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INTERCULTURAL CREATIVE LEARNING: NEW SPACES FOR NURTURING COMPASSIONATE GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The University of Cambridge Primary School is the first University Training School in the United Kingdom. Designed to be bold, innovative, ambitious and inclusive, the school's practice is an example of research informed practice to build the capacity among teachers to become research generating. The article guides the reader through reflexive moments in the lived experience of the school, its Headteacher (the author) and teachers and children. The emphasis on space making opens up opportunities to discuss the necessity of enabling spaces that foster listening, uncertainties and possibilities-thinking. A new project is introduced to show the innovations that arise from a culture in which releasing the imagination is vital.

Key words: research-informed practice, creativities, spaces, agency, intercultural

RESUMEN

La Escuela Primaria de la Universidad de Cambridge es la primera escuela de formación universitaria del Reino Unido. Diseñada para ser audaz, innovadora, ambiciosa e inclusiva, la práctica de la escuela es un ejemplo de práctica basada en la investigación para desarrollar la capacidad de los profesores para convertirse en generadores de investigación. El artículo guía al lector a través de momentos reflexivos en la experiencia vivida de la escuela, su director (el autor) y los maestros y los niños. El énfasis en la creación de espacios abre oportunidades para discutir la necesidad de habilitar espacios que fomenten la escucha, las incertidumbres y el pensamiento de posibilidades. Se presenta un nuevo proyecto para mostrar las innovaciones que surgen de una cultura en la que liberar la imaginación es vital.

Palabras clave: Práctica basada en investigación, creatividad, espacios, agencia, intercultural.

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INTRODUCTION

Using the word love in educational contexts is not commonplace and yet, for the University of Cambridge Primary School (UCPS) and others, like the Hindu-based Avanti schools, in the United Kingdom, it is central to the vision and design of their ethos and curriculum. We want children to love learning, to develop a love for their world, each other, and the wider global and diverse communities in which they increasingly live. Love, as a universal human need and the right to love, as a human right, makes us what we are, who we are, how we are and why we are. At UPCS, we frame this as nurturing compassionate citizenship.

In this chapter, I present the idea of intercultural creative learning in terms of space making for nurturing compassionate citizenship. I focus on three spaces: 'spaces for listening', 'spaces of uncertainty' and 'enabling spaces.' I start with a conversation between an 11-year-old student called Jay, which foregrounds a lived moment – a 'space for listening' – within a 'space of uncertainty'. I then explore how interculturalism and creative learning are aligned in their purpose to bring about new ideas, an evolution of relationships through which engagement with complexity and uncertainty encourage possibilities thinking and social imagination (Greene, 1998, 2000). I share how space making influenced the curriculum design of the school to illustrate how creating an enabling space has fostered the notion of global compassionate citizenship; and how this spurred new ideas about the purpose of education.

'SPACES FOR LISTENING' TO CHILDREN'S VOICES: A REMEMBERED CONVERSATION

In considering the notion of global compassionate citizenship, we need to consider how far schools are democratic – given that citizenship implies a democratic order (Biddulph, Rolls and Flutter, 2023). We must also adapt our mindsets about childhood and children; acknowledging that children have their own views, biases, interests – that they already have a voice and a degree of agency to engage in important social matters. If we seriously mean to nurture the qualities of citizenship in children we must, "...establish reporting systems in which they are heard themselves as well as reported by others" (Qvortrup, 2009: p.88). Children need to be able to speak their realities with their own words (and be listened to) as well as have their voices reported by those who work with them. Schools must be 'spaces for listening'. What follows is a remembered conversation between me, the headteacher of the school and Jay, an 11-year-old child.

> It was the end of the school day. Jay appeared at my office door, visibly upset. I invited him in, and he voiced his concerns. This is the context.
>
> During the week leading up to our school's celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, I had hosted delegations of ministers from two middle Eastern countries, by request of one of our school partners. In the spirit of openness and belief in the possibilities of humanity and dialogue, I had no concerns about sharing our vision, values and mission to nurture compassionate citizenship. I answered questions about school design and building matters; I explained the importance of professional agency with high expectations and good professional learning support. I introduced them to our next project, the beginning of a research centre called the Centre for Educational Possibilities (www.possibilities.org.uk) which aimed to respond to the problems facing humanity.

