential of unexpected outcomes, as opposed to prescribed and standardised outcomes. It also challenges the dominance of using exam results as the measure of a successful education.

Chapter 4

The capabilities approach

> So it happens that in reading or writing, the propositional or conceptual semantics of a text may rupture so that an image breaks through and touches us with a new kind of knowing or understanding: the world has turned into an image. The image is not some picture, but the evocative understanding ignited by the image.
>
> (Van Manen, 2014:262 in Dewar, 2016:62)

Beginning with a reminder of the Scottish government's neoliberal conception of education and the specific concept of well-being articulated in relation to its raising attainment agenda, this chapter explores Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach and its relationship to the theory's original contributor, Amartya Sen. The chapter proceeds to a capabilities conception of well-being, tracing the place of autonomy and dignity within this description. It then explains the complexity of functionings and capabilities by drawing upon examples from Sen, Nussbaum and the Scottish education context. The chapter highlights the fruitful relationship there can be between education and developing capabilities. The overall purpose of the chapter is to illuminate the distinctive theoretical elements of a capabilities approach, including Nussbaum's emphasis on autonomy and dignity, before relating the capabilities approach to my professional practice and the ways some schools raise attainment in chapter five, and to policy and practice implications of the approach in chapter six.

Recapping the Scottish government's conception of education

As demonstrated in chapters two and three, the Scottish government has appropriated a very distinct conception of education as a means to an end. It believes '…a highly educated population is …a key determinant of economic success…' (Scottish Government, 2011a:2). Pupils are expected to '…be more able to control their own lives and to be active in society, particularly in contributing to the economy…' (Scottish Government, 2010, n.p.). The purpose of education is to produce highly educated, self-improving, flexible workers fit to achieve specifically desired economic and social outcomes. It is a view embedded in a utilitarian mind-set of satisfying preferences and what is best for the employment market. Indeed, McCafferty proposes that in the current education-economic climate, simply being eager and fit for the future workplace is not actually enough.

Through their experiences of a neoliberal-inspired education, pupils are meant to understand that 'learning for work and personal fulfilment are not separate' (2010:550). In other words, a neoliberal experience of education directs pupils to believing that personal fulfilment is to be found in the workplace. In this prevailing conception, (of the type Nussbaum would describe as the 'old paradigm' because it favours economic growth over a 'more complex account of what societies should be trying to achieve for their people') (2010:16), I argue well-being in Scottish education policy is conceived through the lens of that same paradigm as a 'function of economic utility' (Bessant, 2014:138), as skills that can be taught, and of pupils dominantly pictured as useful human capital. Well-being supports a raising attainment agenda, as I have argued in chapter three, which is to be understood as increasing exam results and improving Scotland's comparative education performance to other countries. Consequently, well-being is conceived of as a useful tool through which other outcomes are achieved. These outcomes include the Scottish government's descriptions of well-being as 'central to effective learning' (Education Scotland, n.d.) which, in turn, cascades to other related outcomes such as:

> Learning through health and wellbeing enables children and young people to:
>
> - make informed decisions in order to improve their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing
> - experience challenge and enjoyment
> - experience positive aspects of healthy living and activity for themselves
> - apply their mental, emotional, social and physical skills to pursue a healthy lifestyle
> - make a successful move to the next stage of education or work
> - establish a pattern of health and wellbeing which will be sustained into adult life, and which will help to promote the health and wellbeing of the next generation of Scottish children.
>
> (Scottish Executive, 2004a)

As a teacher, these outcomes are hard to disagree with, but well-being is ancillary to other outcomes and is pictured overall in education policy as useful for developing desired personal attributes such as the four capacities. Ultimately, however, well-being is desired for enhancing competitiveness in the global economy[40]. These outcomes fit the education-

[40] Scottish Government thinking on 'learning, skills and well-being' is focused around the aim to 'stimulate the future generation of entrepreneurs in Scotland through building the ambition, creativity and enterprise awareness of our school children' (Scottish Government, 2007:24, in McCafferty, 2010:556).

economic vision of the Scottish government. I argue its prevailing conception of well-being and the means by which some schools raise attainment does not respect pupils' autonomy and dignity and therefore actively diminishes well-being; autonomy and dignity are not respected in using pupils as a means to develop into predetermined citizens or in fostering a competitive economy. By promoting economic utility, great inequalities of distribution and resources are occurring and can be seen in the attainment gap between socio-economic groups. In chapter three I demonstrated that school cultures and structures prioritise raising attainment strategies that contribute to anxiety and ontological insecurity, not well-being. In view of the limitations of current approaches, a capabilities approach offers an alternative conception of well-being. Often contrasted with a utilitarian approach, a capabilities approach is based on a minimum threshold required to secure human dignity. It seeks to foster and equalise capabilities – what individuals are able to do and be – thus it is an approach that 'evaluates capabilities, rather than resources and outcomes, (it) shifts the axis of analysis to establishing and evaluating the conditions that enable individuals to take decisions based on what they have reason to value' (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007:3).

By contrast, it is utilitarian theory that underpins the economic and political system of trade and industry in the UK. The assumption is that the consumption of goods and services results in pleasure or utility. It is therefore possible to measure how 'happy', or 'well' the population is by comparison to purchases in the market, making it an aim of government to maximise its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Since the introduction of measuring the progress of a country by calculating its GDP, there has been an assumed causal link between economics and well-being. Economic theories of well-being 'equate well-being with utility' (Sumner, 1996 in Diener et al., 2009:4), arguing that individuals spend their money on 'market goods … to realise their preferences' (p. 4). Individuals in countries with a high level of GDP tend to enjoy more and better goods such as quality housing, access to education and achieve a reasonable level of material prosperity. Additionally, other measures of well-being such as low mortality rates and higher life expectancy rates are higher because surplus income can be invested in services which improve quality of life. Economic freedom certainly can be used to satisfy certain preferences or desires but what is important to note so far is that GDP is an indicator of well-being but does not encapsulate well-being. This is evident, for example, in the recognition that not all preferences are satisfied by level of income or goods purchased

(Diener et al., 2009). Furthermore, economic theories of well-being tend to prioritise how much money an individual earns or generates but ignore other aspects of employment or of having a job that are important for well-being such as having and expressing autonomy (Judge et al., 2001 in Diener et al., 2009:6). Amartya Sen, the original contributor of the capability approach, criticises utility as a measure of well-being because well-being should be conceived as the ability to achieve valuable functionings (Sen, 1985). These functionings, if Sen was to provide a list, could include, for example, health, which would be both a subjectively and objectively valuable constituent of well-being (Alkire, 2015).

Another limitation of conceptualising well-being predominantly in economic terms is that it belies rising levels of mental and emotional anxiety that exist alongside rises in material wealth. This is not to suggest direct causation but to acknowledge that any economic argument only contributes partially to achieving well-being. Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) recommend that real quality of life (of which we assume well-being is part) requires a shift from emphasising economic growth to improving psychological and social well-being (p.4). They note, however, that any such shift tends to focus on individual rather than political remedies. Examples of the responsibility that the Scottish government has for individuals to achieve well-being, and moreover a particular conception of well-being, are discussed in chapters two and three of this dissertation. Wilkinson and Pickett argue that we are now in an age of 'diminishing returns' whereby 'additional income buys less and less additional health, happiness or well-being' (P.10) which suggests that the present is an opportune time to explore alternative theories of well-being. Nussbaum's capabilities approach is such an alternative theory and can be used to re-shape government policy conceptions of well-being. Forming and implementing any alternative vision of well-being will require political will. Social, economic, cultural and political circumstances matter in a capabilities approach because these create the conditions in which functionings occur, and capabilities are the freedoms necessary to achieving these functionings.

Adopting a capabilities approach to pupils' well-being requires focusing on what beings and doings (functionings) enable their well-being, and it means considering the ways education provides opportunities (freedoms) for pupils to identify and pursue lives that are valuable and meaningful to them.

A capabilities approach provides a useful framework to critique the current educationally and ethically flawed conception of well-being found in policy and practice in Scottish schools. Referring to the epigraph at the beginning of the chapter, a capabilities approach offers a way to re-image well-being, and therefore to understand it differently. It offers a means to re-conceptualise well-being as what a person is able to do and be, or what 'substantial freedoms' (Sen's description in Nussbaum, 2011:20) a person has to choose and to act in a way that s/he values. There are differences in the way Sen, the initiator of a capability approach, and Nussbaum, who has developed her own articulation of it, conceive of its key elements but both agree that being in a position to exercise freedom and choice are valuable constituents of human well-being. Although Nussbaum uses the term 'well-being', she often refers to 'a dignified life' or 'a flourishing life'. It is unlikely that a person without well-being could be said to be flourishing. Sen, meanwhile, observes that a person's well-being is an important aspect of their flourishing (Hart and Brando, 2018). While the terms 'well-being' and 'flourishing' are descriptions of quality of life, it is relevant to consider how or what sort of well-being or flourishing is achievable[41]. In this chapter, what is meant by well-being, its re-image or re-conception, will be understood as including the exercise of autonomy (self-governance), and dignity (making and having choices respected). These are the constituent elements of having or being able to achieve a state of well-being.

Sen and Nussbaum: capability approaches

A capability approach is an approach to human development that focuses on what human beings are able to do and be (Sen, 1984). Originating in the arena of development economics, it seeks to address poverty, inequality and even political tyranny (Crocker, 2008) that prevents human beings from fully flourishing. A disparity of living conditions between rich and poor, men and women, and those who are oppressed and those who are not, exists and affects millions of human beings across the globe: famines that deny the basic freedom to survive; the socio-economic conditions that enable a longer life in a rich area but a shorter life in a poor area; the subjugation of women due to cultural constraints (Sen, 1999) are all examples of a lack of freedom that prevents human beings from living a life that they value. From the 1970s the economist, Amartya Sen, argued that economic

[41] I have previously indicated on p.4 that my conception of what it means to be a flourishing human being is informed by Martha Nussbaum's (2000) argument that human beings ought to be able to function *qua* human, meaning that human beings are using all of their faculties or powers to function as truly human. I extend that explanation in this chapter.

growth was not the end of development but the means of development, which should be judged on how well it enables human beings to be and to do (Crocker, 2008); 'whether they can live long, escape avoidable morbidity, be well-nourished, be able to read, write and communicate, participate in literary and scientific pursuits, and so forth' (Sen, 1984:497). It became an approach that provided an alternative way to judge human well-being, asking not about what or how much a human being has in terms of material wealth or goods but how well each human being can live a life they have reason to value. As Aristotle has argued millennia before, 'wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking; for it is merely useful and for the sake of something else' (Aristotle, 1980 in Sen, 1999:14). Wealth contributes to well-being but does not define it. 'The usefulness of wealth lies in the things it allows us to do – the substantive freedoms it allows us to achieve' (Sen, 1999:14). In the capability approach, well-being becomes re-associated with human freedoms, or as Sen puts it, what actual processes and opportunities human beings have to act and make decisions about their own lives (p.17).

Adopting a human development basis of human flourishing, the political philosopher Martha Nussbaum offers a complementary but distinct reading of Sen's capability approach, from which it is possible, using the tools of philosophical inquiry, to derive autonomy and dignity as constituent elements of human well-being. Accepting Sen's primary notion of what people are able to do and be, Nussbaum grounds her argument in 'lives…worthy of the dignity of the human being' (Nussbaum, 2000:13) which means human beings are using all of their faculties or powers to function as truly human. This means they are not, by circumstances, being forced to act 'animalistically' (Kleist, 2013:258) by want of scarce resources such as scavenging for food. Advocating a place for philosophical reasoning to assess genuine alternatives to often unexamined public policies, Nussbaum argues that philosophy can help us to identify 'what we really want to stand for' (Nussbaum, 2000:300). Her approach is focused on the concept of human dignity and she presents a list of central capabilities that she claims provide the minimum means to live a life of dignity. She asks, 'what does a life worthy of human dignity require?' (2011:32) and her ten capabilities provide a minimum threshold from which people can 'pursue a dignified and minimally flourishing life' (p.33). Nussbaum argues that her list reflects a diversity of ways for humans to experience a flourishing life, in contrast to a utilitarian approach that reduces the conception of a 'good life' to pleasure and aggregate utility. Sen, however, refrains from compiling a list of capabilities. Critics

of Nussbaum's list claim that it seems static (Kleist, n.d.), in danger of being interpreted as paternalistic (Crocker, 2008), too rooted in western values to apply to all cultures (Jagger, 2006) and possibly too intellectual to be of relevance to real lives (Okin, 2003 in Kleist, 2013:274). In response, Nussbaum regards her list as open-ended (Nussbaum, 2000), arrived at by discussion (Nussbaum, 2011), responsive to different cultural contexts (Nussbaum, 2006) and based on a moral ethic that protects individual dignity (Nussbaum, 2011). Sen, on the other hand, has been criticised for not providing a list of functionings (Roemer, 1996 in Saito, 2003). He does seem to endorse some capabilities such as the ability to read, write and live a long life (Sen, 1984). Both Sen and Nussbaum regard choice as important within human development: for Nussbaum, choice reflects respecting a person's dignity. For Sen, choice reflects respecting a person's freedom. It is for these complementary but distinct differences that some scholars such as Crocker (2008) distinguish Sen's capability approach from Nussbaum's capabilities approach. The complexity of their complementary but distinct articulations, and Nussbaum's particular attention in her wider work to education and to the importance of exercising one's own human powers to construct one's own life, is also why I draw mostly upon Nussbaum's articulation, which can enhance public policies by subjecting them to philosophical critique while retaining a qualified use of Sen's ideas.

Flourishing

Flourishing can be understood as a sense of fulfilment that arises from achieving one's full potential as a human being[42]. Implicit in this definition is well-being, in contrast to ill-being, which enables human beings to achieve their potential. Helping human beings to flourish, or to achieve well-being, has been contested in different psychological, philosophical and political spheres. Jayawickreme and Dahill-Brown (2016:478) identify, for example, Rawls' (1999) conception of primary goods as essential for well-being. Sen (1999) considers a human development approach, while Doyal and Gough (1991) promote a basic needs approach. Rawls' primary goods theory encompasses securing natural primary goods such as health and social primary goods such as civil rights and liberties as essential for well-being. Sen's human development approach seeks to ensure that opportunities are available for developing capabilities such as health and education, while Doyal and Gough's basic needs approach seeks to ensure that well-being outcomes such as

[42] 'Eudaimonia', definition available online at https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Human+flourishing, [accessed 20.04.19].

health and education are distributed fairly within society. The most radical of these conceptions is Sen's because it configures well-being as opportunities and freedoms individuals have in society and so it conceptualises well-being as more than what utility or access to resources people have. It challenges GDP as the traditional indicator of well-being. It is its focus on ends, not simply means, that distinguishes the capabilities approach from Rawls' primary goods theory (1999) and Doyal and Gough's (1991) distribution of resources theory as avenues to well-being. These would be examples of what Robeyns (2016, n.p.) describes as approaches that 'value particular means to well-being rather than the ends'. This is understood when the availability of resources does not mean equal access to those resources, or that those resources are equally needed to live a flourishing life. Poverty, already established in chapter two as a key indicator of poor well-being, would not just be understood as a lack of or unequal distribution of goods but would be considered by Sen as a deprivation of capability because it prevents individuals from achieving outcomes that they have reason to value (Sen, 1999).

In chapters two and three we saw how Scottish education policy identifies well-being within discourses of care and psychology (Spratt, 2017) dominated by an agenda of employability and 'positive destinations', reflecting the prevailing socio-economic conception of the purpose of education. Sen's capability approach is a radical departure from that traditional economic model that measures or assumes well-being based on GDP. With roots in human development, it makes two philosophical normative claims relating to human beings. Firstly, that well-being is of moral importance and secondly, well-being should be understood as the real opportunities that people have to do and be what they have reason to value (Robeyns, 2016). Since Sen's early conception of capability in 1979[43] the philosopher Martha Nussbaum has developed these normative claims into her list of capabilities that, together, she claims constitute a flourishing life. Nussbaum's approach also has roots in Aristotle, a philosopher often associated with the idea of human flourishing, who believed 'the happy man both lives well and does well' (Aristotle, in Ryan et al., 2008, p. 145). For Aristotle, this means being able to reason, for example, about the meaning of life, and being autonomous, for example, to be one's true self (p. 145). Aristotle's flourishing life involves becoming virtuous through education and habit, and the good life is one in which humans are flourishing. Nussbaum draws on Aristotle's moral

[43] Sen first introduced the concept of capability in his Tanner Lectures on Equality of What? (Sen 1979), 'Sen's capability approach' available online at https://www.iep.utm.edu/sen-cap/,[accessed 19.04.19].

claim that a flourishing life is a life in which there are opportunities 'for human beings to use their powers in a truly human way' (Kleist, n.d.). She goes beyond only arguing for freedoms to argue also for functioning *qua* human (Kleist, n.d.). She means that human beings ought to have both capabilities and options in exercising them. Autonomy and dignity are respected when humans can do this. She considers both the conditions that seek to secure a flourishing life and the space for human choice within those conditions[44]. Her list of ten capabilities will be examined in detail in chapter five but for the moment, in brief form, they are:

1. Life: living a normal life span
2. Bodily health: having good health; being adequately nourished and sheltered.
3. Bodily integrity: having freedom of movement, freedom from harm and freedom to exercise bodily choice in terms of sexual satisfaction and reproduction.
4. Senses, imagination and thought: having freedom of expression including religious, political and artistic; adequate education; being able to experience pleasure and avoid pain.
5. Emotions: experiencing normal human emotions such as love, grief, longing and anger; having attachments to people and things. Avoiding emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety.
6. Practical reason: engaging in critical reflection about the planning of one's own life, including freedom of conscious and religious thought.
7. Affiliation: recognizing and showing concern for others; having social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being treated as a dignified being equal to others; rights to non-discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion and national origin.
8. Other species: living with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the natural world.
9. Play: laughing, playing and enjoying recreational activities.

