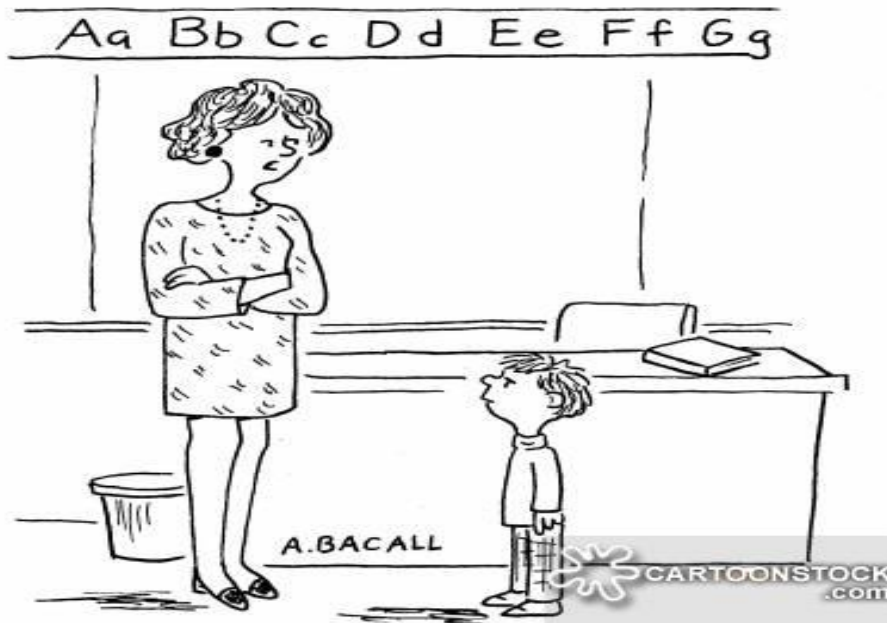




The relationship between school leadership and the aims of the school

Niclas Rönström, Stockholm University

Education: What is it for? Who is it for? What is leadership for?



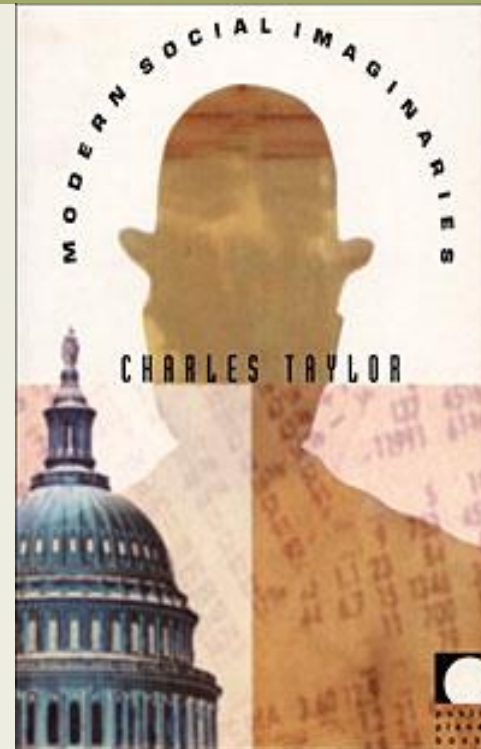
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"My objective is to have each student become more insightful, compassionate, introspective, and empathetic. In your case I will settle for quiet."

Living in an imagined real world – the imaginary character of modern society

Social imaginaries capture the way people imagine their social reality: **how we are linked together in society.**

- ✓ In an economy
- ✓ In a democracy/ public sphere
- ✓ In a nation
- ✓ In a knowledge society

Education and educational research is penetrated by and dependent on our modern social imaginaries.



Modern social imaginaries and the aims of education

What we do in schools and classrooms is imagined to link:

- The child to adulthood
- The present to the future
- **The individual to society**

Economy? Civil society?
Knowledge base? Democracy?
Nation? Cultural heritage? The
world society?