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Jay sat near to my desk, holding back his tears unsuccessfully. Whatever had happened had really impacted on him. He asked:

"Dr Biddulph, why did you invite the ministers to come?"

I was taken aback. I had no idea this was the cause of his concern.

Me: "I was asked to host two tours of our school to show other education ministers how a values-led curriculum design can nurture compassionate citizenship"

"But they do not have the same values as us. They do not educate girls well and their human rights record is not good. So, how can you let them in to see what we do when they could just use the visit to promote themselves in a better light?" he said, his tone polite and respectful.

"I believe in dialogue, J. I believe that we have the responsibility to advocate for a better, humane, kinder way to educate children. As your headteacher, I believe it vital to express that sentiment, don't you?" I suggested.

He thought for a moment.

"But it is not as if they will actually listen to what you said or take on board what we do here. They may even corrupt the idea and link it with us and then we will have our vision changed and tarnished. How can we work with people who do not treat people with our values of empathy, respect, trust, courage or gratitude?"

(Does he have a point? I wondered. Where is the line drawn between attempting to find similarity or agreement and standing for a position that we believe to be right?

Another thought…

Should I be discussing such things with a child at our school? Should a child be challenging their headteacher? Is this 'democratic children's voices' in action?)

"I understand your concern, Jay. I share it. How can we mitigate the hypocrisy that arises in these matters? Like some Universities, who accept funding from oil companies, which in turn fund their research on climate science? It feels wrong at one level. Or tobacco companies that fund cancer research. Is that a public relations strategy, perhaps? Whatever happens in the future for our school and centre, we would have to take careful consideration about anyone investing in us or wanting to collaborate."

Jay continued, wanting assurances, "Are you saying, then, that if you are invited to visit schools in countries where human rights are not good, you will not go, and that you will not form partnerships on behalf of the research centre?"

"That is a hypothetical question and a difficult one to answer. What if a country came to us and said, 'we acknowledge we need to improve our girls' education so that more girls become scientists and we are keen to learn how you do this'? What, then? If we become so protectionist, we might just end up building metaphorical walls around us and only share

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our vision and purpose with like-minded people. How does the world change for the better in that way of working?"

Jay responded by maintaining that he felt it had still been wrong to invite government representatives from such states into a primary school environment, and especially to share in our school's celebration of the royal jubilee.

I explained about Helene Cixous's theory of 'othering' and the notion of 'being tinted'. I drew Jay a Venn diagram showing that, taking governments as an example, despite differing from one another in many ways, both the UK and the countries we were discussing, shared being monarchies.

Cixous writes about always being the other, in every interaction, seeking the strangeness and uncertainty that arises and of becoming 'the different', becoming as a movement that involves being tinted with the other:

> I am constantly impelled to ask myself the questions engendered by this structure which is at once single and double: questions of the ethical, politico-cultural, aesthetic, destinal value of this constitution; questions of the necessity of writing for myself and for others; of the usefulness, the strangeness of forever being here and elsewhere, ever here as elsewhere, elsewhere as here, I and the other, I as the other, etc., (p.xv)
>
> This is why I never ask myself "who am I" (qui suis-je?) I ask myself "who are I?" (qui sont-je?) – an untranslatable phrase. Who can say who I are, how many I are, which I is the most of my I's…Without counting the combinations with others, our exchanges between languages, between sexes – our exchanges which change us, tint us with others (p.xviii)
>
> (Cixous, 1994)

"How do you work with people who do not have democratic principles like we do?" he said.

"Being democratic is not easy. It brings about differences and conflicts and uncertainties. We have to sustain dialogue with people who may be very different in their ways of living and thinking or there is no hope for societies to evolve and improve." I responded.

Our conversation illustrates the issue of passionate uncertainty in democracy. It was a moment, Jay and I in discussion, about an important ethical matter and of uncertainty on both our parts; a moment in which opportunities to critique, disagree, agree to disagree, and face difference was fostered (see Biddulph, Rolls and Flutter, 2023). After all, democracy is a messy business. It has diverse positions and practices across the globe, it involves or should involve various and variegated ideas/ideals/visions for the world and the people who live in it; it involves inclusion, freedom and social imagination – or should do (Biddulph and Baldacchino, 2023).