[44] Some commentators prefer not to identify lists of goods that may or may not result in happiness (or goods like well-being), seeking instead the right conditions for it, or going further, emphasising the importance of processes for discovering those conditions (Wren-Lewis, 2019). I believe that although Nussbaum provides a list of goods, she makes clear that it is open and discursive (yet non-fungible), she does also makes clear that capabilities can be developed or denied by personal and social circumstances – thus the conditions – and I would argue that developing autonomy and respecting dignity are part of the process required for achieving well-being.

10. Control over one's environment: having freedom of political participation, association and speech; having property and employment rights on an equal basis with others.

(Nussbaum, 2011:33-34)

The importance of autonomy and dignity underpinning this list is explained in the following section. All of the ten capabilities are presented by Nussbaum as non-fungible (not interchangeable or reducible) but for Nussbaum two of them, practical reason and affiliation, 'organise and suffuse all the others, making their pursuit truly human' (2000:82). In concord with Nussbaum, practical reason and affiliation suffuse the arguments I make in Chapter five. However, I also emphasise senses, imagination and thought; the importance of play; and control over one's environment as features particularly minimised by some raising attainment strategies used in secondary schools.

Autonomy and dignity within a capabilities approach

Autonomy features in a number of ways in Nussbaum's capabilities approach. Although it can also be a contested and contestable concept, at a minimum it could be described as 'an individual's capacity for self-determination or self-governance'[45]. Variously linked to related notions of freedom and choice, it spans political, personal and moral spheres, all of which feature in Nussbaum's list. Firstly, autonomy is political, and Nussbaum argues that the state must create and respect conditions in which individual rights such as employment rights are respected. There should be laws that protect individuals from harm and which respect freedom of thought and belief. This aspect of Nussbaum's list fits a description of objective list theory because, following De Ruyter (2007:27), it reflects goods such as 'health, social relations and safety, as well as intellectual and creative and physical pursuits' that contribute to human flourishing. Secondly, autonomy is personal, and individuals have choices about how to live their own life. Nussbaum calls her list ''thick' but 'vague'. It is thick because it provides a specific conception of the good life (that is, human flourishing), however, it is not thick enough that it mandates how one ought to live one's life' (Kleist, n.d., online). Taking the capability of play as an illustration, an individual would be entitled to enjoy recreational activities but choose these activities for

[45]'Autonomy' definition available online at https://www.iep.utm.edu/autonomy/, [accessed 20.04.19].

herself. This aspect of Nussbaum's approach reflects a subjective conception of flourishing as individuals pursue these goods in their own ways. Thirdly, autonomy is moral because it relates to self-determination and freedoms to choose one's own path in life. Moral autonomy views human beings as active in their own lives rather than passive recipients of others' commands.

Sometimes excluded from autonomy arguments are human beings whose capacities are limited in some way, such as children by nature of their young age. However, age is not a barrier to respecting autonomy within a capabilities approach and the ends of a liberal education would seek to encourage developing a child's autonomy, which must also be protected by the state[46]. Autonomy, in this instance, can be understood as developing '…capacities of self-direction and choice' (Dearden, 1975:335). A capabilities approach has much to offer the education of children. Saito outlines, for example, that education can be used to expand a child's capacities and opportunities. He gives the example of a child learning mathematics: she can learn the equations of maths and this can lead to a wide range of opportunities open to her, through which she uses her autonomy to decide her own choices (2003:27). Saito's example intimates Dearden's view that 'relevant freedoms… are a necessary condition of the exercise of autonomy' (1975:335). Mortlock, too, in describing his experiences of outdoor education, comments that adults can underestimate young people's capabilities. Mortlock suggests that exercising autonomy is not necessarily an age-specific occurrence but can be competence dependent (1984),[47] and Landsdown (2001) points out that in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child 'there is no lower age limit imposed on the exercise of the right to participate. It extends therefore to any child who has a view on a matter of concern to them' (p.2).[48] In my setting of a secondary school, pupils are aged between 11 and 18 years, and certainly in latter stages tend to possess the ability to reason, to make preferences, and display judgement. In the last years of secondary school, called the senior phase, pupils can choose to stay or leave school. Education is not compulsory after the age of 16 and pupils

[46] Chappell (2014:6) presents the argument that a parent treats her child 'as a creature that can reason, respond, reflect, feel, laugh, think about itself as a person, think about others as persons too, and do everything else that persons characteristically do'. This means that children are not treated as inanimate objects such as furniture but treated proleptically, with the parent being aware of her child's continuing development.

[47] Mullin (2007) argues that children as young as 3 years old can have capacities of autonomy, such as expressing preferences, even if in a limited way.

[48] Roffey (2015:25) also notes that children can express preferences and opinions on the world from an early age.

can leave school at Christmas or summer following their 16th birthday. The Scottish government suggests a range of options for pupils who leave school at age 16, which include going to college, starting a business, joining the army or having a gap year[49]. All options that by age 16 infer capacity for self-direction and choice. If pupils are denied opportunities for exercising choice, it limits development of autonomy. Of course it is prudent to note that if a 16 year old leaves school because their family needs them to be employed, or their social context persuades them that there is no point in staying at school, then we can say that adaptive preferences (Nussbaum, 2000) may be constraining that choice, whether it is apparent to them or not. If we return to Liz Lochhead's poem, 'The Choosing', Mary made choices to leave school, get married and begin a family, thus conforming to her family's expectations, which may have offered her a limited range of possible choices. Although this appears to be working out well for Mary, Nussbaum argues that having control over one's environment (2011) can help to avoid making adaptive preferences. Mary's friend, who reflects on their different life paths, sees what she herself does not have and displays affiliation (Nussbaum, 2011) when she recalls their previous friendship. Her critical reflection about how their individual lives have turned out conforms to Nussbaum's (2011) ideas about practical reason, and so in the poem we can see the relevance of autonomy within Nussbaum's capabilities. It underpins what opportunities both girls had for shaping their own lives.

Within education, the Scottish government appears to reflect a desire to enhance opportunities for children to become autonomous by involving them in decisions that affect their lives:

> Children and young people must be at the heart of our education system. Decisions about their learning must be taken as close to them as possible by the people that they know and where they have an opportunity to influence those decisions. This is their future so they should have the right to participate and to have their views listened to and acted upon. Evidence shows that involving young people in their own learning and promoting the student voice is an important lever for school improvement [7]. We will strengthen the voice of children and young people through more effective and consistent pupil participation.
>
> (Scottish Government, 2017d)

[49]'Scottish Government (2019b) 'Leaving school: your options', available online at https://www.mygov.scot/leaving-school-options/, [accessed 23.06.19].

Noticeable, however, is the caveat of school improvement. Opportunities for pupils to be involved in decisions about their own learning are linked to school improvement, not apparently to developing autonomy as part of human well-being. Also re-appearing in this quote is the image of the future, of what possibilities lie ahead, rather than in the present. Autonomy is presented here as akin to empowerment, but it is carefully controlled and, in reality, demands compliance. The genuinely empowered, according to Reich (2005), are the most likely to become non-compliant, which appears opposite to the desire of the state. Ultimately, it is a hard-working compliant workforce that the Scottish government wants. Education has the capacity to extend capabilities but it can also stifle capabilities if children cannot exercise opportunities to be autonomous (Saito, 2003:27) or if any opportunities that are available are offered on a limited basis or only as a means to achieve other ends.

Nussbaum claims that her capabilities list protects not just the very young in society but also individuals who may be elderly, ill or disabled in some way. All are entitled to life, bodily health, bodily integrity, and so on (Nussbaum, 2006:168). These entitlements lead to Nussbaum's list being described as an 'objective list' theory of well-being (Fletcher, 2016; Thorburn, 2018) but there is not always a clear distinction between subjective and objective indicators of well-being; a subjective definition of well-being could specify autonomy as essential for personal well-being and as objectively necessary in order to experience well-being.

Distinct within a capabilities approach is the conception of the individual. Nussbaum's liberal interpretation of each individual contrasts sharply with a neoliberal interpretation. A neoliberal self invests in itself as if it is a marketable commodity whose skills require to be self-managed. Rose calls this kind of market self-investment as 'one who becomes a subject for oneself' (Rose, 1990:240). Autonomy in this interpretation

> is represented…as the capacity to accept responsibility – not to blame others but to recognise your own collusion in that which prevents you from being yourself, and in doing so, overcome it and achieve responsible autonomy and personal power.

(Rose, 2000:334)

As in chapter two, we see a picture of responsibilisation. Visualised as an enterprising entrepreneur, the self is responsible for its own future no matter any inequalities it faces, and freedom is conceived as choice, but it is choice within certain parameters. Neoliberal individuals are pictured as rational, balancing risk and disadvantage with success and advantage. Beder (2009) describes such enterprising individuals as 'made to order' (p. 112) growing up in schools run like businesses that prioritise rewards, sanctions and outputs. In these circumstances pupils can be coerced to select subjects that are good for the economy, and we currently see this in Scotland represented in the promotion of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) qualifications[50]. In contrast, Nussbaum's autonomous liberal self is conceived of as free in determining one's own life, which includes the ability to act and, which Nussbaum would argue, free to develop capacities to be fully human. Reflecting the capability of senses, imagination and thought (Nussbaum, 2011), freedom includes the power to express one's own choices, including social and economic choices, as one sees fit. Nussbaum's capabilities approach demands that governments create conditions in which individuals are able to 'pursue a dignified and minimally flourishing life' (2011:33), which is achieved through a combination of internal and combined capabilities (p. 23). The role of the state, according to Nussbaum, should be to ensure a minimum set of entitlements - the capabilities list - for its citizens (2006). Choice within neoliberal and capability perspectives greatly differ. The neoliberal diktat of consumer choice, for example, is not just about the range of goods and services that humans buy, it also about what humans sell, which includes themselves as commodities. Neoliberalism offers the illusion of many free choices but the reality of financial, structural, cultural barriers, and so on, to human achievement and well-being means that some become materially rich and successful while others do not and simply cannot because they are prevented from doing so by deep seated inequalities. The belief that an individual will achieve success if s/he could just be a little more aspirational, more competitive, and more entrepreneurial than the next person results, as we have seen in chapters two and three, in insecurity and stress. Sen (1999) warns that individuals living and working in conditions of extreme deprivation or exploitation, in which choices are minimal, can become used to their conditions by mental conditioning. These individuals, he argues, are not free because they do not have real

[50] Scottish Government, (2017e) Science and research: 'We are improving education and training in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in Scotland's schools, colleges and universities. This will enable and encourage more Scots to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for helping to grow Scotland's economy', Scottish Government, available online at https://www.gov.scot/policies/science-and-research/stem-education-training/, [accessed 25.07.19].

political, social and economic opportunities to live the kind of lives they would like to lead. Agreeing that this is a deficit of a utilitarian perspective, Nussbaum reflects Sen's idea of mental conditioning in her phrase, 'adapted preferences' (Nussbaum, 2011:83), a learned conditioning through which individuals adapt to, and might seem to prefer, situations of injustice or unfairness.

The importance of autonomy in leading a flourishing life, or a life of well-being, is clearly evident in a capabilities approach and Nussbaum's original conception of an autonomous individual focuses on what is required to live a truly human life. The choices any human being makes are not to be coerced by others' authority or dictated by circumstances but are to be self-chosen based on one's own practical reason and decision-making. Prominent in Nussbaum's picture of autonomy would be what Dearden (1975:335) describes as 'the capacities of self-direction and choice' and must include choosing for oneself. Dearden suggests that if we imagine a lack of or deprivation of autonomy, its importance to us becomes clearer. Autonomy is, according to Dearden, part of a person's own 'self-concept' and 'as such it will be an important part of his (sic) dignity' (p. 342). Nussbaum, likewise, invokes dignity within her conception of capabilities, framing her list of capabilities as the minimum to ensure the conditions in which to live a dignified life.

As a RMPS teacher, I teach a conception of dignity found within Kant's categorical imperative. Containing a moral imperative to treat people as ends and not as means to an end, this conception fits within my liberal conception of a flourishing human being with a capacity for reason and who has absolute worth. Having capacity for reason means having the ability to be moral and so dignity is understood as a moral concept (Formosa and MacKenzie 2014). Kant's means and ends distinction incorporates the idea that we should not treat a person on the basis of instrumental means. Rather, Kant would promote an individual's ability to choose his/her own end. Kant's means and ends distinction relates to my professional context in that Apple (2001:413, in Priestly et al., 2015), for example, has pointed out that in performative education systems there has been 'a subtle shift in emphasis…from student needs to student performance, and from what the school does for the student to what the student does for the school', and so it is through this idiom of what a school can do for its pupils rather than what pupils can do for a school that I try to uphold a distinction between means and ends. To illustrate, pupils are not just

performative data but are fully human beings. In this way I can ask questions of my professional actions: is this particular action to achieve a certain end? Or is that particular action using pupils as a means to an end? In concrete terms this might translate into practice as a question such as 'is this conversation I am having with a pupil about them as a human being or them as a means to increase my results?' Unlike Kant, others such as Formosa and MacKenzie (2014) distinguish different subsets of dignity: status and achievement dignity. Status dignity is considered to be a property of a person while achievement dignity is the level of respect afforded to 'a person's beings and doings' (p.877). Thus, I might claim status dignity in having been educated to a certain level and achievement dignity in my professional actions as a teacher. Nussbaum, however, explicitly rejects the notion of dignity as a property (2006:7) and she insists that 'dignity is not defined prior to and independently of the capabilities' (p.162). What she claims, instead, is that a life worthy of human dignity is realised through her list of capabilities (p.167). She stipulates if any of the ten capabilities are missing, an individual cannot be argued to be living a dignified life.

It is fair to claim that Nussbaum incorporates what White (2013) would call an existential construct of personhood in her capabilities approach. Existential here means that there is an inherent state of being human which is not related to status. This does not imply any metaphysical state but that there is an innate value in being human which is not dependent upon what that person achieves. Nussbaum could also be said to incorporate a relational construct of personhood (p.83) because she acknowledges the importance of the interpersonal or social context in which a person exists in relation to others. Nussbaum's list of capabilities is an attempt to provide the most basic conditions through which each human being can thrive, which includes showing concern for others and being equal to others (what Nussbaum calls affiliation). It also involves living with concern for other species and the natural world (Nussbaum, 2006:77). Accepting that White's conception of existential personhood accurately reflects Nussbaum's conception of the human being, dignity, then, is not a property of an individual but a possession intrinsic to the human condition[51] which is realised through her capabilities.

[51] White (2013:83) views existential personhood as 'not defined by or dependent upon the conceptualization of rights. Existential personhood views rights as possessions of the individual and not as properties which define the individual'. I have used this definition to claim that dignity is therefore not a property by right but is a possession of personhood.

In summary, although Nussbaum's combination of Aristotelian and Kantian elements of the intrinsic worth of human beings might vary in conception[52] from other possible perspectives on entitlements of human life, we can at least claim that her articulation of the capabilities approach conceptualises a flourishing and dignified life extended to every individual who is to be treated as an end in him/herself and not as a means to an end. Neoliberalism, as we have seen in earlier chapters as a particular expression of utilitarianism, offers a different picture of well-being: well-being matters as useful for achieving particular ends such as increased performativity and economic and social outputs. Neoliberalism presents a picture of well-being that overlooks variations in economic, social and personal circumstances, and which places each individual in competition with another. In contrast, Nussbaum's capabilities approach alerts us to the very nature of well-being. She promotes a picture of well-being as one in which important choices in respect of exercising autonomy is paramount. A flourishing and dignified life, according to Nussbaum, is a fundamental entitlement for all human beings.

In a capabilities approach, well-being is both about what achievements or functionings an individual can realise, and what freedoms or capabilities s/he has to function. These two related concepts, functionings and capabilities, are discussed in the following section.