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
Ministry of Education and Culture

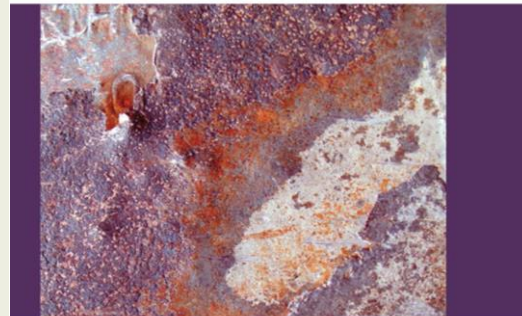
Inclusion in society is at stake

70 million Europeans lack adequate reading and writing skills, and even more have poor numeracy and digital skills.

4.5 million young people still leave school without upper secondary qualifications.

More than half of the 12 million long-term unemployed are considered as low-skilled.

**CONFRONTING
MARGINALISATION
IN EDUCATION**
A FRAMEWORK FOR
PROMOTING INCLUSION



KYRIAKI MESSIOU



The work of teachers and school leaders depend on social imaginaries that stretches beyond their immediate contexts.



If the immediate loose connection with purpose and wider contexts – educators might connection with the aims of education. They might miss out important targets.

What shapes education and leadership in education?

Imaginaries of economic performance



Globalization perceived as a risk; education as a solution!



What is going on in policy and reform?

“The goal of the nation [...] should be economic growth. Never mind about distribution and social equality, never mind about the preconditions of stable democracy, never mind about the quality of race and gender relations, never mind about the improvement of other aspects of human being’s quality of life that are not well linked to economic growth.”

(Nussbaum, M, 2010, p. 14)

In Sweden

If Sweden is to regain its position as a **leading knowledge-based and industrialized country**, we must invest in world-class education for pre-school and school teachers (The Government)

An important issue for educational policy is, thus, how Sweden **stands up in international competition**. (The Inquiry HUT07)

Without world class teacher training we cannot stand up to the **challenges of globalization** (The Minister of Education)

... and in Greece.

“Building a first class education system in Greece is the most effective way to strengthen the country’s capacity to promote inclusive growth from within; strengthen its competitiveness; and improve its productivity [...] OECD is working with the Ministry of Education to help them design new measures and frameworks to promote greater school autonomy; develop educational leadership; develop greater assessment and evaluation capacities; and develop all-day schools.”

(OECD Press Release May 2017)

“With a focus on cultivating a knowledge-based economy, Cyprus’ education sector is expanding to meet market demands.”



Lived imaginaries in policy & reform

The global economy makes knowledge and skills for competitive edge essential to economic growth.

People in general, but more importantly school leaders, teachers and students must be transformed into a high quality human capital.





The globalist imaginary: in 60 seconds

Economy is conceived as the essential way in which people are linked together, and human life is designed to produce mutual benefit on a global scale.

Globalization is mainly about the liberation and global integration of markets.

The global market will promote rationality and efficiency, but also social cohesion in society if performative and consumerist identities are promoted among individuals forming a nation's human capital.

The global economy is much more demanding than its national predecessors, and one must to discipline the state and its citizens in line with the demands of the global economy. Nation states are becoming competition states.

Education, teacher education and school leadership education/training are primarily instruments for producing human capital or human resources for economic growth and competitive edge of nations

GSAE-thesis (Dale, 2005)

A Globally Structured Agenda of Education:

The adaption of nation states to the imagined needs of knowledge economies:

- ✓ a narrow (economic) view of education
- ✓ a thick relationship between economic growth and educational change.
- ✓ **the dominance of economic imaginaries, goals, models and standards (and the influence of transnational organs)**



GET
EXCITED
IT'S
COMPETITION
TIME

The Primacy of the Economy in Education: **a multidimensional change in educational institutions**



Aims, norms, governance, leadership, quality standards and measurements of success are shaped by or drawn from economic imaginaries...

... but also identities, roles and agency:
Teachers as commodities; teaching and leadership as technologies; leaders as assets; people as human resources; members of society as human capital; managerialist vocabulary.