The remembered conversation also brings to the fore the issues of power and authority which Doreen Massey (1994) makes explicit in her work. She refers these spaces of social relations as constituting a 'geometry of power' (Massey, 1994: p4) which is a dynamic and changing process.

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Lefebvre, also a key theorist in the concept of space suggests that the lived world in multiplicity of spaces creates uncountable sets of social practices made up of networks and pathways, bunches and clusters of relationships, all of which interpenetrate each and superimpose themselves on one another (Lefebvre, 1991: p.86). The moment described above is but one moment; consider how many more lived experiences within a school context there are; the countless interactions that overlap, interlink, juxtapose and collide as children and teachers try and make sense of their own experiences within these shared spaces of learning.

In reflection, this moment, one Friday afternoon, in one school in the U.K., between a student and his headteacher, was a 'space of listening' that brought about a 'space of uncertainty'. In this space, the following key features appear:

- Voicing big ideas: Jay's questioning shows that children do think about 'big issues' in their world.
- Evolving positions in relationships: suspending my authority as headteacher, I did not dismiss the concern and instead engaged in discussion.
- Maintaining uncertainties: There were no easy answers to the considerably complex questions being asked. Neither did I attempt to achieve harmony. I held the space of listening and introduced the space of uncertainty.
- Establishing conventions of dialogue: listening, responding by building on another's idea or challenging it, taking turns were underpinned by the school values.

There was respect on both sides and, the fact that he felt able to come to my office and discuss a serious concern about the value of democracy and our school values, indicated an opening towards global compassionate citizenship, in which children's voices must be heard, listened to and valued.

'SPACES OF UNCERTAINTY': INTERCULTURAL CREATIVE LEARNING

A school is not a building but the people within it. My own experiences of learning as an educator, most memorably being in Nepal where I lived and taught for a year, guided my thinking. I remember one moment on a bus from Nepal to India which has remained with me. I was reading a book that I had picked up in a small bookshop near a Kathmandu bus station. I felt inspired by the words, which looked to the possibilities in education and offered a perspective that guided my thinking:

> 'Life is a well of deep waters. One can come to it with small buckets and draw only a little water, or one can come with large vessels, drawing plentiful waters that nourish and sustain…the school should help its young people discover their vocations and responsibilities' (Krishnamurthi, 1981, p.44)

The sense of education as a vital opportunity to connect, to integrate thought and feeling (and spirit), was present in the text. As I learnt: 'without deep integration of thought and feelings, our lives are incomplete' (Krishnamurthi, 1981, p.11). In questioning the purpose of education, Krishnamurthi challenges what he sees as conventional 'orthodoxies', based on fear, power and control, which are systemic, propagated in the interactions between pupil and teacher, and he urges us to revolt, "keep[ing] [our] intelligence highly awakened" (p.11). Question of spirit and of spirituality arise through Krishnamurthi's text and, while the University primary school is not a religious designated school, we do want to honour the rich and diverse perspectives about humanity

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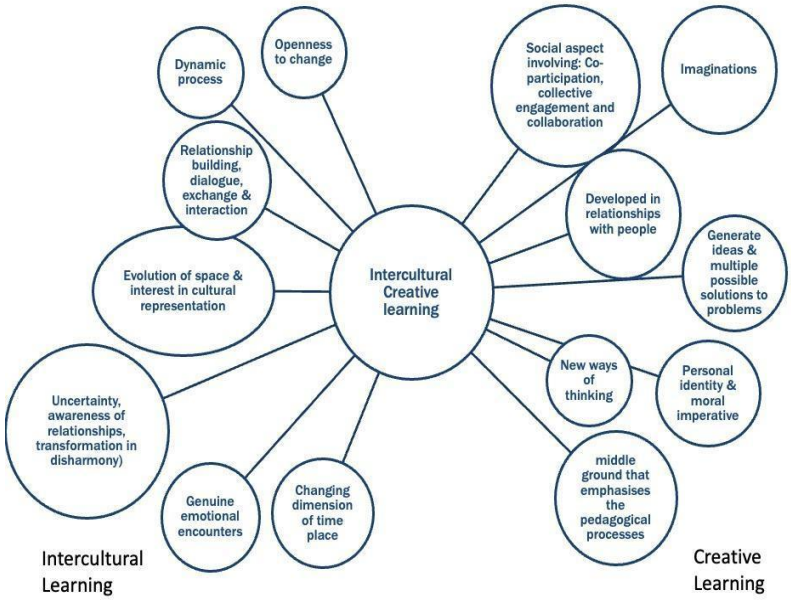
and spirituality to give children every possible chance of having rich and happy 'educational lives' – now and in the future. Maxine Greene's work especially resonated in our search to understand what an educational life might mean, bringing to light the educators' responsibility to find ways to 're-position perspectives' through an active engagement with 'open-space-making'. The spaces for listening are key in a school that aims to be democratic and nurture global compassionate citizenship. If we do not listen to children, we are unlikely to hear what they say about their world and their experiences within it.