Functionings and capabilities

Nussbaum's capabilities approach is grounded in Sen's original conception of 'functionings and capabilities' (Sen, 1999:75). The distinction between these two concepts is not straightforward but is unfolding as the theory develops. Both are considered important elements of an individual's well-being (Karimi et al., 2016). Sen explains that functionings are an achievement or state of beings and doings such as riding a bike. Riding a bike is something a human being can do, as is reading or voting or marrying. A capability is a genuine opportunity or freedom, for example, to ride a bike, or read, or vote, or get married, or achieve an alternative functioning if that is desired. By virtue of being human, human beings can achieve these things but do not always have genuine opportunities or

[52] Formosa and MacKenzie (2014) argue that Nussbaum's conception of dignity is political rather than moral and that besides accepting a means/ends distinction Nussbaum largely rejects a Kantian conception of dignity. Kleist (2013) argues that Nussbaum does use the term 'dignity' in a Kantian sense of treating others as an end, but that she also includes an Aristotelian dimension of living a life worthy of a human being.

freedoms to do so (Sen, 1999). The complexity of the relationship between functionings and capabilities is illustrated in the following vignette which Nussbaum uses in her book 'Creating Capabilities' (2011): Vasanti is a poor, illiterate Indian woman who has had limited opportunities for education, personal safety and employment. Cultural expectations of caste, marriage and access to money all contribute in some way to Vasanti's lack of opportunities. India's growing GDP (a traditional indicator of well-being) does not solve Vasanti's problems (p.13). What Vasanti needs are genuine opportunities to live a life she has reason to value; one that affords bodily integrity, rights to education, access to employment, and so on. Growing India's GDP might eventually lead to government investment in schools and healthcare and so on, but for Vasanti, more state resources would only be part of the equation, she also needs to be able to access them. Crocker (2008, in Kleist, n.d.) helpfully illustrates the capabilities approach as in the following formula: 'a capability x entails (1) having the real possibility for x which (2) depends on my powers and (3) no external circumstances from preventing me from x'. Intrinsic to the capabilities approach is a means and ends distinction: are people able to be x, and do they have the genuine means to achieve x?

The distinction between functionings and capabilities is also illustrated in the following 're-presentation' of two vignettes found in Walker and Unterhalter (2007:5). These are not verbatim quotes of quite lengthy stories but are a faithful re-telling of these authors' original examples.

Example 1:
Two women achieve a degree in literature at the same university. The first woman benefits from a middle-class background and a school which prepared her for university. She fits in well and enjoys the stimulating environment. She has a job lined up in her father's business. The second woman is raised in a working-class home and attended a struggling inner-city school. She does not feel her school prepared her well for university and she struggles with anxiety. She does not have the confidence to approach her tutors for help. Both women attain a second-class degree. This illustrates similar functioning or achievement but very different capabilities.

Example 2:
Two students in Kenya fail a mathematics exam. One student attends a well-resourced school with specialist teachers, but she chooses to spend time with her friends, and not on mathematics. The other student attends a school without a mathematics specialist and the parents prioritise private tuition for their son and not their daughter. Requiring their daughter to attend to household duties, the lack of time to study for the mathematics exam contributes to the failure.

As in example 1, both students achieve an equal outcome but have unequal capability. Hence the capabilities approach does not evaluate only functioning or outcome 'but the real freedom or opportunities each student had available to choose and to achieve what she valued' (p.5).

Applying the issue of functionings and capabilities closer to home, a third vignette below is from my own professional context of working in schools in Scotland, illustrating that although Scotland is a comparatively rich, developed country and has the resources to foster capabilities up to and beyond a basic threshold, some practices in schools may well be undermining the capabilities of pupils.

Example 3:
It is 21st century Scotland and two students attend an after-school supported study session run by their teacher. One student happily attends and values the opportunity to discuss areas of difficulty with the teacher. She does not mind using her own time to do this. The second student would rather not be present in the supported study class and would like to spend her after-school time differently. However, the school has imposed a system whereby she needs a medical certificate to opt-out of supported study and she is not ill.

As in the Walker and Unterhalter examples, the functionings are the same: both students in example 3 are attending after-school supported study but the freedom to choose what each individually values is very different. At a subsequent meeting the Head Teacher commends the school policy of medical opt-out as there is a percentage increase of pupils attending after-school supported study. It is this outcome or functioning that is valued over the value of having freedom of choice or even capacity to choose. Sen and Nussbaum agree that it is both functionings and capabilities that contribute to living a good life. Nussbaum argues for 'combined capabilities' (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007:10) which are individual

capabilities and external arrangements that allow individuals to flourish. Clearly in example 3, the case of the two students compulsorily attending supported study, the attainment-driven culture of the school, which results in the policy of medical opt-out, diminishes the capabilities of both students. Although one student makes the best of the situation and the other student does not, both students are equally compelled to attend. The student who values the supported study experience may well have attended of her own free will had she the opportunity to exercise, for example, the capability of practical reason and to make an informed decision to do so. In this example, her overall attainment or functioning may increase (assuming a link between supported study and exam results) but her ability to exercise choice and to have her choice respected, in other words her dignity and autonomy, which Nussbaum argues is constitutive of well-being, is yet impoverished.

The examples above illustrate the importance of taking both functionings (like attainment) and capabilities (like choosing to attend supported study) into account in education. The ability to convert functionings into capabilities matters in terms of freedom; and the freedom to use a capability involves respecting an individual's autonomy. The importance of choice is, again, raised. Choice, as Sen puts it, is a '…valuable part of living, and a life of genuine choice with serious options may be seen to be – for that reason – richer' (in Crocker, 2008:169). Nussbaum also stresses the importance of creating conditions that enable choice:

> The conception [Aristotelian social democracy] does not aim directly at producing people who function in certain ways. It aims, instead, at producing people who are *capable* of functioning in these ways, who have both the training and resources to so function, should they choose. The choice itself is left to them. And one of the capabilities Aristotelian government most certainly promotes is the capability of choosing; of doing all these functions in accordance with one's own practical reason…The government aims at capabilities and leaves the rest to its citizens.
>
> (Nussbaum, 2000 in Crocker, 2008:170).

In Scottish education, choice, or more precisely personalisation and choice, is one of seven principles underpinning CfE. The other principles are challenge and enjoyment; breadth; progression; depth; coherence; and relevance. These principles are stated in terms of what the curriculum offers pupils:

> It offers to all learners a clear entitlement to a broad general education…
> It requires support for all learners in developing skills…
> It offers learners access to a wider range of experiences…
> It allows learning to be organised more flexibly. Classes do not need to be based on age cohorts. This is intended to make personalisation and choice easier rather than to allow streaming.
>
> (Education Scotland, 2010, n.p.)

These principles of the intended curriculum actively state that schools can express preferences and make choices about how learning is planned and structured, but it is less clear that the curriculum intends pupils themselves to exercise preferences or make choices about their learning. Despite the aforementioned policy rhetoric of developing autonomy in pupils, which has been illustrated previously as conditional for school improvement, the strategies some schools use to raise attainment are resulting in less, not more, opportunities for exercising choice. The academic environment of schools, where there is continual pressure on pupils to perform, mirrors the pressure that can be found in the academic environment of adults in universities. Factors including a lack of control over one's own environment, continuously being required to be competitive, and being judged according to data on a spreadsheet are identified as factors that negatively affect adult well-being, specifically due to a loss of autonomy (O'Brien and Guiney, 2018). If these factors affect adult well-being, then they are factors that affect children's well-being too.

Functionings and capabilities in education

A capabilities approach has afforded fruitful insights in a number of areas related to education such as education and special needs pupils (Terzi, 2005; Devecchi et al., 2014); education and poverty (Sen, 1999); education and life-skills (Hoffman, 2006); and education and gender (Unterhalter, 2007). More recently Sugiono et al., (2018) consider the nature and resources of teaching for capabilities that might occur in poor, rural schools of Indonesia. Emphasised strongly by a capabilities approach would be that access to education and access to an appropriate standard of education (including qualified and well-paid teachers, adequate resources such as books and buildings), and ability to convert that access into capabilities for learning (for example, by being well-fed) emphasises that a

capabilities approach has much to commend it as an approach to examining educational issues. In contrast with some of the developing country contexts often discussed in relation to a capabilities approach, I believe there are yet further lessons for western nations that have well established compulsory education systems. Two particular positions relating a capabilities approach to education are, firstly, education as functioning, for example, being able to attend school; and secondly, education as a means to achieve other functionings, meaning education opens up other possibilities and opportunities (Vaughan, 2007). Focusing on education as a freedom to achieve other functionings – as a capability – such as human flourishing, a capabilities approach can help to identify the valuable beings and doings that afford autonomy and dignity as elements of well-being. To illustrate, again, the distinction, one mainstay of most governments is to develop literacy skills. Literacy is not simply a useful skill for business or employment, as current education policy emphasises. It is not just a function. Rather, literacy is also a capability, it is political (Nussbaum, 2011) and is a source of power and opportunity.

Just as Sen (1999) distinguishes process and opportunity freedoms, Nussbaum distinguishes combined and internal capabilities, which relate to the autonomy and dignity of living a flourishing life. Combined capabilities are 'the totality of the opportunities (a person) has for choice and action in her specific political, social and economic situation' (Nussbaum, 2011:21). Nussbaum calls these 'substantive freedoms' (p.21) and they are a person's internal capabilities and the freedoms afforded in their political, social and economic environment. Internal capabilities are 'the characteristics of a person (personality traits, intellectual and emotional capacities, states of bodily fitness and health, internalised learning, skills of perception and movement)' (p.21) which can be developed 'through education, resources to enhance physical and emotional health, support for family care and love, a system of education, and much more' (p.21). Nussbaum argues that the distinction is important because a government could successfully foster internal capabilities but deny opportunities to convert them, for example, educate for the capability of free speech but then deny or repress opportunities for that free speech (p.21). Robeyns (2014, n.p.) summarises Nussbaum's distinction as:

> [combined] capabilities = internal capabilities + external circumstances

which will be a relevant equation in chapter five because Scotland has a successful compulsory education system but simply providing this does not, as shown in example 3, necessarily mean that pupils' capabilities are being developed. Saito explains:

> …providing compulsory education is not enough to enhance capabilities.…if the education system takes an extremely 'topdown' approach and stresses competitiveness, children tend to study subjects that are required for examination success. Under this kind of system, the children have no choice but to follow what others tell them to do and are considered to have limited capabilities even though compulsory education is provided….it seems appropriate to argue that education which plays a role in expanding the child's capabilities should be a kind of education that makes people autonomous.
>
> (2003:27)

Nussbaum is clear that external circumstances such as a country's laws should help to create an environment in which human beings can convert their functionings into capabilities, and vice versa. Nussbaum's list, however, reminds us that the aim of the state is not just to ensure a state of general well-being for its citizens, rather the capabilities are also important for developing specific elements of well-being such as promoting genuine autonomy. For example, how much do schools allow pupils to plan their own lives or make choices about their learning? As we have seen earlier in this chapter with the example of the two pupils attending supported study, the relationship between functionings and capabilities incorporates autonomy or using one's own power to convert achievements into freedoms that allow such conversion. Internal capabilities are required too, meaning strategies and opportunities that promote the development of pupil voice and freedom of choice have to exist or pupils are not necessarily experiencing freedoms.

Conclusion

This chapter has set out an alternative conceptual definition of well-being to the human capital conception which dominates much of Scotland's current education policy. Critical of well-being conceived of as a means to an end, a capabilities approach offers a new image of well-being that focuses on human beings as ends in themselves and of what beings and doings enable human beings to flourish. The economic model of utility is contrasted with what freedoms human beings enjoy. A capabilities approach incorporates genuine choices in order that individuals can live a life that they have reason to value.

Introducing Nussbaum's functioning *qua* human, the chapter has proposed autonomy and dignity as constituent elements of human well-being, arguing that being able to choose for oneself, in conditions of genuine choice, reflects functioning *qua* human. This chapter has distinguished functionings and capabilities and an important contribution has been an illustration that even in a country where compulsory education is well-developed, there are practices that can stifle the development of capabilities of pupils. Importantly, the chapter has introduced ten capabilities that Nussbaum claims lead to a life of human flourishing, or well-being.

Chapter five will proceed to discuss, in detail, raising attainment strategies often found in secondary schools as they seek to maximise exam results, which will be analysed and evaluated with reference to Nussbaum's capabilities approach and list of ten capabilities. Throughout this analysis and evaluation, I will be examining instances where pupils' dignity and autonomy, key aspects of their well-being, are eroded. Chapter five will show that measures used to secure ever-increasing examination results can minimise, rather than enhance, well-being. A capabilities approach will help to identify the need for alternative approaches that can promote the well-being of pupils.

Chapter 5

The capabilities approach in a Scottish context

> In reality, school is not a place where you are imprisoned. In here, you are manufactured. You move along the conveyor belt of exam seasons, hoping for the grades you need, so you can be packaged up with a pretty label saying you got straight As and are shipped off somewhere else. Capitalism tells us that if we are not fit to work, then we are worthless. There is no love in learning anymore. Every student has given up or is about to. We envy the people that have left already, but have no plans for what to do if we did.
>
> They say high school is the best years of your life – but not in this world, where qualifications matter more than personal qualities. I feel like I have grown backwards, as if I know less about myself and who or what I could be than when I started…. Yes, we may be the next generation of leaders and scientists but we are also the next to be shoved on to the production line known as the world of work.
>
> (Sweatman, 2019)[53]

The words in this epigraph are part of an essay first published in February 2019. The essay won the 2019 Scottish School's Young Writer of the Year competition and the author is a 16 years old pupil at a Scottish secondary school. It is clear the author feels treated as part of an educere-inspired culture (Dewar, 2016), processed and judged on the exam results she produces and on her readiness for the work place. When I read her essay I identified with her experiences as a pupil in a secondary school today. As a teacher I am, after all, part of the 'mechanisms of control and subjugation' (Giroux, 2018, n.p.) that contributes to that feeling of conveyor belt production line into the work place. This pupil's experience reflects my own concerns about the priorities and practices of secondary schools. Foucault's theory of discourse reveals the many disciplinary technologies in place that contribute to Sweatman's experiences, including the policies I critique earlier. I want to improve Sweatman's experience, and the similar experiences of my own pupils, with something more hopeful: a capabilities approach.

[53] Sweatman (2019) 'The grim reality of life as a pupil in a Scottish school – Harriet Sweatman', available online at https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/the-grim-reality-of-life-as-a-pupil-in-a-scottish-school-harriet-sweatman-1-4883211, [accessed 24.06.19].

This chapter explores a range of raising attainment strategies used in Scottish secondary schools to increase exam results and discusses them with reference to Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach. The aim of the chapter is to highlight how these strategies can negatively affect well-being, particularly by contributing to minimising the autonomy and dignity of pupils. Following the example of Nussbaum's description of Vasanti's experiences outlined in chapter four, this chapter begins with a description of 'Isabella' an imagined S5 pupil undertaking Higher qualifications for the first time. Isabella is not a real pupil but she is typical of the experience of senior pupils in secondary schools. In the vignette that follows Isabella experiences a range of raising attainment strategies commonly used in Scottish secondary schools. The vignette is used to show how the school's focus on achieving exam success is perceived from Isabella's perspective. It is included in this chapter to raise issues around potential well-being implications resulting from the raising attainment strategies that secondary schools tend to employ. The chapter proceeds to a discussion of those strategies illuminated by Nussbaum's capabilities approach, including her list of capabilities and its underpinning emphasis of autonomy and dignity. The chapter demonstrates that some common raising attainment strategies could impact negatively on pupils' well-being if well-being is understood from a capabilities perspective. Overall, the chapter argues that the current conception of well-being in Scottish education policy should be rejected in favour of one based on the capabilities approach.

'Isabella'

> Isabella is a 17 years old S5 pupil at a high performing state secondary school. The school's results have been increasingly better year-on-year and Isabella's prior experience of exams in S4 make her aware of some of the strategies and pressures she can expect in S5. Her S5 results have the added value of determining whether Isabella will get the grades she needs for entry to university. We meet Isabella as she is making her subject choices for the year.
>
> The first thing that Isabella notices is that of the five columns of course choice[54], two are already compulsory: English and Maths. In the three remaining columns, Isabella chooses subjects that she enjoys. She is worried about achieving a Higher pass in Maths, she only just scraped a 'C' pass at National 5 level in S4, but someone, somewhere beyond her control, has deemed it necessary that she must sit Higher Maths. (In Scotland there is a long tradition of compulsory English and Maths at all levels and even with the

[54] Pupils in Scotland typically undertake five Higher subjects in S5.

introduction of CfE and a more flexible curriculum, presentation figures of English and Maths at Higher level has remained relatively stable)[55].

Isabella is dismayed when her Year Head interviews her about her subject choices and recommends she change two of her chosen subjects to subjects in which Isabella performed better in S4. Despite a better academic performance, Isabella enjoyed them less and has changed her mind about continuing to study them. Pressure from her Year Head and a phone call home to her parents recommending how much better Isabella is likely to academically perform in the two alternate subjects eventually results in Isabella studying four of five subjects she did not freely choose.

As the term progresses, Isabella is struggling in Maths. The expected gains of the two alternate subjects are also not materialising so Isabella is targeted for supported study. Four times per week for twelve weeks, Isabella is required to spend an additional hour at school in order to increase her predicted results. It is impossible for Isabella to refuse after school revision because the school has imposed a medical opt-out system and Isabella is not sick. For those twelve weeks, Isabella foregoes her own after-school hobbies, unable to socialise and spend time with her friends.

