

**Crossing boundaries: exploring the theory, practice, and possibility of a 'Future 3' curriculum [abstract only]**

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## Proposal to the Fifth Knowledge in Education Symposium, Cambridge, July 2019

**Title:** Crossing boundaries: exploring the theory, practice, and possibility of a 'Future 3' curriculum.

**Presenters:** Graham McPhail, Auckland University, New Zealand and Richard Pountney, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

### Abstract

In 1967 in a brief article in *New Society*, 'Open Schools, Open Society', Bernstein discusses how schools might continue to develop, precursing the School Futures debate of four decades later. Drawing on Durkheim's conception of mechanical and organic solidarity Bernstein characterises change in education at the time as a shift, respectively, from 'closed' to 'open' schools and examines the social conditions for a change in emphasis in some of the main features of the school.

In this paper we re-examine Bernstein's conception of open schools in the light of Futures Thinking on the curriculum and the social conditions for an emerging case of innovation in curriculum and pedagogy at one school in the UK. We utilise Bernstein's concepts of Classification and Framing, and Young and Muller's (2010) *Futures* model of curriculum types. This model is utilised as a methodological heuristic to examine a case study of a new school in the UK that exhibits a number of characteristics aligned with a Future 3 curriculum in that it claims to be both *knowledge-led* and *learner-engaged*. We begin by outlining the 3 *Futures* model and then elaborate a number of associated theoretical concepts that are put to work to elaborate an imaginary Future 3 school: *powerful knowledge*, *the curriculum-pedagogy distinction*, and *teachers as curriculum makers*.

In considering the school's curriculum we examine indications of an *open school*, together with how it is classified and framed, to analytically distinguish the possibility of future 3 as a locus of curriculum engagement. By means of a *translation device* developed by us (Pountney and McPhail, 2017) we go on to consider the degree of epistemic emphasis in the school's predominantly open and interdisciplinary curriculum. Together these concepts provide the means to examine the organising principles of practice operating in the school as links are drawn between the Futures model, Bernstein's concepts, and the data. Our investigation at the school to date identifies evidence of careful attention to subject boundaries prior to a form of boundary crossing that takes place in principled curriculum integration. This suggests that even within the context of an interdisciplinary curriculum access to *powerful knowledge* may be maintained in a whole-school approach where the demands of both knowledge and knowers are brought into a balance. The school's approach and the theorisation we offer may provide insights for other schools embarking on a futures model for education and for 21<sup>st</sup> C educational discourses more generally.

**Keywords:** secondary school curriculum, curriculum integration, 3 Futures model, open schools, knowledge-led curriculum