The inspiration for the University of Cambridge Primary School's curriculum design started with my own interest in critical theorists, specifically in the work of Maxine Greene. My doctorate study about creative learning in children's family homes articulated the starting point for the curriculum design that evolved since our opening the school in 2015. In my study (Biddulph, 2015; Biddulph and Burnard, 2022), I suggested a new definition of intercultural creative learning,

> Intercultural creative learning manifests in diverse ways within diverse spaces in the communality of social life. It is rooted in difference and bound by cultural space. Within these spaces, diverse opportunities of uncertainty arise, through which children actively search for imaginative possibilities. These are informed by school culture and access to diverse resources. (Biddulph, 2017, p.261)

Moreover, I found synergy between intercultural learning and creative learning (Figure 1), which both included: relationality, dialogue, evolution of ideas, imagination, social aspects involve co-participation, the generating of ideas and multiple possible solutions and a personal identity and moral imperative. It was this new concept of 'intercultural creative learning' that we used as a starting point for considering how to construct an educational experience to nurture global compassionate citizenship.

Figure 1: Drawing from two fields of research: Intercultural Learning + Creative Learning



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What became significant was the concept of 'spaces of uncertainty': a key quality in the development of creative learning. Returning to my conversation with Jay illustrates many of these intercultural qualities: the relating of different government structures and finding difference, the confidence to engage in a challenging dialogue that tested authority and the decisions those in power make (i.e. my decision to host the delegates), the sense of personal identity, ownership and moral imperative in Jay's drive to be heard. Importantly, as with the remembered conversation, intercultural creative learning involves genuine emotional encounters rooted in a sense of uncertainty and a passionate ability to 'sit within difference'. How can a school sit comfortably with the uncertainties that intercultural creative learning requires – especially because schools are meant to be ordered and do not typically welcome confusion or conflict? And how can this be a pedagogy that inspires democracy?

The importance of space making is evident in the way we manage our schools and classrooms. School space can be seen as the 'third teacher' evoking the values and 'ways of being' of habitus (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000); indicating what it means to learn and what it means to teach – and the relationship between the two. How one feels in a space has a significant influence on how one engages in it; this could be conceptualised as embodiment of space. The way that Jay engages in the space of his school constructs the meaning – the habitus – and defines 'how we are' and the co-constructed rules of engagement.

A space that enables intercultural creative learning is one where pleasure, enjoyment and meaningful purpose is allowed. It is also where confusion, difference and uncertainty are fostered. Spaces are not purely intellectualised; they equally inculcate emotional memories and emotive responses. Spaces involve people living in time, through which they engage in social interactions, and, in turn, give those spaces meaning. This notion of *living in space* informs how the enabling space is constructed. An enabling space, therefore, cannot ignore the body. Glăveanu found this in his study of Romanian egg crafting (2013) as I had done in my doctorate study (see in Biddulph and Burnard, 2022).