After the January prelims, Isabella is still 'not on target'. She is now required to also attend lunchtime revision sessions with her teachers for each of her 'failing' subjects. Limiting her opportunities for eating lunch and socialising with her school friends, Isabella is beginning to feel isolated and stressed. Her parents, meanwhile, concerned about her Maths grades, search for a Maths tutor. They find one but she cannot tutor Isabella on the parents' preferred evening. The school steps in offering Saturday morning Maths classes, 9am-12pm, for six weeks leading up to the exams. Isabella now feels like she's never out of school and is looking forward to the holidays.

During registration one morning mid-March, letters are issued informing parents that the school will be offering revision classes throughout the upcoming Easter holidays. Isabella knows she will be targeted for Easter revision. Exhausted, she spends much of the holiday in school.

The qualification level of Scottish 'Highers' would be considered by Nussbaum as beyond a minimum threshold of education acquired in many countries across the globe yet this chapter will proceed to examine some of the raising attainment strategies experienced by Isabella as her school strives for more and ever better exam results beyond a minimum capacity. Although the capabilities approach is most often cited in a context of developing nations, it also fits the context of developed nations and compulsory education because through it we can consider the potential consequences of our actions. The chapter focuses on the relationship, and at times the conflict, between strategies for raising attainment and

[55] Scottish Qualifications Authority (2018) Annual statistical report contains subject presentation statistics, available online at https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/63001.html, [accessed 01.07.19].

promoting Isabella's well-being. Before proceeding, I provide a reminder of the capabilities on Nussbaum's list. Assuming that capabilities of life, bodily integrity, and other species are in place, it is the remaining seven capabilities that can help to assess Isabella's well-being.

Nussbaum's capabilities list

Bodily health:

Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.

Senses, imagination and thought:

Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason – and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid non-beneficial pain.

Emotions:

Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety.

Practical Reason:

Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life.

Affiliation:

(A) Being able to live with and toward others, to recognise and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another.
(B) Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin.

Play:

Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.

Control over one's environment:

(A) Political. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.
(B) Material. Being able to hold property, and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwanted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.

(Nussbaum, 2011:33)

Missing, or perhaps under-acknowledged in the way Nussbaum presents her list, is reference to mental health. Cited by educationalists and commentators on education[56] as a growing and worrying development, increasing numbers of pupils with mental health issues are being identified in schools. This increase is in part due to better identification of specific conditions such as autism, dyslexia and learning difficulties and it can also include specific circumstances such as bereavement and bullying[57]. While good mental health is fundamental to being able to thrive in life[58], rising rates of depression and anxiety contribute negatively. An over-focus on exams in schools is also cited as contributing to rising rates of poor mental health[59]. For instance, alongside conditions such as social anxiety and negative body image, the Mental Health Foundation Scotland (2018) reports that

- 25% of Scottish parents say that academic pressure and exam stress has caused their children to feel stressed.
- 58% of Scottish young people say that a fear of making mistakes has led them to feel overwhelmed or unable to cope.

[56] See for example Mental health today (2019) https://www.mentalhealthtoday.co.uk/news/teach-me-well/increasing-numbers-of-pupils-with-mental-health-issues-are-being-identified-in-scotlands-schools, [accessed 08.11.19].
[57] GTCS (n.d.) 'Children's mental health', available online at https://www.gtcs.org.uk/News/teaching-scotland/76-childrens-mental-health.aspx, [accessed 08.11.19].
[58] Mental health foundation (2018) 'Make it count', https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-schools-make-it-count, [accessed 08.11.19].
[59] BBC (2015) 'Exam focus damaging pupils' mental health, says NUT' available online at https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-33380155, [accessed 08.11.19].

- 60% of Scottish young people say that pressures to succeed has led them to feel overwhelmed or unable to cope.

Toni Giugliano, a Policy Manager at the Mental Health Foundation Scotland (MHFS) explains that their research shows that 'academic pressure is exacerbating many young people's mental health. The Scottish Government's focus on raising attainment in reading and writing must not be at the expense of young people's mental health'[60].

In these research findings we can see the kind of ontological insecurity noted by Keddie (2016) of pupils' concerns in striving to live up to a narrow picture of success in a competitive, comparative and performative culture. A key source of anxiety and insecurity that contributes to mental health problems for some pupils is high stakes exams (Brown and Carr, 2019:243). Pupils are expected to maximise their own success and be accountable for their performance (p. 247) and this pressure to perform has been linked to mental health problems (p. 257).

The capabilities approach is about freedoms to do and be and live a life worth living. But these freedoms can be denied to people with mental health problems and denied by professionals and services if they limit the opportunities individuals have to freely select their own goals, make plans and act on them (Shinn, 2014). Real freedoms, Shinn argues 'must often be supported by complex institutional arrangements and resources dependent upon… policies' (p.2). To expand the capabilities of pupils, therefore, there needs to be opportunities for them to do so. Pupils like Isabella, who are stressed and worried about exam performance, can be in a position where adults make decisions for them yet Nussbaum (2011) emphasises opportunities for control over one's environment as an integral aspect of her capabilities approach. Isabella has very little control over her environment and few, if any, opportunities to experience the kinds of freedoms that contribute to living her own conception of a valuable life. As we will see in the following sections, Isabella's life is bound to the institutional arrangements of her school and the policies that promote academic success as well-being. These institutional arrangements and education policies are factors contributing to the lack of freedoms Isabella is experiencing.

[60] Mental health foundation (2018) available online at https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/news/quarter-scottish-parents-say-academic-pressure-causing-their-children-feel-stressed, [accessed 08.11.19].

It is worth, therefore, considering the place of good mental health as an important component of well-being within the capabilities approach. Although not explicitly mentioned in Nussbaum's list, it might be found in opportunities to think and reason 'in a truly human way' (Nussbaum, 2011:33) and in opportunities for planning one's own life. Good mental health is likely to be supported by opportunities for socializing and by recreation or play. It is also likely to be found in opportunities to make choices about participating in school events such as supported study and Easter school revision.

Compulsory subjects post-16

Education, as argued in chapter four, can lead to skills, opportunities and choices that are fulfilling and of value to individuals. In many countries, compulsory education focuses on developing literacy and numeracy skills and these skills benefit both individuals and societies. Their absence would contribute to a deprivation of capabilities. However, Nussbaum rightly warns that although these skills are important, 'a true education for human development requires much more' (Nussbaum, 2011:155). She remonstrates against too much focus on 'narrow... marketable skills that …generate short-term profit' (p.155) and advocates the skills associated with humanities and arts, such as critical thinking and the ability to imagine (p.155), as desirable for human flourishing. Scotland's CfE is composed of eight curricular areas: expressive arts (including design, dance and drama); social studies (including history, geography and modern studies); languages (including English, Gaelic and modern foreign languages); sciences (including physics, biology and chemistry); technologies (including business studies, computing, food and textiles, craft and engineering); Maths; health and well-being (including PE and PSE); and my own subject, religious, moral and philosophical studies. This varied curriculum content has potential to be compatible with a capabilities approach in that there are many areas through which young people could potentially flourish. However, this potential of CfE is, I believe, being undermined by the neoliberal ideals of Scottish education policy. For example, Priestly and Minty (2013) warn that CfE's underlying curricular structure of four capacities has 'overtones of indoctrination, being "concerned with setting out not what children are expected to know, but how they should be"' (Watson 2010:99, in Priestly and Minty, 2013:42); school education has economic and social goals as primary outcomes of learning; the curriculum focuses on developing skills, including, as argued in chapters two and three, of developing well-being almost as a skill and has tensions around 'preparing

students to pass exams' (p.42). In this mix, our fictional pupil Isabella is contemplating the first of her S5 Higher experiences: compulsory English and Maths.

In the latter three years of secondary school, now called the senior phase, Maths and English are compulsory subjects up to age 16 and, in many schools, still presented as compulsory post-16 when pupils are selecting Higher subjects in S5. Typically, if a school is presenting its pupils for five Highers, this compulsoriness is manifested in two of five columns in which Maths in one column and English in another are the only subjects that can be selected. In circumstances where schools have a combined senior phase course choice option form with additional subjects alongside English and Maths, it remains traditional for S5 pupils to be encouraged to select these subjects while S6 pupils who have already passed English and Maths can select from any additional subject options in each column.

The primacy of English and Maths in the Scottish curriculum is demonstrated in statements such as:

> Literacy and numeracy are basic skills without which an individual's capacity to undertake other learning and training is severely limited. They are also critical to developing people's qualities of resilience and adaptability, along with the ability to go on learning and developing throughout their lives. Equipped in this way, people are more likely to maintain and enhance the health and wellbeing of themselves and their family. They are also more likely to adapt and improve skills, get a job and stay in productive employment[61].
>
> (The Scottish Government 2011 in Griffiths, 2012:668)

Literacy and numeracy, noted in chapter two as being the responsibility of all teachers in Scotland, remain firmly in the auspices of English and Maths subjects. This is despite the fact that all curriculum areas and teachers certainly contribute to the development of literacy and numeracy skills. For Isabella to demonstrate that she is literate and numerate she is expected to pass Higher English and Maths. Literacy, however, comprises many different types, for example, digital, religious, political and critical and these diverse kinds

[61] Well-being appears related explicitly in this quote to literacy and numeracy, and to getting and keeping a job.

of literacy can relate to acquiring the capabilities that Isabella's school appears to be denying her.

It is disappointing for me as a teacher to read statements that refer to literacy as a basic skill. It reflects a constrained kind of understanding of literacy, suitable for employability, like being able to follow instructions or communicate with clients. In her book, 'Not for profit: why democracy needs the humanities', Nussbaum (2010) contends that an education for economic growth relies on an old model of development that views literacy and numeracy in this kind of technical way. My subject of RMPS would fall into the description of a literacy-based subject. For me, literacy is not a basic skill or just a foundation for other learning. Instead, I see it in more ontological terms: as a means to live a more meaningful life because literacy enables us to engage with and construct our own lives. Likewise, Nussbaum affords literacy a greater recognition than a basic skill. For Vasanti, for example, developing literacy skills enabled her participation in politics and employment but it also enables her and women like her to make alternative choices for their own lives; for example, to choose to live lifestyles beyond cultural norms such as employment instead of marrying and raising a family (Nussbaum, 2011).

Nussbaum advocates reading literature as a means to develop narrative imagination or the ability to understand oneself and the perspective of others. For Nussbaum this means 'the ability to decipher meanings through the use of imagination, and to be "an intelligent reader of another person's story and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have"'(Nussbaum,1998:11 in Von Wright 2002:412). For Isabella, this would mean that her literacy skills should act as a way to develop her emotions and enable her to reflect on her own and others' experiences. Her literacy skills should support the development of her capabilities to enable her to make autonomous choices about how she lives her life.

However, returning to the quote from the Scottish government and in addition to any inherent claims of literacy and numeracy as important skills to develop, it is worth considering additional reasons why English and Maths are mainly still considered compulsory in S5. Firstly, there is the dominance of the employment perspective. Employers have long been dissatisfied with the qualities and skills of school leavers.

Rikowski (2000) terms this the 'long moan of history' from employers who have criticised the preparedness of workers since at least 'the First World War' (n.p.). A perceived lack of literacy and numeracy skills being oft-bemoaned. Secondly, for Maths at least, it is the only senior phase subject in Scotland associated with a reduction in the chances of being unemployed (Iannelli and Duta, 2018). Thirdly, for university entrance, subjects, not just grades, matter. In England, subjects such as English and Maths are considered traditional or 'hard' and students who opt for 'soft' subjects risk losing out on places at top universities[62]. These traditional overtones in England are also part of Scotland's education legacy but this kind of orthodoxy can be challenged by considering Nussbaum's notion of adapted preferences.

As outlined in chapter four, adapted preferences or adaptation and mental conditioning (Sen, 1999), can occur in situations of exploitation, deprivation and oppression where individuals become so used to such circumstances that they adjust their expectations to suit (p. 63). Even where an individual believes herself to be happy, or at least accepting of these circumstances, it is, according to a capabilities approach, necessary to create conditions through which there are genuine opportunities for living a life that one has reason to value. Both Sen and Nussbaum iterate an ethical issue that results from adaptation, namely a sort of fatalistic acceptance (Grayot, 2014) of an unjust situation. Grayot distinguishes preference changes and mal-adaptive preference changes to make the point that some adaptation is not within one's control (p.18). This returns us to the importance of having and exercising choice. Post-16 pupils in Scotland can leave school so long as they have a 'positive destination' to go to. Decisions about whether to attend college, get a job, or begin a gap year necessarily involve a degree of choice. Why then, post-16 but staying on at school, should it be necessary for Isabella to be compelled to study compulsory subjects? Notwithstanding the complexity of timetabling arrangements and staffing ratios which can affect the availability of subject options, I am assuming in this situation a scenario in which alternative subjects, available to S6 pupils, could also be made available to Isabella in S5. One answer appears to be adapted preferences. Scottish education has for so long fêted English and Maths subjects as compulsory in S5 that it has become like an adapted preference of schools, employers, universities and, we might presume, of some parents and pupils too. Sen and Nussbaum focus on the adaptive

[62] The Guardian (2011) 'Universities admit 'soft' A-levels damage chance of top places', available online at https://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/feb/04/university-places-traditional-subjects-a-levels, [accessed 12.07.19].

preferences of individuals. I extend their proposition to the question of can one have an adapted preference on behalf of someone else? Grayot (2014) suggests that oppressed individuals can believe that they make their own choices 'while the mechanism of adaptation remains hidden from them' (p.19)[63]. For Sen, however, the focus on adaption is not about how an adaption comes about: 'whether (an adaption) is caused by (unconscious) mental conditioning or by fatalistic acceptance of norms, is beside the point - what matters is the suffering which results from adaptation' (p. 31). Likewise, Nussbaum is concerned that it is the effects of adaptation that matters.

> This means that, in evaluating the moral implications of adaptive preferences, we should not begin at the cognitive origins of adaptation, but at the empirical source where freedoms and liberties are inhibited.
>
> (p. 35)

Our first issue, therefore, is to consider how compulsory subjects such as English and Maths might affect Isabella's well-being. The following example focuses on compulsory Maths.

In a striking headline, *'Once children were birched at school. Now they are taught Maths',* the Guardian columnist and former teacher Simon Jenkins, bemoans Maths 'as the most cited measure of performance' (Jenkins, 2018: n. p.) much because, he argues, proficiency in Maths is easier to measure than creativity or use of imagination. In the article Jenkins recounts a primary-school child who

> can handle counting and proportion, but he cannot access the world of complex numbers and algebra. In every way a lively, intelligent, creative boy, he is innumerate. For this harmless failing, he is accused of lowering his class score and his school league place. He dreads going to school.

For this young pupil, school is a source of ill-being; the school's emphasis on what counts as achievement – maths scores – contribute to his anxiety. I include this part of Jenkins'

[63] In my vignette, Isabella's reluctance to accept compulsory subjects is not because she is ignorant of her school's mechanism of compulsory subjects but because, to remain at school, means she cannot do other than accept it.

article to highlight that school practices matter because they have an impact on the lives of young people. Isabella is different to this young boy. She is older and has already gained a Maths qualification at National 5 level. Yet she also experiences anxiety and she has no choice in avoiding more Maths. Is Isabella's year-long anxiety about passing Higher Maths off-set by its perceived future economic benefits? Iannelli and Duta's (2018) research that demonstrates Maths as a subject useful for gaining employment also acknowledges that any inequalities in the labour market are only partly explained by subject choices; parental input and socio-economic background also play a part in the likelihood of successful future employment. Of the many good reasons to study Maths, developing everyday numeracy skills is certainly one good reason, but even some Maths teachers admit that unless a person is willing to study Maths at an advanced level, most people do not really apply theorems, vectors and quadratic equations on a day to day basis (The Guardian, 2016)[64] and so some Maths curricula are irrelevant, even for employers.[65] For Isabella, being compelled to pursue a subject that she is struggling with and did not choose raises the question of how far she is able to realise the capability of using her senses, imagination and thought (Nussbaum, 2011). Using her imagination, being creative and expressing herself freely would constitute that Isabella has some degree of capability. Having successfully passed English and Maths, and other subjects, at National 5 level, she has already cultivated basic literacy and numeracy skills. Being compelled to spend fifty minutes per day, five days per week plus homework on a subject she does not willingly choose minimises how she chooses to express herself as a human being. It diminishes respect for using her own mind to pursue what she really values. We could argue that being compelled to study Higher Maths counts as beneficial pain that will be good for Isabella in the long-run, but that assumption rests upon whether Isabella's feeling of stress and anxiety is more or less important than the ease with which her school can quantify its own success. We need to enquire whether perceived future economic benefits to Isabella off-set her fear of failure; and whether those economic benefits are only for Isabella. Might they be for national gain too, and be a measure of national performance? We need to decide if, by forcing upon Isabella a daily experience of anxiety, we are truly supporting her to flourish.

