



# Introduction to the Great Education Debate

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(General Secretary – ASCL)



# What the Great Education Debate is seeking to do

- To enable school and college leaders and the teaching profession to be fully involved in shaping the future of our education service.
- To engage in serious, unbiased debate with all stakeholders in order to establish a consensus which can outlast the political cycle.
- To facilitate an evidence-based discussion.
- To provide leadership and inspiration for ASCL members.
- To take a constructive and proactive lead towards the future development of our education service.



## The challenge of seeking a consensus

Development of a clear, widely-owned and stable statement of the outcome that all schools are asked to deliver. This should go beyond the merely academic, into the behaviours and attitudes schools should foster in everything they do. It should be the basis on which we judge all new policy ideas, schools, and the structures we set up to monitor them.

CBI First Steps report



## The proposed focus

- **Purpose of education;** to cover philosophical questions such as what is education for, what the term 21st-century education means, curriculum and qualifications.
- **Leadership,** developing the best teachers, teaching and learning, assessment, CPD.
- **Systems and structures;** to include accountability and autonomy



## What will the next steps be?

- During the next six months we will be gathering evidence and views
- We will collate the findings into an interim report in early 2014 and feature this at ASCL's annual conference.
- At that stage we will evaluate progress and decide what still needs to be done.



# The purpose of education

September 2013



## The purpose of education?

*“The end then of learning is to repair the ruin of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love Him, to imitate Him and to be like Him”*