With Jay, I noticed the physical response to the space of uncertainty: he was upset and physically different in the way he spoke. He was talking from his core – the issue of fairness, freedom and justice were inherent in his ways of thinking as a cultural habitus. I experienced for myself what de Certeau (1984) indicates: that movement in space is a significant way in which we make sense; the unusual situation of an 11-year-old child questioning the ethical decision of the headteacher was a shift, a movement in an educational space, a re-imagining of power and voice. These tensions and synergies within social spaces evoke what the space meant symbolically for us both – a new space in which we explored an important global issue (Sen and Silverman, 2014). How do these spaces for listening and spaces of uncertainty arise in a school context? In Box 1, I describe an art project that allowed children to respond to concerns they had about climate change. It was a project that evolved with the children's ideas, creating spaces of uncertainty that led to creative learning and releasing the imagination.

Agents for Change: Primary school students create climate-themed art project

In 2019, children from the University of Cambridge Primary School, with the support of Cambridge Zero (a Cambridge University department created to tackle issues about climate change), took part in a climate-themed art project.

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The idea of "Agents for Change" was to create an interactive and positive art project, highlighting the importance of addressing climate change. The children first identified four themes, namely, poles and oceans, endangered animals, trees and plants, and people. Then, each class of 30 children were given nine cardboard boxes, and their individual artwork was fixed to one side of a box, producing 54 individual pieces of work per class, which in turn represented the particular theme the class was working on.

The cubes could be moved around, rotated and placed in different groupings, which meant that when the boxes were arranged in a three-by-three formation, the nine pictures on the pile of boxes would create a thematically related face. For example, one side might be nine pictures of penguins and the opposite side nine pictures of polar bears, species which are, literally, poles apart!

The children working on the theme of 'people' drew self-portraits in oil pastels. Their 30 faces were supplemented with six mirrors. The observer could then see their own face together with those of the children, making the observer part of the installation and of the group of children working on the project. The idea of placing the mirrors was to highlight the fact that we are all agents of change, the children and those enjoying their work. Given that there were a total of 54 faces, of the remaining 18 faces, nine were words and phrases to do with climate change and the other nine were monochrome, from light to dark, symbolising the range of possible outcomes depending on our ability to change.

Image 1 and 2. Art work installation called Agents for Change

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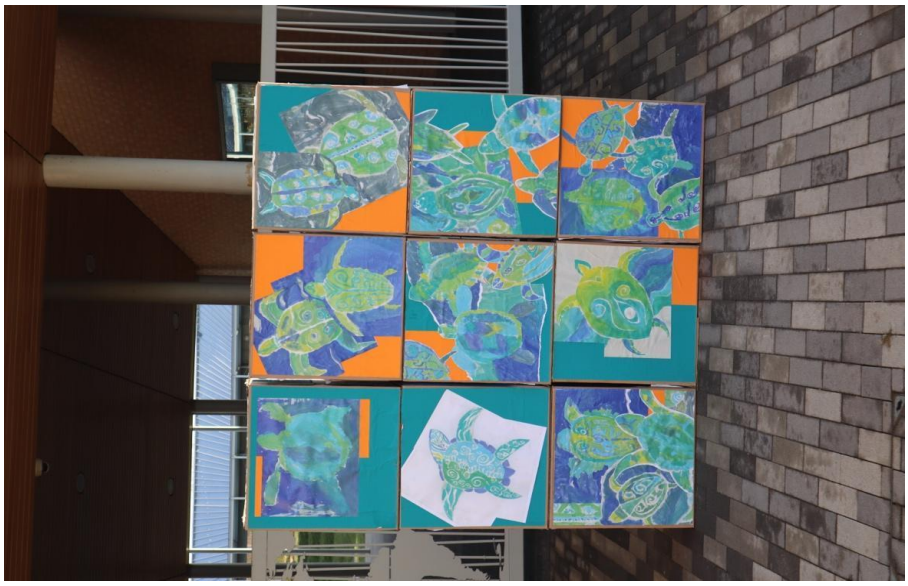

The potential of releasing imaginations as a pedagogic act is embedded in our thinking. Through the 'spaces of uncertainty', there is a coming together of politics, creative learning and possibilities. Greene explores the role of imagination in illuminating public spaces and through the arts, in creating educational critical experiences to engage children and community in grappling with politics. The art project did just that: it allowed children to metaphorically transform their world (through their thinking and questioning the issues of climate change that lead to the damaged to animals and wild life) using the arts as a vehicle to bring about possibilities. In the next section, I introduce the creation of enabling spaces which underpinned our ways of working in the school.