[64] The Guardian, 'Secret Teacher: pupils are force-fed maths they'll never use again', available online at https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2016/oct/15/secret-teacher-pupils-forced-maths-never-use, [accessed 31.07.19].

[65] It is not my intention to discuss whether all subjects or subject matter that is taught in schools has to be relevant. My point is that lack of perceived relevance can lead to anxiety and disengagement.

Isabella's second experience is being told that she should continue to study subjects in S5 that she performed well in during S4. Remember, after making her own choices, Isabella was interviewed by her Year Head who persuaded her parents to accept his advice that Isabella would more likely perform better in two alternative subjects. The Year Head, we will presume, is genuinely seeking the best for Isabella. But his intervention calls in to question the nature of 'best'. Recalling Apple's (2001:413, in Priestly et al., 2015) warning of performative education systems that focus on what pupils can do for a school, it is likely, or at least cannot be ruled out, that the Year Head is considering Isabella's likely future exam results and their benefits to the school's record of improvement. It is possible that the Year Head is using Isabella as a means to secure school improvement measured as exam performance. His argument that Isabella continue with subjects she studied in S4 is based on the idea that progression from one level to another is the most likely grounds for exam success. We could argue here that the Year Head's thinking is utilitarian; he is hoping to maximise the results of the school by ignoring Isabella's original subject choices. If this is the case, there is insufficient regard for Isabella's autonomy. If exam results were not as dominant a force within Scottish education, would the Year Head make the same intervention? It is impossible to answer this question, but we can ask and answer another question. Is it for the best that Isabella's own choices are overlooked? Having a say at school and a voice in decision-making is identified by Anderson and Graham (2016) and Roffey (2015) as constitutive of pupils' well-being, where feeling listened to and shared decision making especially emerges as a strong determinant of well-being. Underpinning their analysis is the importance of recognition and feeling valued. We might conclude that Isabella's 'say' in subject choices is only tokenistic if it is so readily dismissed by the Year Head. Her own choices are pitted against the choices of the school and Isabella loses out. Furthermore, considering Mullin's explanation of autonomy or self-governance: that there is a self to govern, one is able to self-govern; and that self-governing is in accordance with what the person cares about (2007:2), post-16 Isabella can be presumed to meet these requirements. She could, after all, leave school. If Isabella's choices are being coerced by others' authority or dictated by controlling circumstances such as an attainment driven culture, her autonomy, her capacity for 'self-direction and choice' (Dearden, 1975:335) is being minimised.

The next three raising attainment strategies that Isabella experiences have a common theme of additional time in school: lunchtime supported study, Saturday Maths classes and Easter

school revision. These will, therefore, be addressed together. Isabella feels pressured to be revising through her lunchtimes and to be in school at the weekend and during a holiday thus removing free choice of how, when, and even if to revise. To consider the impact of these measures on Isabella's well-being, we can draw upon research from University College London (UCL).

In May 2019, the BBC reported the results of research from UCL into the structure and duration of a school day. With a dramatic headline of *'School break times cut short to cram in more lessons'*[66], the researchers are reported to have found that secondary school pupils have lost 65 minutes of break time since 1995. Of over one thousand primary and secondary schools surveyed, 'nearly 60% of schools withheld breaks from children when they or their classmates were poorly behaved or needed to complete work' (n.p.). In the same BBC article, the Association of School and College Leaders' general secretary explained:

> The fact is that school timetables are bursting at the seams because of the pressure to deliver a huge amount of learning and to prepare children for high-stakes tests and exams. It is therefore no surprise that school break times are shorter than they were 20 years ago. This may be regrettable but it is the result of a conscious decision by successive governments to expect more of schools.

In the article, the lead author of the report, Ed Baines, claims:

> Despite the length of the school day remaining much the same, break times are being squeezed even further, with potential serious implications for children's wellbeing and development.
>
> Not only are break times an opportunity for children to get physical exercise - an issue of particular concern given the rise in obesity - but they provide valuable time to make friends and to develop important social skills, experiences that are not necessarily learned or taught in formal lessons.

[66] BBC (2019) 'School break times cut short to cram in more lessons', available online at https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-48203595, [accessed 14.07.19].

UCL's research encompasses schools in England but their findings of using break times to prepare pupils for high stakes exams is similarly occurring in Scotland. When I started teaching in 1998 my school incorporated an afternoon break in addition to morning interval and lunch time, yet this afternoon break has been largely phased out of schools, reflecting the UCL findings within English schools. The importance of breaks in the school day can be seen in the following observation made by the UCL researchers:

> Pupils at primary and secondary levels valued breaks first and foremost for the opportunity they provide to socialise with friends. They also valued the opportunity for some free time, and the chance to choose what they wanted to do and/or to engage in playful activities.
>
> (UCL, 2019)

Returning to Isabella's situation of lunchtime revision, we could comment that her capability of affiliation is adversely affected because her opportunities for social interaction with her friends are removed. Her capability of play[67] or to enjoy recreational activities is diminished when she has to attend lunchtime revision. Her bodily health is put at risk if she has no time for eating lunch or has to eat lunch quickly before revision classes begin. Noting that 'school is increasingly the main, and in some cases the only, context where young people get to socialise'[68], compelling Isabella to attend lunch time revision classes emphasises a focus on academic attainment rather than socialising, play or nourishment, all factors that contribute to Isabella's well-being. The school's concern for results is prioritised over and above Isabella's opportunities for developing her well-being via spending time with friends, socialising and having time for an adequate lunchtime meal[69]. Even if Isabella's school is unintentionally minimising her well-being because a raising attainment strategy such as lunchtime revision is embedded in its practices, considering this practice through a capabilities lens alerts us to the possibility that it will not be serving the best interest of pupils. Flourishing is, according to Spratt

[67] Article 31 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child recognises a child's right to relax and play. The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland website, which endorses the UNCRC, notes this article as important for 'being able to relax and unwind in the way they want to is vital to a child or young person's health and happiness, and to making sure they are as fulfilled as they can be', available online at https://www.cypcs.org.uk/rights/uncrcarticles/article-31, [accessed 01.08.19].

[68] UCL (2019) report available at https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/news/2019/may/break-time-cuts-could-be-harming-childrens-development, [accessed 14.07.19].

[69] Ironically, a report from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) notes that reducing breaks can negatively affect, rather than enhance, academic achievement, as noted in Sahlberg and Doyle (2019:92).

(2016), a discourse based on how individuals live, yet how is Isabella living? She is, in our scenario, spending approximately six hours per day, five days per week pursuing four of five subjects she did not willingly choose and is using many of her break times to study them. If 'experiences of schooling can… create or deny opportunities for children to lead meaningful lives in the present and in the future' (Spratt, 2016:12), Isabella is currently being denied the opportunity to live a meaningful life as one which reflects her own choosing.

For some schools the pressure to improve results is so acute that they offer Saturday morning teaching sessions and whole days of revision throughout the Easter holidays. A sample of which is footnoted below[70]. Isabella, our fictional pupil, is pressured into attending both. Her Maths grades are low and she is deemed to be underperforming in two other subjects. To be so anxious about exam results that Isabella is in school on a Saturday morning and for several days through an Easter holiday reduces the time Isabella has to enjoy recreational activities, to relax and play, and to enjoy other forms of social interaction or affiliation, all capabilities promoted by Nussbaum (2011). Isabella's ontological insecurity, her uncertainty and doubt about whether she is good enough in comparison to others (Keddie, 2016), is tied to the calculable standards of exam results which will deem her as successful or not in relation to her peers. Her school's persistence of exam performance-based goals means Isabella's self-worth is linked to avoiding failure. For Isabella, and other pupils like her, such a narrow parameter of success undermines any alternative ways she, and they, might choose to express success. If Isabella is being judged on whether she is good enough compared to others based on her exam results, then she is not being treated 'as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others' (Nussbaum, 2011:33).

In addition to lunchtime revision, Easter revision and Saturday Maths classes, Isabella is, in our scenario, being compelled to also attend after-school revision sessions four times

[70] A). www.castlemilkhigh.glasgow.sch.uk/Websites/SchSecCastlemilk/UserFiles/file/easter..., [accessed 01.08.19].
B). There is business called SaturdaySchoolGlasgow that offers Easter revision for those who can afford its fees. Details of this revision can be found online at https://www.saturdayschoolglasgow.com/national5-higher-easter-revision/, [accessed 01.08.19].
C). One school in Aberdeen made news headlines when it decided to charge parents for exam revision sessions during Easter. Details of this story by Paul Rodger can be found online at https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/.../4096257/aberdeen-school-parents-exam-easter-holidays, [accessed 01.08.19].

per week. Her school has imposed a medical opt-out system for this raising attainment strategy which means Isabella can only avoid these after-school revision sessions if she is sick or has a medical appointment[71]. Before continuing with Isabella, however, imagine the following vignette in which you are the central character:

> You work 9 am to 5pm. These are the hours you are contractually obliged to be in the office in contact with your colleagues. Now you are told that you are expected to remain longer in the office four times per week and work until 6pm and this must happen in an effort to improve at least four elements of your work. The only opt-out is a medical certificate. Your boss maintains an attendance register, cajoles and uses other verbal tactics to make you stay in the office for at least four additional hours per week. Now ask yourself if you are happy with this new approach. You may feel that this is not the best way to improve those elements of your work. You might resent the additional time you have to put in. You might prefer to have some say in what you do after work hours and to have your choice respected. You might have other commitments after work that you enjoy pursuing. You might simply feel tired after your day and want to be at home. Perhaps your optimal performance is not brought about by an additional hour on top of a working day.

For most adults such a compulsory change would be ethically unacceptable, particularly if it is imposed without reference to your wishes. This, however, is what Isabella is experiencing, four times per week after school. If it is unacceptable to coerce an adult to do this, it is equally unacceptable to impose such a system on pupils. In this illustrative example, it is possible to observe that Isabella's capability of senses, imagination and thought is challenged in a culture and mind-set that privileges exam results. The capability of play is diminished because of the reduced time Isabella has to engage in recreational activities. These capabilities, Nussbaum argues, are not merely 'instrumental but partly constitutive of a worthwhile human life' (Nussbaum, 2011:36). There is an erosion of control over Isabella's environment because she is not involved in any decision-making processes relating to after-school supported study. Isabella has no freedom of expression to say no to compulsory after-school revision classes because of the imposed medical opt-out condition. Thus she has reduced opportunities to develop autonomy. This is reminiscent of Nussbaum's perspective of 'substantive freedoms' (P.21) which are a person's internal capabilities and the freedoms afforded in their environment to express them, as explained in chapter four. Isabella has neither. Her capability of freedom to say no to compulsory after-school supported study is not being fostered and, equally, she does not have freedom to put that expression into action because the medical opt-out condition

[71] This illustrative example is drawn from the author's experience.

denies her the opportunity to do so. A capabilities approach judges well-being in terms of functionings and whether a person has a genuine choice or capability of an alternative (Saito, 2003), and dignity, we are reminded, is 'inseparably linked with …the capabilities and resources to convert these into functionings' (Hedge and MacKenzie, 2012:340). We may conclude therefore that Isabella's dignity is diminished in a situation where she cannot and is not encouraged to refuse. Research by Vaughan (2007) on capabilities considers well-being both within and through education and might be employed here to show that Isabella has reduced capability to participate *in* education because she has no choice but to attend after-school revision, and reduced capability *through* education because she is not developing the skill to say no; in this case to after-school revision. This not only reflects Saito's (2003) point that some practices in top-down education systems can limit children's capabilities in the present, it also reinforces Sen's concern that we must consider how we might, or might not, be developing children's freedoms in the future (p.25). This raises the issue of justifying the use of compulsion, how much and to what age? In their own work on creating a capabilities list, Biggeri et al. (2007) suggest that the relevance of any given capability may vary according to age. They distinguish 'early' childhood [0-5 years old], childhood [6-10 years old], 'early' adolescence [11-14 years old] and adolescence [15-17 years old], suggesting that a 'complete list of capabilities may be fully realised only by the older category of children' (p.66). Isabella would, in their list, be considered an adolescent and thus fit the older category of children. The degree of autonomy and choice thus afforded to her would, according to Biggeri et al. vary at different ages (p. 64) and Isabella, currently, is at an age where she can realise a complete list of capabilities. Sen's concern can be used in support of some educational practices that could be claimed as 'good for pupils'. For example, children should be made to study subjects now that might gain them more employment freedom in the future, like Maths, and he argues that '…capabilities adults enjoy are deeply conditional on their experience as children' (Sen, 1999:4 in Biggeri et al., 2007:62). But future freedoms are not guaranteed, and we can hardly claim that Isabella's choices are free if they are made out of insecurity, anxiety or resignation. Research conducted by Biggeri et al., (2007) concludes that children can conceptualise capabilities and determine their value' both at present and for their future' (p.79) but it seems we are in a predicament of age and compulsion. One way of concluding this issue then is to consider the idea that

> …the least harmful course we can follow is to let a child determine what the Good shall be for him or her as far as possible…as long as we ensure 'a) that

> he (sic) knows about as many activities or ways of life as possible which he may want to choose for their own sake, and b) that he is able to reflect on priorities among them from the point of view not only of the present moment but as far as possible of his life as a whole.
>
> White (1973:22 in Saito, 2003:25)

Nussbaum (2011) claims that all ten capabilities on her list are important for securing a minimally flourishing and dignified life, and that two capabilities in particular 'play a distinctive architectonic role: they organise and pervade the others' (p. 39). These two capabilities are affiliation and practical reason.

> Affiliation…pervades the other capabilities in the sense that when they are made available in a way that respects human dignity, affiliation is part of them – the person is respected as a social being.
>
> (p. 39)

Firstly, as we have seen, the raising attainment strategies Isabella's school employs do not secure all of the other capabilities and thus cannot be said to respect Isabella's dignity. Secondly, affiliation as a capability in itself is diminished when Isabella's opportunities for developing relationships through socialising are minimised because of revision during-school, after-school, during-Saturdays and during-holidays. Furthermore, Isabella's relationship she has with her school, which might be considered political, is undermined because she has little or no freedom of expression within it.

Nussbaum's second all-suffusing capability is practical reason and it is worth reminding ourselves that practical reason is:

> being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life.
>
> (Nussbaum, 2011:34)

This capability raises the question of whether Isabella's S5 experience of compulsory subjects, coerced curriculum choices and compelled revision allow her to meet her own particular conception of a good life, one that allows her to do and to be in accordance with

what she values. Nussbaum describes 'the opportunity to plan one's own life (as) an opportunity to choose and order the functionings corresponding to the various other capabilities' (p.39). Functionings, to be worthwhile, are to be chosen (Hedge and MacKenzie, 2012) and well-being is to be judged in terms of functionings achieved (Sen, 1992:39 in Saito, 2003:21). Choosing to stay on at school post-16 should not mean that Isabella subordinates her autonomy and dignity to the school's pursuit of attainment. Post-16 and having already completed several rounds of exam experiences, Isabella is likely to be able to recognise the different potential consequences of her choices. She is also likely to feel, as Sweatman is, that she is on a school-to-work conveyor belt, valued for her exam grades rather than her personal qualities. She does not rebel but resignedly accepts her situation because she is manipulated and shaped in a Chopraesque (2003) doxa[72] of human capital values and economic policies. Socialised to fit the ideals of these values and policies her identity is being defined by her experiences of school: developing four capacities and her worth judged on exam results. She does not have the means to challenge her situation because she lacks opportunities to be autonomous, or to learn autonomy by being given opportunities to exercise it, so Isabella may not be developing her capabilities in the most optimal way. It is being able to choose that enhances Isabella's capabilities and having her choices respected enhances her well-being.

Conclusion

Inquiring philosophically into well-being offers an important and constructive critique of current influences and their related practices and where these are found wanting, to thereafter develop and justify an alternative view of well-being. By contesting the assumptions and highlighting the defects that underpin current policy conceptions of well-being, it is possible to reconceptualise well-being by modifying our related notions of it to emphasise autonomy and dignity. We see that current raising attainment strategies impede the development of autonomy and respect for dignity. Well-being, currently, has developed within a neoliberal framework, prioritising individual competitiveness, self-regulation of emotions (Clack, 2012), and managing one's life to be a successful, confident, responsible and effective[73] citizen of the state, and a marketable commodity based on academic success. This view presents a narrow conception of well-being, a market-based one, challenged by an alternative human-development based philosophy that can contribute to

[72] Explained in chapter 2.
[73] The four capacities

living a life one has reason to value. The vignette of Isabella, explored in order to contest the conception of well-being in practice as informed by the policies explored earlier, demonstrate that Isabella is not currently being treated as an ethically significant human being; she is being treated as a means to an end. Utilising the tools of philosophical inquiry, a capabilities approach can inform the discourse of well-being so that it is not just well-being for the economy that schools prioritise but well-being as human flourishing. The illumination brought about by reflecting upon Nussbaum's capabilities list is that well-being viewed through the lens of a capabilities approach, and promoting autonomy and dignity, is valued as inherent in achieving and experiencing well-being. The capabilities approach enables a re-conception of well-being in a way that can guide our thinking about well-being practices. It offers a clear picture of practices that appear to be inhibiting pupils' well-being, and of the policy construct that promotes this, while at the same time asking the moral questions of how human beings should be treated.