John Milton





# The purpose of education?

To build mastery of key subjects, skills and concepts

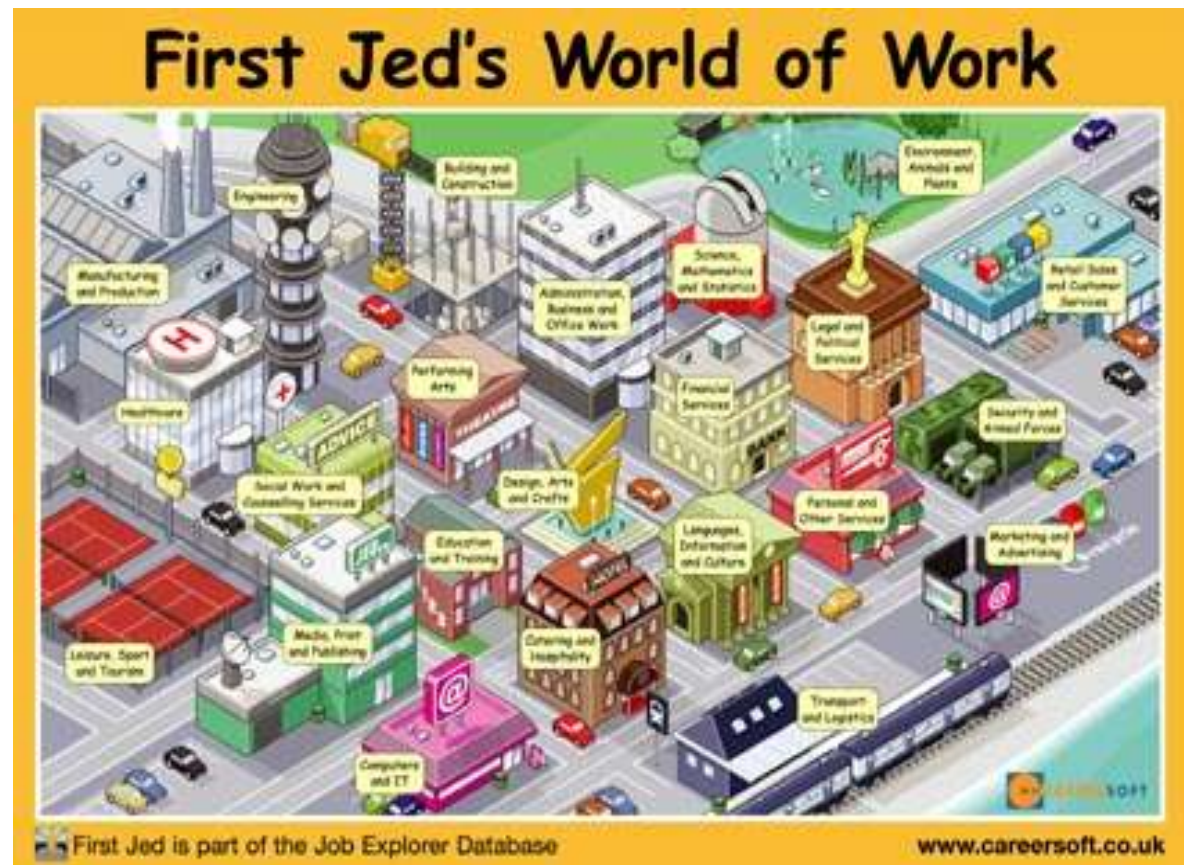






# The purpose of education?

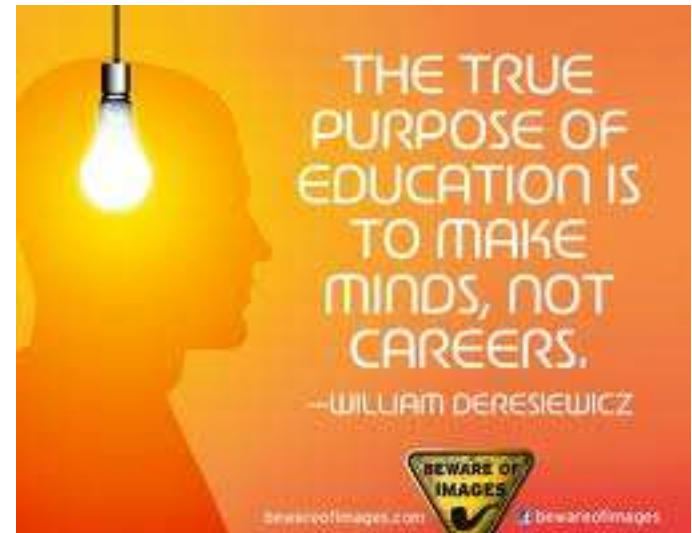
To prepare young people to be effective and successful in the workplace





# The purpose of education?

To inspire and equip young people to learn how to learn – and to be lifelong learners





# The purpose of education?

To develop resilience and creativity through learning from failure





# The purpose of education?

To develop informed,  
and act citizens who  
contribute to society





## The purpose of education?

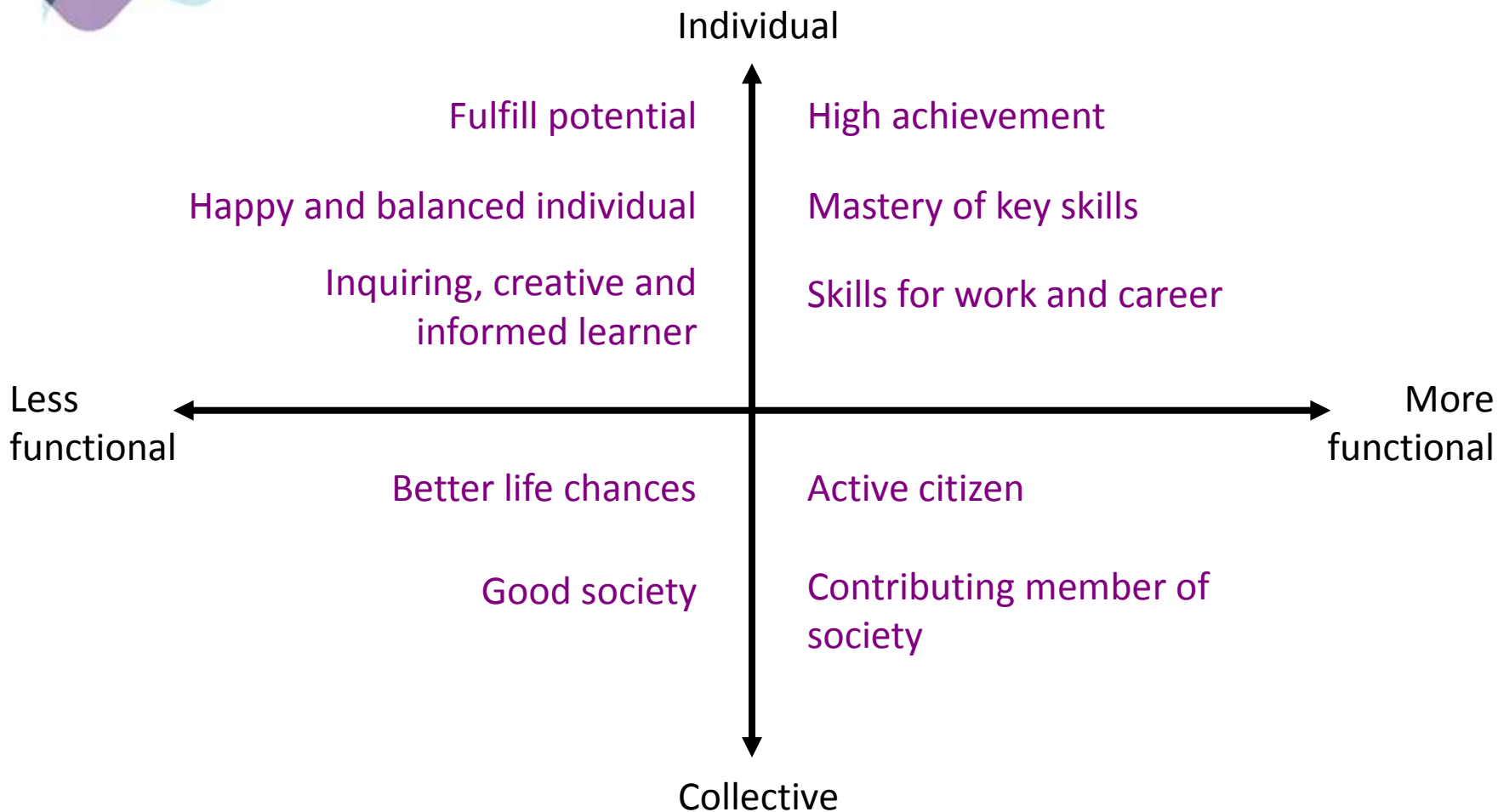
To enable young people to grow up as balanced, happy and fulfilled individuals

