

## **Crossing Boundaries and Building Bridges: ICSEI Virtual Congress 2021**

### **Disrupting boundaries to build bridges**

Education is not equal. We know it does not work often for our most marginalised children and young people. This presentation comes from a philosophical positioning that argues we need a new holistic educational approach. If there was ever a time to critically reflect on how we might disrupt boundaries and build bridges, it is now. In a Covid-19 world, where the most economically, socially and educationally disadvantaged have been the most negatively impacted, we need to rethink how and why we do what we do.

We are in a unique position. Scottish Government policy provides a context for partnership working as well as recognising the various areas outside formal education that impact on a child's life and learning trajectories. Towards a Robust, Resilient, Wellbeing Economy (2020) details an economic recovery plan in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighting community as one of the four key pillars of a future Scotland. We have educational policy, The Empowered System (2020), recognising the need for partnership, joined up work with a central focus on children and young people. These moves are essential to ensure that Scotland is the 'best place for children to grow up' and that the ongoing commitment, 'The promise', that all children, particularly those who have been most disenfranchised from the education system such as those with an experience of care, are listened to and included. All this points towards the need for a connected, integrated, holistic educational offer.

This innovative workshop explores our vision for a more united education which brings together professional practitioners from formal and informal education. It utilises participatory methods to explore how we can all engage in a vision for a more holistic educational approach. It uses poetry to get participants to question- are they disruptors? Do they build bridges or unwittingly create barriers for partnership work? It calls for a boundary crossing pedagogy which gives parity of professional esteem (Coburn and Gormally, 2019) to all those engaged within a young person's life. More, it recognises the need for bridges to be built between communities, schools and families. We can learn from each other, but we need to assess the power dynamics, the labelling, the roles and professionals who all want

the best for our societies. This workshop critically questions the role of educators in disrupting boundaries, in crossing and connecting to build a more just educational system. We will provide examples of effective partnership working between formal and informal education that supports and enhances the outcomes of children, young people and communities. We argue that by engaging beyond the boundaries, issues of equity and social justice will be challenged both within and outside the traditional formal educational systems given the interconnectedness of young people's lives.

## References

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