In chapter six, I consider how Nussbaum's capabilities approach could shape some practices of raising attainment. This consideration includes the tensions that I encounter as a middle leader who is accountable to her community. The politicised, economic policy-focused reality of school life that means middle leaders like myself can lack autonomy to take decisions without approval and often cannot choose to do what they have reason to value (Fertig, 2012). Nevertheless, middle leadership roles like mine need not be a form of perfunctory, bureaucratic leadership and it is worthwhile to interrogate and disturb current practices and difficult notions and to re-think current policies. To do so opens up those potential 'practices of liberation' (Patrick, 2013:6) that 'school leaders have for shaping learning opportunities for pupils' (Fertig, 2012:405). The capabilities approach raises the moral question of well-being and requires us to reflect on what policies and practices we need to truly value pupils as human beings, and of how it might be possible to create a counter narrative (Watson, 2018) that will move the discourse of well-being forward in a way that will help pupils to flourish.

Chapter 6

The capabilities approach to well-being in education: implications for policy and practice

> Philosophy asks for public deliberation instead of the usual contest of power. It asks us to choose the view that stands the test of argument, rather than the view that has the most prestigious backers; the view that gets all the details worked out coherently and clearly, rather than the view whose proponents shout the loudest. At its best, its conceptual fussiness is profoundly practical: only if things are worked out in all their detail will we know whether we really do have the alternative that can stand up to objection better than another, and sometimes the fatal objection to a view emerges only after considerable probing. It makes sense for public deliberation to take account of these apparently fussy debates, because this is how we think through what we have to do, see what we really want to stand for.
>
> (Nussbaum, 2000:300)

This final chapter sets out the insights gained from re-conceptualising well-being, inspired by a capabilities approach, and of examining critically the relationship between well-being and Scotland's raising attainment agenda. Presenting an alternative conception of well-being in education and particularly of its relationship to raising attainment, and based mainly on Nussbaum's capabilities approach and her liberal view of education, these insights are, firstly, the need for policies that emphasise and treat human beings as ends not means and, secondly, for practices in schools that foster the development of pupils' autonomy and dignity. Nussbaum's capabilities approach, with its philosophical underpinning principles of autonomy and dignity offer, I contend, a more educationally and ethically defensible view of well-being than the current view that stresses well-being is important in so far as how well it secures comparative nation or school ranking or future employability. Nussbaum's capabilities approach stresses that there is a threshold level below which human beings are not fully flourishing. Human capabilities are to be developed not compromised and so a capabilities inspired approach to well-being supports my moral claim that pupils should not be treated as the means to specific policy ends. Any interventions schools make to reduce the attainment gap or increase exam results should not frustrate or ignore pupils' capabilities for autonomy or their own views

of living a valuable life[74]. Instead, all pupils, particularly those in secondary schools, should be supported to develop and exercise their capabilities of critical thinking, imagination and sympathy (Nussbaum, 2010)[75]. The importance of re-conceptualising well-being, and guiding the purpose of education away from a human capital economic model cannot be overstated. Research identifies academic pressure as contributing to pupils' stress [76]. Scottish schools struggle to decrease a poverty-related attainment gap (Sosu and Ellis, 2014) and continuous competition is leading to ontological insecurity (Keddie, 2016). The current human capital-inspired conception of well-being is having a destructive impact on pupils, despite the declared aims of policy, and the well-being of a number of our pupils is not being realised. A capabilities inspired approach to educational policies and educational practices that aim for human flourishing can help to address these problems. In this final chapter I weave the illumination of philosophical analysis through a consideration of the implications of these insights for my own professional practice, and I consider what approaches to raising attainment might be possible for middle leaders and teachers like myself who are accountable for exam results yet committed to supporting the well-being of their pupils. For policy makers, I aim to persuade them of the value of the benefits I believe philosophical analysis of policy can bring in supporting pupils to flourish. In advance of this discussion I draw upon some of what I have learned as an Ed.D. student.

Policy ends and means

Four years ago, in year one of my Ed.D. journey, all of the participants in my class were required to identify a policy or policy area for analysis and use it as the basis for writing an essay about it. For that module, I chose to write about leadership policy. As a principal teacher, which is a middle leadership position in Scottish secondary schools, this seemed a pertinent area to explore having been in the position for many years but only just beginning to reflect critically on it. The policy module was transformative in enhancing my understanding of how policies are 'an attempt to exercise control, to shape the world'

[74] Entwistle and Watt (2013:36) make a similar point in a healthcare context. They claim that health promotion efforts should not undermine or preclude patients' 'self-trust, self-respect, or (other) capabilities for autonomy, and that patients' own views of what is good for them are not neglected'.
[75] Nussbaum proposes these three broad aims in her book, '*Not for profit'* (2010) in which she sets out her vision of how a liberal education, and especially the humanities, can develop thoughtful, engaged and creative world citizens who are self-aware, self-governing and respectful of others.
[76] Mental health foundation (2018) 'A quarter of Scottish parents say academic pressure is causing their children to feel stressed', (Make it Count report) available online at https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/news/quarter-scottish-parents-say-academic-pressure-causing-their-children-feel-stressed, [accessed 30.11.19].

(Goodin et al., 2006:3-4) and of how a concept, such as leadership, can be used to wield power (Ball, 1990). I learned that my professional actions are governed by policies which are themselves governed by particular ideologies. I also, with relief, learned that the enactment of policy can be a site of resistance and that teachers need not be merely 'subjects in the policy process' (Braun et al., 2010:549 in Ward et al., 2016:47). Instead, teachers can interpret and translate policy in their own contexts. It is with the knowledge gained from the policy course and of reading Nussbaum throughout this dissertation that the benefits of a philosophical approach to an inquiry on policy become apparent. A philosophical approach commits to studying major thinkers in philosophy and considering their ideas in relation to educational issues. Nussbaum's capabilities list, not written as a basis for policy-making per se but as a theory of minimal justice (Richardson, 2015), can inform government policy so that it 'improve(s) the quality of life for all people as defined by their capabilities' (Nussbaum, 2011:19). Situated in a national, political context governments, Nussbaum argues, have responsibility to their citizens in providing opportunities and liberties that lead to them being able to experience full human functioning, ensuring a particular threshold level of capability (Nussbaum, 2006). In other words, to be 'able to have lives that are worthy of the dignity of human beings: this political goal should constrain all economic choices' (Nussbaum, 2000:33). The moral normative argument that envisions another person as an end and not just a means is highlighted when politics and ethics combine to ensure that economic goals work for citizens in a way that supports their human development and not just their human capital. This alternative policy conception of well-being is humanistic and more likely to lead to human flourishing. The pressure from supra-national governing bodies such as the OECD is to measure well-being (OECD, 2015) but Nussbaum is clear that creating well-being capabilities is more important than comparing or measuring them (MacAllister, 2018). Measuring and educating for well-being are not the same thing (p. 96). Furthermore, the current trend of education policy that focuses on 'marketable' skills to the detriment of skills, attributes and values developed through studying the humanities narrows, rather than enhances, pupils' capabilities (p.103) and reflects neoliberal rather than liberal values in education. Cognisant of its global reputation to be a successful nation, the Scottish government's recent laws and policies do reflect a declared global focus on well-being. For example, beyond its education policies, in 2018, the Scottish government established a new network called the 'Well-being Economy Governments Group', a group of governments working together aimed at producing healthy economies and happy societies. For Scotland, this included focusing on becoming a carbon-neutral society and

tackling inequality and ill-health[77]. The Scottish government regards the well-being of its citizens as important but, however well-intentioned internationally, its conception of well-being in education is currently too embedded in an economic model reflecting a culture of performativity and audit. Well-being is useful, it seems, but is too dominated by a conception of human beings as useful human capital. The Scottish government's recent policies that focus on well-being do not reflect any shift in paradigm towards a human development model. In the previous chapters of this dissertation, the interpretation of policies like GIRFEC and the SHANARRI well-being wheel shows that they set out to promote preferred behaviours, emotional regulation and performance-based goals reflecting a human capital inspired culture[78]. Taking their lead from the Scottish government and its policy agencies such as Education Scotland, schools, too, appear to interpret well-being within a human capital framework, selling the message that greater performance in exams will lead to greater workplace success which will lead, at some future point, to a form of social and economic well-being sanctioned by the Scottish government. This is despite the knowledge that the relationship between well-being and employment and well-being and income is complex (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009)[79]. Well-being, as explained in chapter one, encompasses a complex interplay of multiple factors. Hill (2013:145) claims that 'participation in the policy process is likely to be about the advancement and protection of interests' and Scottish education well-being policies, according to Spratt (2017), advance the interests of the Scottish government by 'reframing [teachers'] role as professionals and re-shaping the relationship between the state and the child' (p. 70). In chapter two we saw how teachers are now legally responsible for pupils' well-being and in chapter three I showed how a Foucauldian discourse of power is operating when the state holds the power to define what conception of well-being it wants. Arguably, the Scottish government conceptualises well-being in a way that suits its policy aims which involves pressing forward with the economic requirements of a successful, potentially independent, country. Their vision conceptualises well-being as inextricable from economic ends and these ends appear to

[77] Sturgeon, N. (2019) 'Why government's should prioritize well-being', available online at https://www.ted.com/talks/nicola_sturgeon_why_governments_should_prioritize_well_being/transcript?language=en, [accessed 23.11.19].

[78] It might be possible to re-frame these policies to be capability-focused if they were considered within an alternative paradigm that is dialogic and participatory and working in harmony with political actions that seek the removal of external barriers such as structural inequities caused by poverty, discrimination and so on. GIRFEC and the SHANARRI well-being wheel also tend to encourage a focus on meeting statutory duties, instead, they could be adjusted towards the lived experience of young people.

[79] Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) argue that increased income does not necessarily correlate with increased well-being.

determine and undermine its other aims. Indeed, these economic aims are so well embedded in education aims and are so consistently followed through that there appears little room left over to conceive of well-being differently. Yet it is a change in these national policies that is required.

There might be an objection that the stance I am advocating is impractical. However, there are contexts in which alternative conceptions of well-being are in practice. For instance, some educationalists are looking towards some Nordic countries for alternative inspiration on how to promote pupil (and teacher) well-being (Urbina-Garcia, 2019). Noting that some children as young as five years old suffer from mental health problems, Urbina-Garcia explains that schools in the UK too often value academic success over well-being and tend to promote rivalry rather than enjoyment of life (n.p.). The former conception reflects a human capital model of education that values productivity, skills and knowledge possessed by a self-invested, competitive individual but the latter better encompasses a human development model that values relationships, trust and networks that enable society to function effectively. It is this latter model that evokes, philosophically, the kind of conditions in which individuals might flourish. As an example of how education policies and institutional arrangements could work together to promote pupil flourishing, the Scottish government could look to Finnish education for some ideas[80]. Firstly, Finnish schools do not have a high-stakes testing culture. Finnish pupils who complete their courses in upper secondary school are entitled, but not compelled in their final year (aged 18), to sit a National Matriculation Examination. This exam, which can be taken over the course of a year, is a measure of academic maturity and readiness to continue in higher education (Sahlberg, 2015). Pupils sit one compulsory exam which is competency in mother tongue and then choose three other exams from a broad range of options. Before the age of 18, Finnish education employs a range of alternative assessment practices to high stakes testing, such as portfolio assessment, performance assessment, self-assessment and self-reflection (p.169) in order to determine how well their pupils are performing. This broader range of methods captures a record of pupils' attainment which is likely to be more encompassing than relying solely on high stakes exam performance. Furthermore, pupils in vocational schools do not need to sit the

[80] Finnish and Scottish schools teach a similar number of pupils. There are approximately 600,000 pupils in Finland (https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/schools/are-finnish-schools-the-best-in-the-world-2289083.html), accessed [07/04/2020] and 697,989 pupils in Scotland (https://www.gov.scot/publications/summary-statistics-schools-scotland-no-10-2019-edition/, [accessed 07/04/2020[.

National Matriculation Examination but undertake school-level assessment of learning outcomes and skills:

> The principle behind the (vocational) assessment is to develop a positive self-image and personal growth in students with different kinds of competencies. Students are gauged according to their own self-assessments, as well as through interviews with their teachers (p.41).

Underpinning pupils' decisions about which educational pathway to pursue and what assessments to undertake is a counselling and career guidance service available to pupils as they move through lower secondary school, where all pupils are entitled to two hours per week of educational guidance and counselling (p.33). This, in turn, builds on an Early Years National Framework which states that educators in kindergartens are responsible for:

1. Enhancing the personal well-being of children
2. Enforcing behaviours and habits that take into account other people
3. Increasing individual autonomy gradually
   (p.52)

It seems that in Finland, national education policies and school arrangements combine to create conditions in which pupils' flourishing is foremost. Its education system appears to reflect a conception of well-being that includes providing opportunities to develop some autonomy and valuing the personal choices of pupils as they study subjects of interest to them, and achieving this without a detrimental impact on academic attainment. Finnish education policy makes several interesting claims: in contrast to competition between schools, Finnish education promotes collaboration; instead of standardised learning, Finnish education promotes personalised learning; instead of a narrow focus on literacy and numeracy, Finnish education focuses on developing the whole child; instead of test-based accountability, Finnish education promotes trust-based responsibility; and instead of school choice, Finnish education promotes equity of outcomes (p. 149). Of course, the Finnish education system is not based on a capabilities approach but it does appear to reflect a human development model in that it places developmental outcomes before academic outcomes. Its values could therefore be a place to start in examining how its conception of education supports the development of the whole pupil, thus supporting

pupil well-being, and of how this could inform the policies and practices found in Scotland[81].

The Scottish government is interested in education in Nordic countries[82], but, realistically, given the grip of its education-economy values, it is unlikely that it will change its course regarding its human capital-inspired conception of well-being. Neoliberal ideas are deeply entrenched in Scottish education. I am reminded, here, of Labaree's (2019) description of Dewey's vision of education. In 'How We Think' (1933) the education that Dewey envisioned was 'child centred, enquiry-based, personally engaging and socially just' (Labaree, 2019: 2) which is a vision described by Labaree as like 'a hothouse flower trying to survive in the stony environment of public education' (p. 3). Instead, 'socially efficient' education, or the kind of education I claim is dominated by human capital ideology, is, according to Labaree, like a weed able to grow almost anywhere: 'the weed of social efficiency grows under difficult conditions because its primary goal is to be useful in the narrowest sense of the term: it aims for survival rather than beauty' (pp. 3-4). Adopting this analogy, a re-conception of well-being as human flourishing will not thrive unless conditions are ideal. These ideal conditions require

> committed, creative, energetic, and highly educated teachers, who are willing and able to construct education to order for students in the classroom; and it requires broad public and fiscal support for education as an investment in students rather than an investment in economic productivity.
>
> (2019:3)

Current education policy sells the message that 'the ends (in terms of higher attainment outcomes) justify the means (of intensive preparation for examination)' (Brown and Carr, 2019:259) so if the Scottish government's well-being policy focus was genuinely

[81] While these aspects of the Finnish education system appeal to me as an educator, it is prudent to also be aware that, as for all education systems, Finnish education has its own challenges to solve and no education system is perfect. For example, Sahlberg has suggested elsewhere that one challenge Finnish education is grappling with is an unsatisfactory level of student engagement in the classroom. Article available online at https://pasisahlberg.com/why-finland-isnt-overly-concerned-by-declines-in-student-test-scores/, [accessed 07/04/2020].