'CREATING ENABLING SPACES': TOWARDS GLOBAL COMPASSIONATE CITIZENSHIP

Expanding the notion of 'spaces of uncertainty', the bringing together of intercultural and creative fields of thought brought to view the idea of an 'intercultural enabling space' that situates creative learning as a way to explore and make sense of different cultural spaces – the space between a child and teacher or on a grander scale between different versions of government. Creating enabling spaces for intercultural creative learning could offer opportunities for children (and teachers and headteachers) to be *consciously present* and learn to accept and become comfortable in the uncomfortableness of uncertainties. Being conscious about one's position and to the positions of people around us, offers the chance to connect, despite the uncomfortableness. An enabling space, constructed collaboratively, hints towards the idea of social imagination which could be created through creative learning (Greene, 1998); in seeing new ways to understand difference and to create new possibilities; that fosters agency, communality and makes room for difference and uncertainties. It is rooted in difference and entangled in the boundedness of diverse social spaces.

We were also inspired by the first *Learning without Limits* study (Hart *et al.*, 2004) and subsequent *Creating Learning without Limits* (Swann *et al.*, 2012), realising that principled action and leadership that can enable inclusive learning for *all* children and teachers. Importantly, building trust, co-agency and an ethic of 'everybody' were principles to create enabling spaces. Moreover, the study identified seven key leadership dispositions for building an inclusive culture of challenge and

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success; in setting up the school, we created policies to inform practice that attended to these dispositions. In particular, the emphasis on dispositions that led to greater professional agency and learning were desired (Swann *et al.*, 2012, p. 88):

- **Openness** to ideas, to possibilities, to surprise
- **Questioning** restlessness, humility
- **Inventiveness** creative responses to challenges
- **Persistence** courage, humility
- **Emotional stability** taking risks and resistance
- **Generosity** welcoming difference
- **Empathy** mutual supportiveness

The curriculum design focuses on, at its core purpose, the vision to nurture compassionate citizens; people who have strong values, a propensity to think of others and a desire to act to improve the society in which they live (their local community) and to which they belong (the global community). We decided on five values to guide our thinking: empathy, respect, trust, courage and gratitude. We remained curious, asking and discussing answers to many questions around the aims, values and ambitions of the school (Gronn & Biddulph, 2016):

- What was our vision for the school's pupils as future citizens?
- How could we enhance both children's learning and their wellbeing?
- How could we help to develop the critical thinking skills, resilience, courage, empathy, imagination and creativity needed to produce the craftspeople, doctors, mechanics or visionaries of the future?
- How do we balance knowledge-rich content with life-important skills?

Centrally, we want to empower children's capabilities for making sense of the complex world in which they live and to make and express reasoned decisions (Alexander, 2010). The enabling space was essential for designing a curriculum which aimed to develop children's skills for discussing and challenging diverse positions respectfully and compassionately, nurturing discussion to consider diverse views about the world and how we should live in it. The details of our curriculum can be found at www.universityprimaryschool.org.uk because it is ever evolving and responding to new knowledge, new groups of children and new contextual factors.

However, within a punitive and high accountability U.K. school system, we had to navigate wider policy expectations as well as holding strong to our vision and purpose. Drawing from my research into creative learning, the terminology of flexibility, adaptability, possibility thinking, transformability, playfulness and connectivity arose time and time again. Furthermore, Rolls and Coltmand (2021) emphasized the importance of creating a space that enabled educators to have these intercultural creative learning qualities:

> To promote the development of compassionate, articulate citizens for now and the future, we drew recognition that the ways in which we engage with children informally and formally determines how the principles are enacted and 'lived out'. In the UK, the Warwick Commission Report (2015) argued that our education systems should be creative learning landscapes, infused with possibility spaces (Burnard et al., 2017). Similarly, we have worked to develop enabling spaces for curriculum and pedagogic possibilities to arise; spaces that are collaborative, foster agency, communality and engender trust.
> (Rolls and Coltman, 2021: p.29)

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Within an enabling space for intercultural creative learning, if uncertainties (i.e. confusions, risks, difficulties, unsureness) are articulated explicitly, as children and teachers move across spaces, there could be transforming and diversifying power relationships and the making of new democratic ideas on equal terms. It is vital, therefore, that our teachers feel professional agency, supported with high quality professional development opportunities as well as high expectations, to find the space in which optimal professional learning and possibilities would arise. If the teachers felt that through their grappling with problems in their own 'spaces of uncertainty' they would be criticised or that they would be held to account, they would not willingly enter these spaces – and arguably professional learning for innovation would not take place.