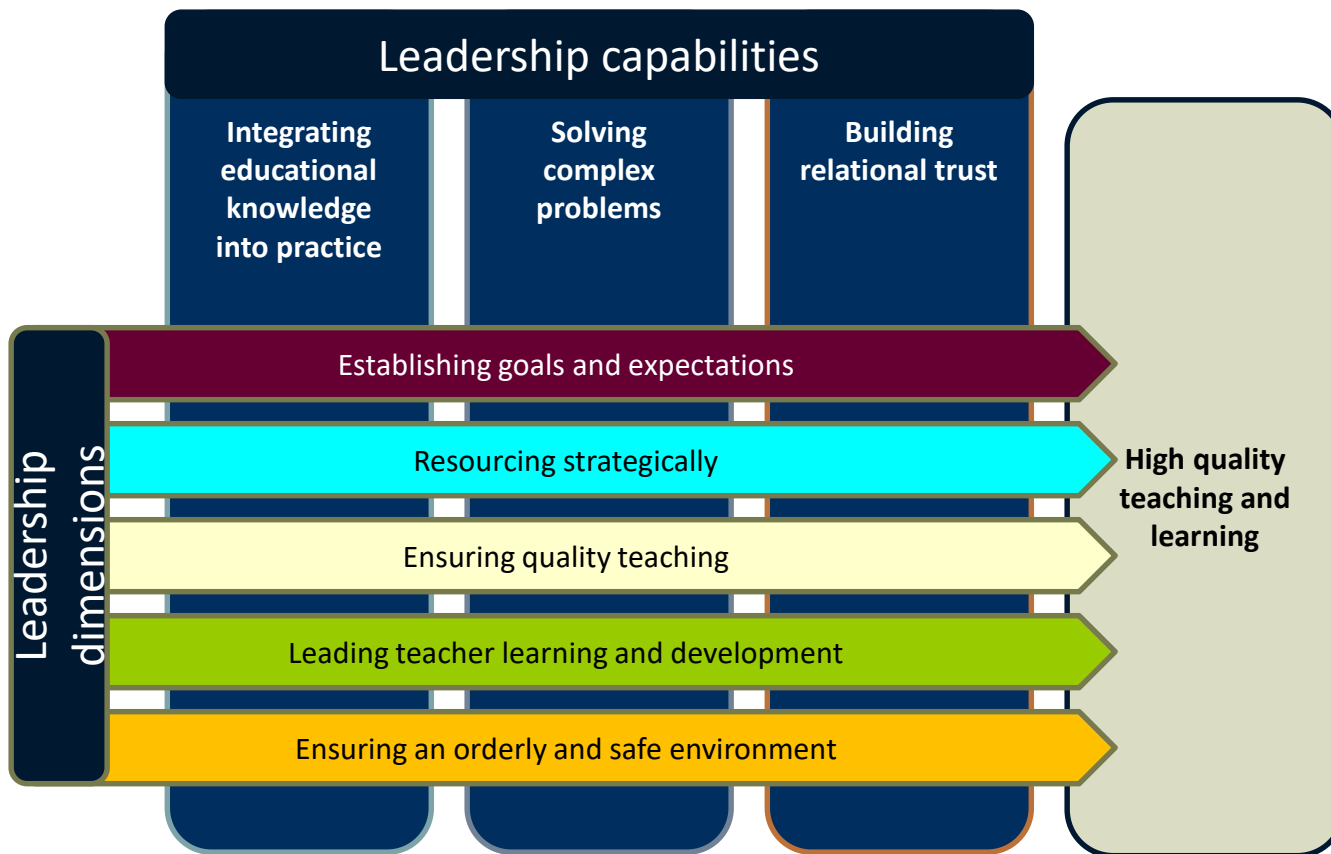
Eg. Selling teaching carriers to young people in Sweden

From the website www.fordetvidare.se (Swedish National Agency of Education)

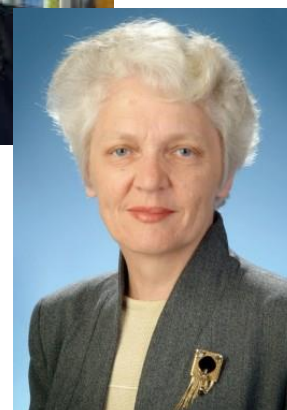
You will: make a difference, **become a super hero**; stay young, **develop leadership**, be creative, **secure your future**, work with your passion, **be sought after**, have a carrier, **have freedom**, have magic moments, **work abroad**, and you will be remembered as THE teacher.