[82] Scotland's education secretary, John Swinney, visited Finland in March 2019 attending the International Summit on the Teaching Profession (ISTP) and visiting Finnish schools. He is reported to have said that 'Finnish teachers are fully empowered and operate in a climate of trust. Scotland can certainly learn from this'. Article available online at https://www.tes.com/news/swinney-we-want-fully-empowered-teachers, [accessed 30.10.19].

concerned with ends and not means, it would need to begin by considering the question, 'what is sought for the sake of what?' (Richardson, 2015). This means identifying what is worth seeking. Noted by Aristotle and quoted previously in chapter four, wealth, for example, is not the good we are seeking but 'merely useful and for the sake of something else' (Aristotle, 1980 in Sen, 1999:14). It could mean beginning with the question 'how could we enable well-being'? Promoting or requiring well-being as means of securing a nation's income or per capita production reflects well-being as being useful for economic purposes. This is different from promoting well-being for the sake of itself or promoting well-being as something else such as human flourishing. Richardson (2015) argues that it is easy to conflate something we regard as intrinsically good as a final end but that a final end can be thought of as something that is worthwhile or sought for its own sake (p. 164). This then raises the question of which ends should be sought? A philosophically informed approach to policy leads to one that is critically chosen because its proposals are critiqued and justified so if what is sought is educating for well-being with capabilities for autonomy and living a valuable life, then the Scottish government would need to consider how to create and then foster capabilities. The answer could lead to policies that do not tie so tightly the success of schools to academic results and where pupils' self-worth is not defined by exam results. Valuing well-being as developing capabilities has to begin with the Scottish government and its policy agents like Education Scotland. Their policies would need to be based on enabling pupils to have opportunities to determine and pursue their own goals, '…since having a voice in the choice of the policies that govern one's life is a key ingredient of a life worthy of human dignity' (Nussbaum, 2010:24). In contrast to a human development model of well-being, however, the Scottish government appears keen to measure and compare well-being with other countries. Nussbaum would argue that 'measurement and comparison of well-being capability are not in themselves good. They are only good if they support the creation of actual well-being capabilities' (MacAllister, 2018:102). Here, we can note a contrast between a normative construction of measurement (Enslin and Tjiattas, 2015) and a numerical one. In an article entitled, 'Capabilities and Social Justice' (2002), Nussbaum acknowledges that while human capabilities are difficult to measure numerically, normatively they ought to include the voices of those affected as 'they will help us find ways to describe, and even quantify, their predicament' (p.135). I would argue that the voices of Sweatman and Isabella describe their situation clearly: Sweatman is critical of the practices and outcomes of her secondary school experiences and Isabella resignedly accepts them. What currently counts are exam results while what should count are the opportunities afforded of living a valuable life. The Scottish

government, as has been argued throughout this dissertation, does not appear minded to consider how its policies can be informed by theories such as a capabilities approach. Its views are entrenched in neoliberalism that began as a theory developed by economists and philosophers and embraced by politicians as Harvey (2009, in Ward, 2016) shows. The entrenchment of neoliberal ideology has been accepted as common sense but that common sense is now being questioned. In the epigraph to chapter four, Van Manen (2014) describes how our conceptual understanding can rupture and lead to a new image and understanding and perhaps, in the post pandemic space[83], theories like the capabilities approach can emerge and challenge the current, dominant, understandings of the meaning and purpose of education. If current conceptions of education are not challenged it may need to be in the gap between production and implementation of policy (Bernstein, 2000), where 'individuals bring their own moral frameworks to bear' (Spratt, 2017:18), that an alternative conception of well-being emerges.

Hope of this emergence might be found in what Priestly et al. (2015) describe as an ecological theory of teacher agency. They describe agency not as a capacity that one has or possesses 'but… as something individuals and groups can manage to achieve – or not' (p. 3) meaning that agency results from an 'interplay' of working cultures, structures and capacities (p.3). To make the point, a particular national policy, such as well-being, determined at 'macro' or government level can be (re) interpreted at 'meso' or local authority level as well as at 'micro' school or teacher, level (p. 152). With the Scottish government's human capital model of well-being apparently so well-embedded at macro, meso and micro levels, there appears little space for any sort of policy (re) interpretation or distortion and, if there is any gap at all, those who want to challenge current conceptions might be cautioned by Priestly et al. who draw on Eisner's metaphor of a bird kept for ten years in a cage refusing to fly out when the cage door is finally opened (1992 in Priestly et al., 2015:151). The metaphor warns that even an internally disagreeable environment may yet be preferable to the unknown conditions outside the cage. In the same way, even though the performative outcomes and an over emphasis on academic attainment and assessment that drive Sweatman's and Isabella's experiences of secondary school form the internal disagreeable conditions of teachers like myself who wish for something different, the conditions outside the cage may not yet appear appealing for the majority of teachers. This is because policy rhetoric supports the idea of a critically enquiring professional (GTCS, 2012; Education Scotland, 2014) who could offer alternative ideas to current

[83] I say more about the Covid-19 pandemic later in this chapter.

norms but it remains the case that not all teachers work in environments of trust or support or where a critique of existing policy and practises would be welcome (Leat et al., 2014; Priestly et al., 2015). Furthermore, there is evidence that if an institution's norms are challenged, it may 'respond in a defensive, self-protective manner' (Anderson et al., 2007:34). However, unappealing conditions in which to press ahead with an alternative perspective on well-being is, in my view, not a reason to hesitate. Indeed, the opposite is the case because the very real impact of current conceptions on pupils is a compelling reason to do so.

An ecological theory of teacher agency relies on three interwoven elements: working cultures, structures and individual capacities and considers how these might enhance education from the bottom-up (Priestly et al., 2015). In other words, it imagines how teachers can shape the conditions in which they work by considering both their abilities and contexts. These interwoven elements, I believe, are redolent of Nussbaum's ideas of combined and internal capabilities; combined capabilities are 'the totality of the opportunities (a person) has for choice and action in her specific political, social and economic situation' (Nussbaum, 2011:21) and they are a person's internal capabilities and the freedoms afforded in their political, social and economic environment. Internal capabilities are 'the characteristics of a person (personality traits, intellectual and emotional capacities, states of bodily fitness and health, internalised learning, skills of perception and movement)' (p.21) which can be developed. In current circumstances for example, theoretically a capabilities-inspired approach to well-being could 'expand young people's capabilities and develop opportunities for them to pursue a life they have reason to value' (Hart, 2009:401 in Toson et al., 2013:491) but, and it should be acknowledged, in practice this is very difficult to do. In the non-ideal[84] conditions of real-life Sen says the real-world should have primacy (Sen, 2006). The current politicised, economic policy-focused primacy of reality means that middle school leaders like myself often lack autonomy to take decisions without approval and often cannot chose to do what they have reason to value (Fertig, 2012). Instead they are required to pursue ever greater academic results and policies they do not value. This difficulty is compounded in the adaptive preferences of pupils who have learned 'to desire what they are socially constructed to desire rather than what they have reason to value' (Wood and Deprez, 2012:489); that is,

[84] Wolbert et al., (2017) agree with Sen that an ideal or perfect society does not exist but that different theories e.g. of social justice may be able to guide our actions towards a better society.

pupils beginning to believe that the purpose of education is to develop marketable skills rather than developing 'wide-ranging skills necessary for enhancing capacity and freedom so students can choose agentive and valued lives and extend that capacity and freedom to the lives of others' (p. 489).

However, if an ecological conception of teacher agency opens up critical consideration of working cultures, structures and individual capacities and so enhances education from the bottom-up (Priestly et al., 2015), it can conceivably support teachers in evaluating public policies by engaging in, what Richardson (2015:161) would call 'reasonable debate about what is to be sought'. His call reflects Nussbaum's view emphasised in this chapter's epigraph that it is through public deliberation that 'we think through what we have to do, see what we really want to stand for' (Nussbaum, 2000:300). Policy making, and enactment, therefore, emerges as part of an on-going, iterative process which focuses on what, through public deliberation, we choose to value. Conceivably, this will incur disagreement. After all, as a citizen and public sector teacher, I am in disagreement with my government's conception of well-being but this shows, in Richardson's words (2015:170),

> that we have important public reasoning to do about the ends of policy…and (we should) strive to arrange our ends into coherent and defensible orderings that reflect our considered judgements about which of them are appropriately taken as regulating which.

In other words, there needs to be public deliberation about what sort of well-being we are pursuing and what values underpin our reasoning. This is because the values underpinning pursuing well-being for the sake of economic prosperity or for human flourishing have repercussions for educational practices. The experiences of Sweatman and Isabella testify to that.

Implications for professional practice

Considering Isabella's experiences of raising attainment strategies and the lack of opportunities they afford to foster her autonomy, it would be tempting, as a few schools

have, to simply remove[85] lunch time revision, Easter school revision and after-school supported study and claim that Isabella now has more time and opportunity to freely pursue her hobbies, socialise with her friends and eat her lunch. This certainly is one way to foster her well-being capabilities. However, the present-day realities of heightened competition and pressure to secure good exam results mean that some schools would not consider cancelling these activities as a viable option. Indeed, there would likely be arguments that these measures of revision do work, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Yet any measures that such schools pursue must, according to the capabilities approach, be constructed around and not dominate the individual interests and matters of concern of pupils. To that end, there are potential alterations schools could make to their revision practices, especially so-called 'compulsory' practices, that could be regarded as more in tune with a capabilities-approach to well-being[86]. These potential alterations are premised upon Wood and Deprez's view of curricular implications for the capability approach, which is:

> if classroom experiences are to aid students in being and acting in ways that they value, they must then create opportunities for authentic autonomy and choice in terms of how and what they learn …
>
> (2012:489)

Citing concern that much teaching and learning is predicated on predicted outcomes, Wood and Deprez suggest that teaching and learning, and we might imagine other school experiences such as raising attainment strategies[87], could 'take shape around evolving interests, questions and concerns of students' (p.489). This could, in turn, provide opportunities for pupils to freely participate in revision classes and make deliberately determined choices about what actually matters to them. Following Wood and Deprez (p.488), a question to ask oneself is, how do raising attainment strategies such as attending supported study at lunchtime, after school and during holidays relate to the

[85] Schoolsweek (2016) 'Head teacher scraps "mad" year 11 revision classes to protect pupil mental health', available online at https://schoolsweek.co.uk/headteacher-scraps-mad-year-11-revision-classes-to-protect-pupil-mental-health/, accessed [14.10.19].

[86] This would reflect, again, realistic idealism as a starting point for moving towards an alternative, more ideal, state of affairs (Wolbert et al., 2017).

[87] Strategies that seek to raise attainment are likely to continue to be practised in schools given the dominant values, constraints and real-world context of teaching in Scotland. However, any such strategies could and should be re-modelled in ways that promote capabilities and protect the dignity and autonomy of pupils.

'concerns, desires, interests and aspirations' of the pupils? Furthermore, do these activities include opportunities for developing and exercising autonomy?

Which is why, as a PT, my preferred way of addressing raising attainment based on a capabilities approach, is to work in voluntary collaboration, rather than involuntary coercion, with pupils. This means negotiating with pupils if, then when, they would like measures such as additional study support. It rejects components such as compulsory attendance registrars that are passed to a Year Head or compulsory opt-in systems which represent the kind of requirements and expectations demanded of performative-orientated systems. My preferred approach involves being 'flexible, dialogic and responsive' (p.489). Pupils attend because attending matters to them and it is authentic and meaningful, not because they are coerced by fear or anxiety or authority. It is an approach that acknowledges that pupils' well-being can be fostered when their own values are taken into account and where their participation contributes to living meaningful lives. With regards to Nussbaum's capability of practical reason, it means carefully considering what opportunities pupils have to deliberate and negotiate contrary and competing values such as the relationship between their own attainment and well-being; in terms of lives that pupils' actually live, it means providing them with opportunities to express a reasoned view on that relationship and apply it to their own lives; and in terms of freedom and dignity, to make choices to participate with any social arrangements that are in place to raise attainment[88]. My approach necessarily means that pupils might reject offers of additional supported study, and to have that choice respected. That is not to suggest that teachers simply accept a pupil's preference. It is understood that accepting or rejecting measures such as additional supported study is decided in an informed way, knowing that pupils' capability for autonomy has been built on prior support[89]. Walker and Unterhalter (2007) and Saito (2003) suggest that schools can enhance or diminish pupils' capabilities depending upon the social arrangements that are in place for them, and pupils' ability to make decisions and be participatory are influenced by those social arrangements (Biggeri and Santi, 2012)[90]. This means creating cultures which develop and value pupils'

[88] These latter three suggestions are adaptations of Wood and Deprez's (2012) heuristic that addresses educational challenges in curriculum development (p.474-475).
[89] Entwistle and Watt (2013), considering a similar situation in building autonomy capability in health care patients, suggest patients can be supported via 'help with reasoning, encouragement to discuss what might matter to them, development of self-trust' (p.36).
[90] The example of a medical opt-out to after-school supported study does not offer choice, rather I suggest it reflects a neoliberal safeguard built in to avoid the unintended consequence of pupils choosing to not undertake additional study.

capabilities. It means, as is the case in Finnish schools, providing opportunities in their school experience for pupils to develop a long-term capacity for autonomy and to practise it. Opportunities to make genuine and reflective choices do, according to Sen, 'make one's life richer' (1992:41 in Walker and Unterhalter, 2007:15) and thus contribute to human well-being. My pupils who are post-16 and who choose to stay on at school need not be, as Isabella is, subject to raising attainment strategies that incur a significant degree of compulsion, to such an extent that they are denied autonomy in several ways, including what to study and how to spend their time beyond the formal school timetable. To compel Isabella, and pupils like her, to do so is to render her own aspirations irrelevant. Instead, my approach allows Isabella to make an informed choice; one that prioritises her view of a good life and which respects Isabella as an end in herself.

To act in a way that prioritises pupils' voices and which shifts the notion of adult authority over young people to one which co-constructs with young people (Bigerri and Santi, 2012), has in the past been described as 'subversive' (Naples and Bojar, 2002) or 'managing managerialism' (Gewirtz, 2002). Both descriptions imply acting differently or even covertly within normal expectations. If we were applying an ecological perspective, Priestly et al., (2015) could describe it as acting with agency within an education system that prioritises monitoring, measurement and control (p.147). Philosophically, we could begin, I contend, to think differently about our interactions with pupils. Current raising attainment strategies are very process-orientated concerned with incremental, measurable outcomes. They impose on pupils the school's priorities rather than their own. When Sweatman[91] describes exam season (and school more broadly) as an experience of being manufactured, packaged, and shipped, her feeling of dehumanisation is clear. She is not being treated as a person with dignity. She is reduced to a category of herself rather than being considered as a full human being. Kant's categorical imperative and Nussbaum's capabilities approach remind us not to treat human beings as a means to others' ends and so teachers are reminded that they ought to interact with pupils in ways that signal and ensure they are valued.

Grounded in securing the dignity of humans being treated as ends and not means, Nussbaum's capabilities list could therefore be used as ethically significant indicators of

[91] See epigraph at the beginning of chapter five.

pupils' well-being. One advantage of considering her list in this way is that a capabilities approach can be used to 'evaluate policies according to their impact on people's capabilities' (Robeyns, 2003: n.p.). In practice, then, Nussbaum's capabilities list could be used to evaluate the practices of schools, including the interventions used to raise attainment, and to judge if these practices and interventions promote or deny capability development which would lead, hopefully, to not only a focus on outcomes of pupils' efforts but also on the processes of school aims that affect them. In short, it supports a greater regard for the subjective experiences of the pupils as they work towards their exam results.

The insights of philosophical analysis

As a teacher embedded in an environment of practice and action, and often compelled to immediately introduce across my department national policy aims or practices that can lack critique but are in vogue, it is tempting to rush forward and apply Nussbaum's list in a perfunctory way and thereafter imagine that I have learned something new and adjusted my practice accordingly. The pre-occupation in my school with exam performance and the impossibility of genuinely being able to re-adjust my school's attainment culture to interventions that prioritise my pupils' dignity and autonomy lead me to imagine what I could conceivably do as a PT at department level. It makes me consider what advice I might give to other middle leaders running departments and two possibilities come to mind. One, I could create a matrix of the capabilities list and the courses and topics I teach. For this matrix, I could look for examples of where, in my teaching, I encourage pupils to make choices about what they learn or whether there are opportunities to choose concepts and skills relevant to their own lives (Wood and Deprez, 2012). Encouraging pupils' personal expression and choices can be enhanced through how I engage with pupils, focusing on the methods of teaching. This could work in circumstances where it is impossible to adjust formal externally assessed course content. It focuses on introducing dialogic, participatory methods rather than changing prescribed course content. It invites participation with strategies that could raise attainment (assuming a link) rather than coercing it. Two, it is tempting to write a new rationale for my department based on suggestions like the P4C (philosophy for children) movement that claims

> in capability terms, the procedural, epistemological and substantial features of philosophical thinking and the corresponding abilities promoted in the P4C

> curriculum can be interpreted as *functionings components* and specific *sets of capabilities* offered to children as an experience of participatory dialogue in an inclusive perspective
>
> Biggeri and Santi (2012:387).

These are the kinds of responses that come to mind. In the reality of teaching in a Scottish school, my pupils' attainment will still be required to focus on credentialled numerical exam results but this is not the only story that can be told. There is another story of functionings and capabilities - a metric with a more normative foundation (Enslin and Tjiattas, 2015) - that values how pupils are learning to live. Indeed, one unexpected outcome of enquiring into Nussbaum's capabilities approach, both her list and her commitment to a liberal education, is discovering how closely it mirrors the values I believe I hold about my own subject of RMPS. Through Nussbaum's philosophical writing I have discovered a core set of principles which resonate with my beliefs and values that can continue to guide my practice and my teaching. RMPS is about helping young people to forge their own identities by providing opportunities to examine their own and others' beliefs and attitudes to questions about life's meaning and human purpose. This means facilitating their abilities in practical reasoning and supporting the development of their senses, imagination and thought. It means helping them to treat others with dignity and to ensure that they are treated this way, too. It means encouraging and valuing their participation in education in a way that includes their interests and concerns. As their teacher I must examine how well I create contexts for them to do that. Nussbaum's capabilities approach will inspire the coming years of my teaching career as I delve further into its possibilities. I know I want to pursue Nussbaum's work on 'combined' capabilities, genuinely discovering, as Gasper (2002:447) describes them, my pupils' capabilities as 'abilities', their capabilities as 'opportunities' and their capabilities as 'potentialities'. There is no doubt that Nussbaum is to be my kindred spirit after all.