To ensure that we developed a professional space in which critical reflection, reflexivity, and openness were valued, we co-created policies, including those related to working conditions, that emphasised and made explicit both technical skills and the soft skills in the way we worked. We arrived at the following organisational soft-skill qualities: being organised, being innovative, improving professional expertise, ensuring inclusive relationships, developing self and others and leading with courage. All of these qualities were underpinned by our five school values. Through discussions, we also made it clear how we would collectively evaluate the quality of our work giving clarity about what was expected. In so doing, the whole school team began to understand that, for example, making mistakes and being open and defining other solutions were qualities that were highly valued. The result was seen in one interaction between myself and a teacher that I noted in my professional journal:

> Emilia came to see me. She came in smiling but obviously a little exasperated. "That was the worst lesson. Everything and I mean *everything* went wrong." I laughed and said, "congratulations Emilia!" And she laughed and sat down. We then talked about the lesson – a maths lesson which aimed to be experiential, and project driven. "They didn't listen, they just played with the equipment and no learning happened." We explored this assumption, asking questions and seeking evidence. She identified one thing to change and within 10 minutes stood up laughing and saying she would let me know how the next lesson went.

In an intercultural creative learning space, the explicatory role of the educator (Ranciere 1991) cannot be assumed. Emilia and I did not assume this in our short reflexive conversation in which she showed her own vulnerabilities and confusion (with her employer no less). In creating our own enabling space, it is important to develop a disposition towards global compassionate citizenship that presumes in the first place that unless both teacher and student are equally emancipated – that is, that we are free, able to be uncertain, able to acknowledge our own experiential ignorance and that instead we recognise each other's equal intelligence (Ranciere 1991, p. 18), there could be no such space.

Listening + Uncertainties + intercultural learning = new educational possibilities

James Biddulph's Reflection (March 2020)

I read a story to a small group of children. The story telling was recorded and sent to all children in the school via their parents' email addresses. We closed the school the day after, directed by the British government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I remember feeling this moment as a significant one in our history and in my life. Headteachers are not meant to close schools. It feels

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awful. But I remember Maxine's words again and again: "Social imagination is the capacity to invent visions of what should be and what might be in our deficit society, in the streets where we live and our schools. Social imagination not only suggests but also requires that one take action to repair or renew" Greene (2000: p20). I need to keep my own social imagination alive during this time. Listen more. Experience uncertainty with openness. Return to those aspects of intercultural creative learning because this pandemic will be a global experience. There will be new opportunities/possibilities. We need to seek.

In developing a culture of listening, in which spaces of uncertainty are allowed to exist and where intercultural creative learning becomes a pedagogic endeavour, new educational possibilities formulated, driven by a key question: what is the purpose of primary education?

What the pandemic illustrated is that the world is in crisis. From this tragic circumstance, I began to question my own role and purpose as an educator and to consider what the deficits were in our society. It is arguable that 7.7 billion people are confronted with three existential risks: (1) risks to the survival of planet earth, (2) risks to cohesive societies because of the social and economic impact of expanding inequalities and, (3) risks to the individual and communal sense of purpose and meaning. These risks impact considerably on children and young people. Primary Education systems are no longer fit for the future-making preparedness needed to reimagine, reinvent and reinvigorate our/their response-ability to the challenges that will arise (OECD, 2020). Through ambitious transdisciplinary action, across society and especially in education, "the capacity to invent visions of what should be and what might be in our deficit society" (Greene, 2000: p.20) is now essential. This is social imagination. This is what a school needs to become. This is what educators need to embrace.

The Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander, 2010) asked the question: What is the purpose of education? A decade later and the current answers are inadequate; the ways in which we educate our children is not preparing them for the uncertain futures which they will inherit. Building on the provenance of this exceptional study, new thinking ***and action*** is now an imperative.