Imaginarities of performance The focus of educational leaders

The more leaders focus their relationships, their work and their learning on the **core business of teaching and learning** the greater their influence on student outcomes.
(Robinson, V., 2011)



The New Zealand Ministry of Education's best evidence synthesis iterations draw together, explain and illustrate [...]bodies of evidence about what works to improve education outcomes



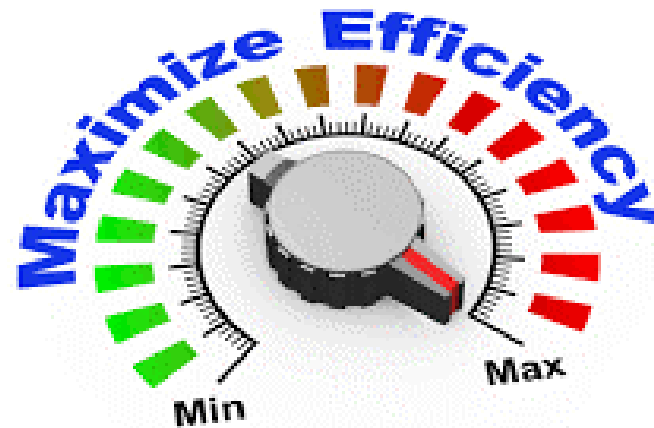
Imaginaries of performance: The role of educational research

Evidence based, synthesizing and generalizing research is supposed to inform policy, reform and pedagogical intervention.

- ✓ **Effective goal setting (performance goals/learning goals);**
- ✓ **Improved or optimized target behavior;**
- ✓ **Effective use of resources, including time, people, etc.;**

Research is gradually becoming a guardian of performance and effectiveness in schools and education.

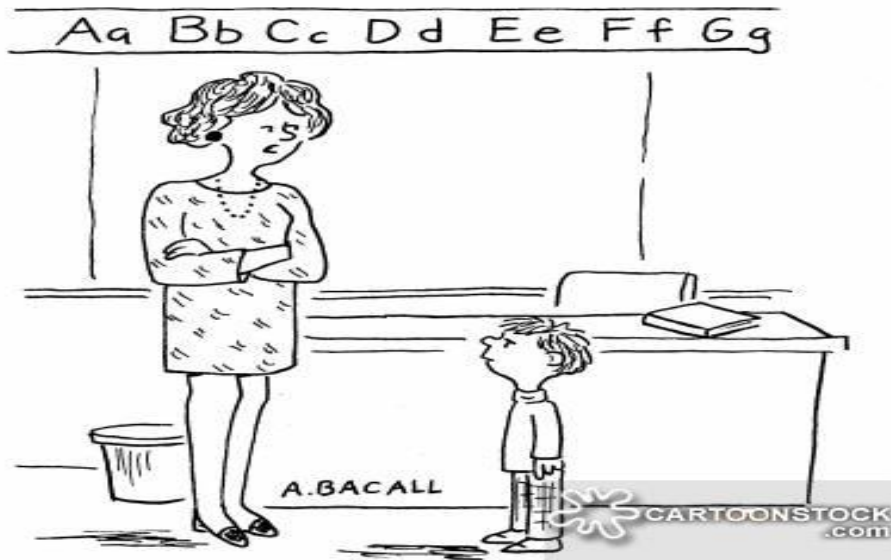
Optimal goal behavior and effective use of resources: is this all there is to education and educational leadership?