Yet as I note the above, I also reflect that the value of philosophical enquiry is more than implementing or evaluating action and philosophical enquiry is not only judged worthy by whether it is 'immediately translatable into practice' (Dewar, 2016:101). Philosophical enquiry causes the very opposite of rushing forward, it demands that I slow down and think about my pupils ontologically. I have not done that before. I have, of course, been concerned for their well-being but I have not, before now, investigated what their well-

being is or could be. To that end, I can say that my moral understanding of my pupils is enriched. That same insight is applicable to all teachers and policymakers in that philosophical enquiry can illuminate the aims of policy by encouraging us all to ask if we are achieving the aims of education and if these are the right aims. An education that trains people to be consumers and producers will reflect a 'market-value' type of well-being; but an education that encourages pupils to live a life that they value aims, I believe, for a more enriched and ethically significant view of well-being.

Schubert (1991:73) asks, 'is any purpose of enquiry more worthwhile than illumination?', and so now, rather than simply having a feeling of unease or sense of dismay on behalf of my pupils and their well-being in relation to attainment processes and educational outcomes more broadly, exploring well-being within a capabilities framework highlights to me what is wrong with current policies and practices, and illuminates a need for alternative actions based on values that foster human development rather than human capital. This dissertation process has demonstrated to me that my school makes the choices it does and frames its success in narrow academic terms because education polices in Scotland are based on beliefs that competition and accountability will drive up standards; that benchmarks and testing lead to improved performance; that standardisation of lessons means high standards; and that good results in literacy and numeracy mean a good education is being delivered and experienced. These assumptions reflect what Sahlberg (2015) calls a Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) all geared to improve education systems. Yet real pupils like Sweatman tell a different story of the effect of these assumptions: a story of disillusionment and dehumanisation. Her experience, like the experiences of my own pupils, is directly attributable to practices embedded in a human capital model of human value.

My initial misgivings about the current policy of well-being in education are confirmed directly in the chapters presented here but so, too, is a new challenge of a potential solution. Promoted in this dissertation is an alternative view of pupil well-being grounded in a human development rather than human capital perspective. What lies ahead for Scottish education need not be the status quo of current policy nor the blank canvas of Foucault's undefined 'practices of liberation' (Patrick, 2013:6). It is striking how many authors have found the capabilities approach instructive or inspiring about diverse aspects

of education in different contexts[92]. Saito (2003:29), for example, suggests 'a capability approach is rich in implication for education' and these implications, I assert, now include how secondary schools might support their pupils 'to realise, shape and extend their capabilities' (Hedge and Mackenzie, 2012:341). These implications also demand a reconsideration of the decisions and actions of what some schools do to raise attainment, or, at least, of how they go about this. It is now clear to me that a capabilities approach offers a useful and defensible conceptual framework for promoting and enabling pupils' well-being in education, and this dissertation offers an alternative to the hegemonic belief that economic development is sufficient to ensure human well-being. Within that hegemonic belief, well-being is framed within a narrow skill set predicated on ensuring employability. Instead, my argument re-conceptualises well-being as human flourishing, with autonomy and dignity at its heart. The success of my re-conceptualisation of well-being will depend on the policy arrangements in place in Scottish education that encourage public deliberation of our values, and practices in schools that challenge a manufactured, production line, educere (Dewar, 2016) experience of school. Instead of limiting education to the development of a young workforce with basic literacy, numeracy and technology skills foregrounded in employability, education policies and practices in schools could promote capabilities. If expectations on secondary teachers become uncoupled from human capital outcomes, teachers, as Spratt (2017:127) suggests, might then be able to plan learning and teaching that enhances 'the types of freedoms envisaged by the capabilities approach'.

Dewar (2016) notes that one unique value of philosophical research is not in whether a new theory or idea can immediately apply in practice and so provide a ready-made panacea, it is to better understand the underpinning values of our practice and action. By slowing down and considering the well-being of my pupils from an alternative theoretical perspective, the value of my pupils' own dreams, concerns and aspirations has become amplified in a way that it was not before. How much better this would be if every pupil's dreams, concerns and aspirations were genuinely embraced and celebrated as important and unique aspects of their own well-being and acknowledged as part of their vision of living a life they have reason to value.

[92] A selection of authors and contexts is noted in chapter four.

An area of further research

As a principal teacher with a middle leadership responsibility, it is incumbent on me to consider how to reconcile my new-found insight into well-being with my leadership role.

> No novelistic reality can ever be complete or wholly coherent; nor can it settle anything. We are left, therefore, with our open questions – about practice, about learning, about educational studies, about community. They may be the sorts of questions that lead us on more and more far-reaching quests.
>
> (Greene, 1995:187)

One question that might lead me on to more far-reaching quests is my interest in educational leadership, an area strongly and persistently promoted over the last decade by the Scottish government to support school improvement. An area of research that could be useful is to explore the relationship between leadership and well-being. Notions of leadership to transform or to improve schools have existed nationally and internationally for some time (Fullan, 2001; Osler and Starkey, 2005; Leithwood and Day, 2008; Scottish Government, 2010) and have tended to focus on driving up results and offering value for money but it would be particularly interesting to research how a school leader could enable well-being. There are many known theories, behaviours, models and values of school leadership and Scottish education policy currently invests in and promotes a model of distributed leadership (Scottish Government, 2011a), which sounds inclusive and democratic. This is because it believes 'the foundations of successful education lie in the quality of teachers and their leadership' (p.2). Yet, note the use of the word 'quality' which belies a human capital, performative conceptual construction of leadership. Developing leaders at all levels in Scottish education has until now, as Mowat and McMahon (2019) note, been 'largely driven by neo-liberal policies and discourses'. The kind of leadership that might support well-being would have to be able to be responsive, inclusive and based on praxis - supporting the 'self-development of each individual learner in her or his interests and for the good of humankind' (Kemmis and Smith, 2008:16). At its heart would need to be moral accountability to the community, not the market-place (Grace, 1998 in Bell and Stevenson, 2006).

At the time of writing this dissertation, the world is currently facing a major health crisis called Covid-19, a virus that has necessitated the closure of schools and businesses in

many countries in order to slow transmission of the disease. My school, presently, has been closed for eight weeks and will be potentially closed for another six weeks leading to the summer break. Such a long-term closure of schools in Scotland, and elsewhere, is unprecedented and has led to much debate about the purpose of schools and of how schools might re-open safely. Those in leadership positions are making difficult decisions about home-learning, blended home and school teaching, and staff and pupil well-being based on limited and changing information. Leadership is appearing to be more empathetic and focussed on health and well-being[93]. In due course, academic texts around the impact of Covid-19 on education will follow but for now much of the debate is centred within the media and informal blog posts online. Some question the long-term impact that Covid-19 might have on our culture and society and what political reforms might ensue. There are fears of the rise of surveillance capital and possible economic instability. Lent (2020), for example, writes that Covid-19 could entrench the neoliberal forces that have led to inequality, yet he also hopes this crisis could lead to a fairer society based on collaboration and compassion. Others, such as Bregman (2020) are asking if neoliberalism is ending, and if so, what will take its place? Sometimes it is not a long-term vision that leads to changes in society but catastrophes like Covid-19, reminding us of Van Manen's (2014) idea of rupture. In the shadow of Covid-19, there is, according to some, an opportunity to reassess our current values and what kind of society we want to have. If we are in the prologue stage of this crisis, what do we want the epilogue to be? Schools and school leaders can play an integral part in shaping the future. In present times, Nash and Eynon (2020) note that

> in many policy circles, the role of schools is often viewed in quite narrow, primarily economic terms, and students are expected to acquire skills that make them competitive in the workforce. But the role of schools is actually far richer and more complex, and involves developing a wider set of knowledge, so young people learn about the society they are part of, their culture and develop a sense of self.

As a result of Covid-19 a new education landscape could possibly emerge, with leadership being 'a critical and positive force in shaping the value-base of an education system that has shifted so far from its axis' (Harris, 2020). To support this richer vision of the purpose of schools, there will need to be different values underpinning school leadership. Leadership that enables well-being will have to be based on care – not the performative,

[93] It is not clear that this shift in focus towards well-being is anything other than short-term. Anecdotally, revised timetables in some schools appear to focus on 'making up for lost time' in terms of academic attainment, side-lining subjects such as PE, PSHE and RMPS that offer spaces for fostering well-being.

duty-based care outlined in chapter two – but the kind of care that values human beings as full persons and which supports human flourishing. Nussbaum (2010) calls this kind of care, 'sympathy', meaning to care for and about others, recognising their human dignity. Such care would not reduce pupils to factors or categories such as being an exam result of '5 As' or of other specific functions such as being 'employable'. Instead, leadership based on care would promote authentic participation, reciprocity and trust (Roffey, 2015). For me, that would be an aspiration worth having and striving for!

Final remarks

This dissertation has applied a range of philosophical tools to well-being as an aim of Scottish educational policy. My philosophical analysis has not sought a definitive definition of well-being because that, in my view, is to be determined by each individual his/herself and based, most likely, on a unique range of subjective and objective elements. To that end, I agree that it is a multi-faceted, complex and contested concept. To determine what well-being is for oneself is an exercise in practical reason, a capability promoted by Nussbaum. What I have highlighted is the particular political and economic context of the purposes of education in which well-being is being conceived and identified within a neoliberal ideology of human capital, with underpinning assumptions about the value of human beings. Furthermore, I have highlighted one distinct relationship to well-being as a policy aim in secondary schools, that of raising attainment. The relationship between well-being and raising attainment is significant because it is academic attainment as assessed in examinations that defines success in and of Scottish education. Well-being is a contestable concept, capable of being emphasised in language and processes that seek to cultivate an ideal citizen as one who is employable and contributes to the state, or alternatively, emphasised in a human development model, as seeking human flourishing. A well-intentioned aim, the way we think about it has important implications for the lives of our pupils, especially if there are tensions in education policies and practices that overlap and, at times, compete. When pupils like Harriet Sweatman speak out about feelings of dehumanisation and disillusionment, it must prompt those in government and education to explore what kind of well-being Scotland wants for its pupils. In an 'educere' (Dewar, 2016) or process-orientated environment, well-being, too, can become like a process, with outcomes to be measured and this reduces well-being to its instrumental value. In contrast to this instrumental aim, I have proposed a capabilities approach that grounds well-being in the context in which human beings are free and able to do and be what they have reason to

value, where any exercise of autonomy requires relevant capabilities to have been developed. As educators we must pay attention to how, and if, we support the development of our pupils' capabilities[94].

It is perhaps now more vital than ever that a philosophical approach is applied to educational policy matters as it is through this approach that matters of meaning and justification are examined (McLaughlin, 2008). Policy makers themselves need not be philosophers, but they can recognise that philosophical analysis contributes to probing and articulating the values, assumptions and implications of particular policies (McLaughlin, 2000). A philosophical approach can help to clarify the overt or what we think we already know, and then uncover the hidden forces (Haggerson, 1991) that drive education in Scotland. It is unlikely that anyone would disagree with the aim of fostering well-being as an aim of education but what sort of well-being is desired and what is its relationship to other dominant aims? These are the kinds of overt questions that the tools of philosophical inquiry can help to assess in terms of current norms and assumptions. Secondly, a philosophical lens can amplify the potential consequences of our policies and practices and identify the forces behind our beliefs and actions that might be preventing well-being, displaying only a limited picture of it, or governing it for some other gain. Thirdly, as envisioned by a capabilities-inspired approach, philosophical inquiry can lead to a consideration of valuable constituent elements of well-being and the recommendation of changes and improvements to current policies and practices.

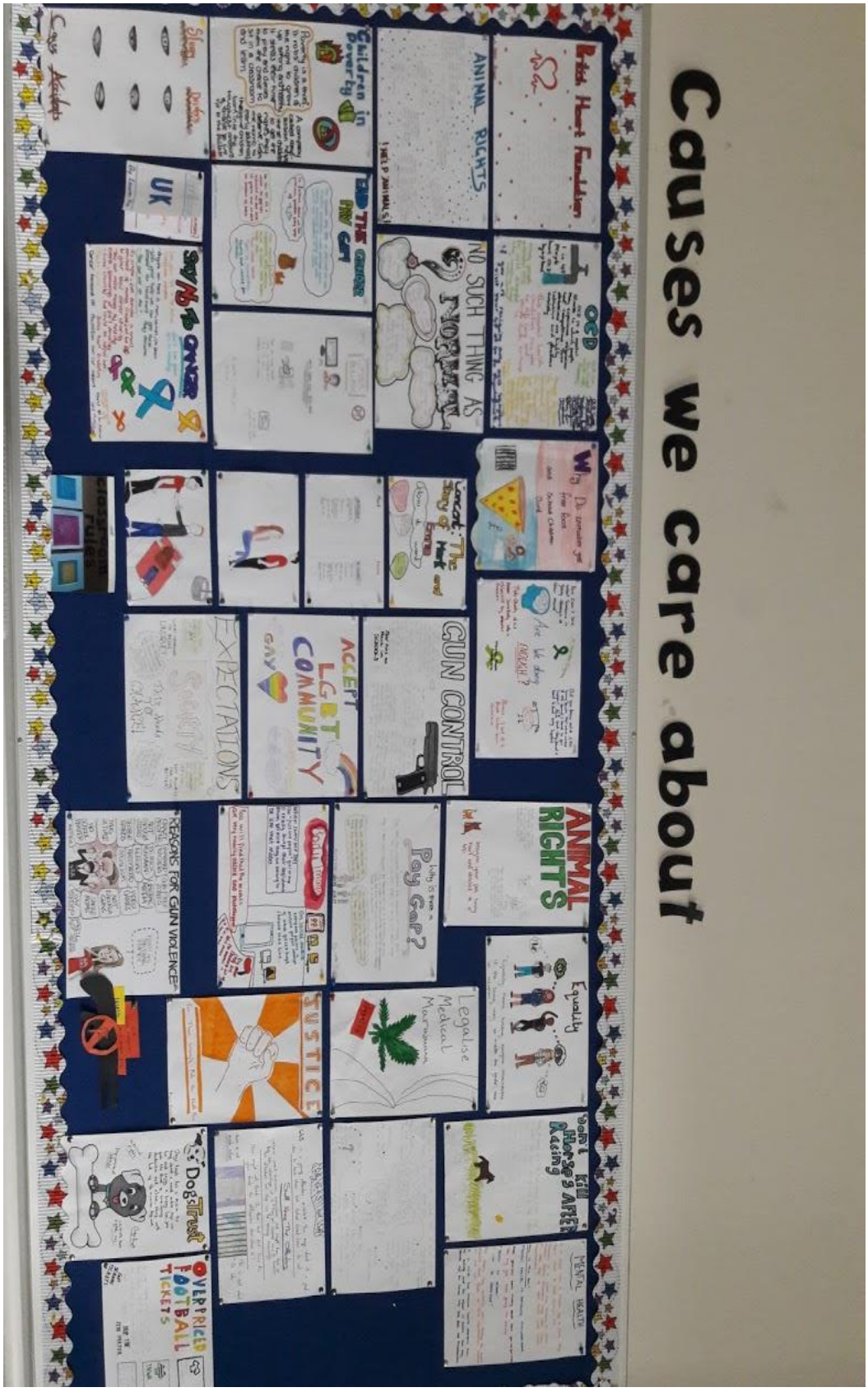
Overall, aimed at learning 'from living in the circumstances inquired about, and the end of our inquiry in ordinary action is increased capacity to act and decide with moral defensibility' (Schubert, 1991:72), this dissertation challenges teachers and policy makers to adopt a humanistic, ethical approach to conceptualising the well-being of human beings based on developing autonomy and securing the dignity of our pupils. I argue that Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach is the right place to start in cultivating the kind of well-being I really want to stand for. What a person is able to do or to be matters for their well-being. This includes the freedoms afforded by their personal and social circumstances and

[94] There may be opportunities for disseminating these ideas inspired by a capabilities approach in school environments such as through professional reading or methodology groups. Beyond school environments, some research associations, such as the Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA) draw together practitioners and policy makers at conferences and networks, sharing new insights upon the potential connections between theory and practice.

the real opportunities they must have to make choices about living their own lives. The Scottish government wants Scotland to be the best place in the world for a child to grow up[95]. To achieve that, we need to create an economy premised on well-being that values human lives, not just their productivity and capital profit. If our schools begin to foster capabilities for well-being based on a capabilities approach, education could lead the way to our pupils ultimately having a better chance of truly flourishing.

[95] Scottish Government (2018a) 'Scotland Performs' available at https://www2.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/outcome/childfamilies, [accessed 11.12.19].

Appendix A


Causes we care about
OCD
NO SUCH THING AS NORMAL
ANIMAL RIGHTS
GUN CONTROL
ACCEPT LGBT COMMUNITY
EXPECTATIONS
REASONS FOR GUN VIOLENCE
Pay Gap?
ANIMAL RIGHTS
Equality
JUSTICE
Legalise Medical Marijuana
OVERPRICED FOOTBALL TICKETS
Dog Trust
MENTAL HEALTH

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