**When I was 5 years old, my mom always told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down "happy." They told me I didn't understand the assignment and I told them they didn't understand life.**

John Lennon



# The purpose of education?





## The purpose of education?

Of course we don't have to choose – we can pick and mix

*“The goals of our education, from nursery school through to adult education, are clear enough. They are to equip children to the best of their ability for a lively, constructive, place in society, and also to fit them to do a job of work. Not one or the other but both.”*

Prime Minister Jim Callaghan, 1976



# The purpose of education?

The problem is we haven't debated and agreed a common vision

Having a national conversation leading to consensus would be hard but not impossible







## Some questions for debate

- Should we adopt a national statement on the purpose of education?
- If, so what might it say?
- How can we build a broad base of support for a statement of educational purpose?





# The focus of the curriculum?

The lack of a common vision on the purpose of education means that the nature, form and scope of the curriculum is hotly disputed territory





The focus of the curriculum?

Knowledge



The focus of the curriculum?

Skills



The focus of the curriculum?

Character



The focus of the curriculum?

Meta-learning  
(Learning how to learn)



# The focus of the curriculum?

## KNOWLEDGE

balancing conceptual and practical and connect the content to real-world relevance

## SKILLS

developing higher-order skills such as the '4 C's': Creativity, Critical thinking, Communication, Collaboration

## CHARACTER

nurturing behaviours and values for a changing and challenging world: adaptability, persistence, resilience and moral-related traits (integrity, justice, empathy)

## META-LAYER

learning how to learn, interdisciplinarity, use of ICT, systems thinking

Source: Schleicher, A 2012, *Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century: Lessons from around the world*, OECD



## Some questions for debate

- Is a synthesis as proposed by the OECD desirable and possible – and what should be the balance between the different elements?
- Are different approaches needed for different phases of education?
- How much of the curriculum should be determined nationally and how much left to schools – or groups of schools?







# The nature of assessment?

Views on the curriculum tend to influence thinking about assessment





# The nature of assessment?

Those favouring a knowledge-rich curriculum tend to emphasise the importance of end of course exams – to test understanding of the knowledge taught





## The nature of assessment?

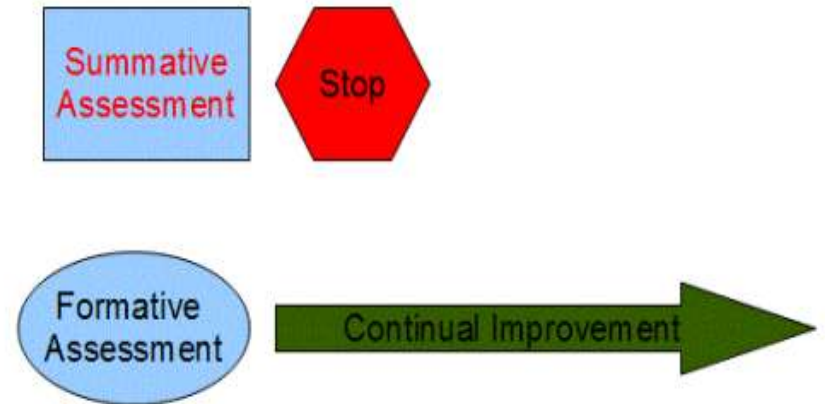
Those stressing skills and character tend to favour using a broader range of assessments – portfolios, coursework, projects, essays and assignments





# The nature of assessment?

Many would argue that the emphasis needs to switch from summative (end of course) assessment to formative (feedback to support progress) assessment





## Some questions for debate?

- Are pupils tested too frequently? If so, which tests should go and how can accountability be maintained?
- Is redesigning GCSEs the right thing to do or should we be focusing on assessment at 18?
- Should external examinations try to balance the testing of knowledge and key skills?
- Who should determine the assessment framework – ministers or examination boards?





# Discussion



## Some questions for debate

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## How to get involved

- Attend an event.
- Comment on an article or blog on the website.
- Start or contribute to an online discussion
- Host a debate in your school or college or other venue and capture everyone's views by film or by taking notes and email them to [info@greateducationdebate.org.uk](mailto:info@greateducationdebate.org.uk)
- Join us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GreatEducationDebate](http://www.facebook.com/GreatEducationDebate)
- Tweet us **@GreatEdDebate**
- Post your views on our website [www.greateducationdebate.org.uk](http://www.greateducationdebate.org.uk)



# JOIN THE GREAT DEBATE.

ASCL wants to know your views on all of these issues and questions. Here's how you can get involved:



Host a debate in your school or college and capture everyone's views by film or by taking notes and email to: [info@greateducationdebate.org.uk](mailto:info@greateducationdebate.org.uk)



Join us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GreatEducationDebate](http://www.facebook.com/GreatEducationDebate)



Join the discussion and post your views on [www.greateducationdebate.org.uk](http://www.greateducationdebate.org.uk) where you can also download a resource pack



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