The challenge is considerable: How do we educate children so that they have the future-making knowledges, skills, values and response-ability needed to embrace the challenges and opportunities of uncertain futures? What is now needed in education to support children to live with purpose, to live sustainably and to live together (through democratic attributes)? The notoriously complex and often rigid systemic structures of primary education across the globe (OECD, 2020) needs compelling and successful examples of future-making curricula and pedagogies to affect meaningful change. Educators need new resources, including curricula and research knowledge, to create meaningful learning so that children are equipped to respond to the challenges they are and will face.

And yet, within the darkness of the days in a school without children, new educational possibilities arose in our thinking and how we conceived ourselves as a school that wanted to nurture global compassionate citizenship. In partnership with Cambridge Zero and the Centre for the Future of Democracy, there is now a long term vision and campaign to establish a Centre for Educational Possibilities. The centre, through its research activities and collation of global knowledges, will draw together the expertise from Cambridge, and from the international and transdisciplinary

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networks which are fostered at the University. The mission of the centre captures the sense of hopeful future-making possibilities:

> The Centre for Educational Possibilities will be a hub for expanding ideas about curriculum, pedagogy and children's agency. More particularly, the centre will research for new knowledges, skills and pedagogies that will be needed to create new curricula and resources for global educators. It will be a transdisciplinary centre, hosted in Cambridge, but nurturing active relationships across the globe. It will be international.

In 2022, it remains an idea, rooting in the minds of funders and academics. How it will flourish is yet to be witnessed.

TOWARDS GLOBAL COMPASSIONATE CITIZENSHIP: LAST THOUGHTS

There is an assumption in this paper and in our practices at UCPS that, ontologically, space is social, real and involves relationships; that it is socially produced. In the examples of Jay and the *Agents for Change* project, there is an epistemological view that space making is a lived, conceived, relative and relational practice; furthermore that, "If epistemology is concerned with how we know, then the question of how to know space is also complicated by the multiple ways in which we imagine, sense and experience space. We travel through space, albeit aided by different means. We also attach ourselves to particular spaces, such as places of belonging, giving such places psycho-social meaning" (Robertson, 2010: p.36).

Nurturing global compassionate citizenships starts with teachers and their teaching. It continues with how teachers create spaces for listening, in which uncertainties can arise and then enable spaces of possibilities thinking to flourish. This, I have suggested, is part of intercultural creative learning. Teachers must believe that children have voices that are worthy to hear and to be enacted upon. How else will children believe that what they say is valued? How else will they believe that there are opportunities for them to connect with diversities in a way that enables dialogue and greater connection?

For children to believe that compassionate citizenship is worthy of pursuit, they must be taught about the tensions in democracy, that diverse diversities exist, that compassionate values are important to move towards a greater sense of community; communities that require possibilities thinking, the ability to respond to the challenges of the era and where intercultural creative learning inspire new hopeful social imaginative thinking. And if this is to happen successfully, teachers must also believe it as must school leaders who are charged with the responsibility to nurture, enable and co-create these spaces.[1]

[1] www.universityprimaryschool.org.uk
www.possibilities.org.uk
www.avanti.org.uk
www.zero.cam.ac.uk for detail of the evolving curriculum design and projects to empower global compassionate citizenship.

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Following a degree in English and Music from Durham University, James won a travel scholarship and volunteered in two schools in Nepal. After this, his passion for education evolved and in 2001 he started his career following a PGCE at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. In 2002, his creative approach to teaching gained him Advanced Skills Teachers (AST) status in Music and in 2003 he was awarded Outstanding New Teacher of the Year for London. Having transformed two failing schools in East London, UK, as Deputy headteacher, he was the inaugural headteacher of a Avanti Court Primary School, one of the first new Hindu-based primary schools in the UK. He is now the first headteacher of the University of Cambridge Primary School, the first primary University Training School in the UK, which was recently graded as Outstanding by Ofsted. Concurrently with opening two new schools, he completed his PhD which focused on creative learning in ethnic minority immigrant children's homes and is now the series editor of a series of books aimed to unlock educational research for school leaders and practitioners. He is a founding fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching.

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