Not only globalization, but the way we respond to it is a risk



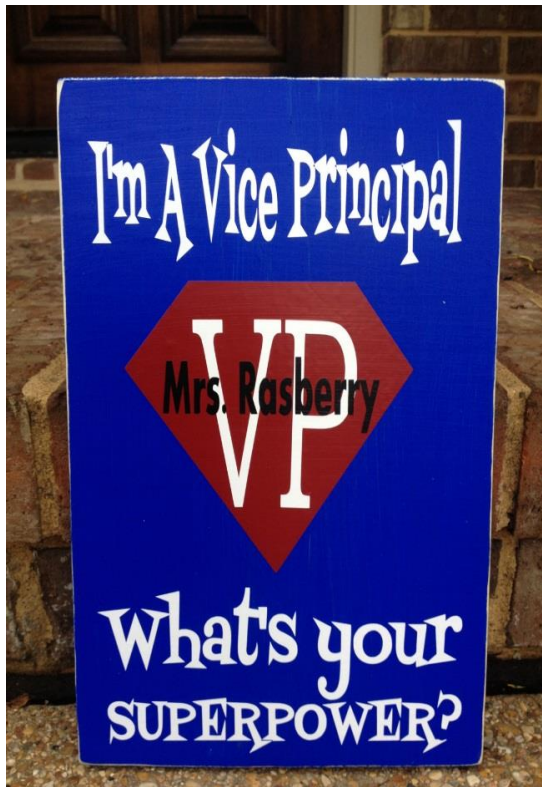
... because education is supposed to link individuals to society and not only to an economy.



"My objective is to have each student become more insightful, compassionate, introspective, and empathetic. In your case I will settle for quiet."

Beyond imaginaries of performance

Re-imagining a broad view of education and society



The economy is not the only way we are linked together in society. We have reason to re-imagine social imaginaries essential to education:

Democracy and democratization locally, nationally and globally?

Nation-building and nation-centeredness in times of global interconnectivity?

Moral obligation, sustainability and ethical values in education in diverse society?

The role and scope of science in schools and society?

Beyond imaginaries of performance

Re-imagining educational leadership



Educational leadership models in performance imaginaries suffer from **descriptive inadequacy**:

- They do not capture everyday complexity and communicative but also ethical conditions.
- Complex underdetermined capabilities (build trust, solve complex problems)
- They assume a problematic expert role among leaders

Beyond imaginaries of performance

Re-imagining educational leadership



- They tend to re-introduce heroism and thereby run the risk of being discouraging

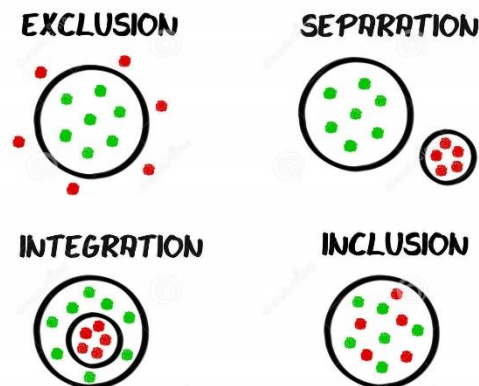
Human action is limited to instrumental action and economic agency and thereby neglecting a fully fledged view of educational leadership.

How social imagination matters: A rights/democracy perspective on inclusion

The equal right and capability to participate in society as free and equal citizens/members

Inclusion is related to all areas of society. Not restricted to an economy

Inclusion assumes that children and young people are bearer of human rights



Imaginaries of inclusion: Ec. performance vs Right/democracy approach

Performance in a global economy

Education as a means for economic growth

Schools as a resources for human capital

Difference to be managed and overcome in the name of performance

The school leader as a performance manager, and children as human resources for markets. Children as goal oriented economic performers.

Participation in society in the broad sense

Education as a citizenship and social right

Schools as agents for inclusive society and democratic citizenship

Difference as a source for learning to be understood and recognized

The school leader as an agent for democratization and inclusion in a broad sense. Children as bearers of human rights and democratic decision takers and not only performers.

Beyond imaginaries of performance

Re-imagining a broad view of education and society



If we still imagine educational institutions to link...:

- Children to adulthood
- Present to an (open) future
- Individuals to (a world) society

... recent imaginaries of economic performance are must be considered as a risk. A problem; not a solution.

Schools, teachers and their leaders run the risk of failing just because they succeed with the tasks given to them.

The work of teachers and school leaders depend on modern social imaginaries that stretches beyond their immediate contexts.



That is why teachers and school leaders need to be aware of social imaginaries shaping schools and education, but also the work they are expected to do.

Educators need to respond to changes in the world. Education cannot afford to become a **zombie** – a living dead practice that no longer matches social reality.





Stockholms
universitet

But the dominant view today is too narrow and risky, that is, imagining that economic performance is all there is to education and educational leadership.

