In an anxious world increasingly perceived in terms of risk management, strategies for mapping and articulating knowledge provide a bulwark against uncertainty. In teacher education, a consequence has been a drive for fullness in relation to knowledge about what teachers should know and be able to do, usually conceived in instrumental terms. Indeed, teacher education, like education more broadly, has been captured by a ‘discursive duopoly’ of instrumentalism, involving the pervasive view that the main purpose of education is to serve the needs of the economy, and consensualism, involving the valorization of agreement regarding this purpose. Negativity, as a political practice that engages with the positive to reveal the historical and contingent nature of all knowledge, thus offers new conceptual resources, such as dissensus and impotentiality, for imagining alternative scenarios for teacher education beyond the confines of current policies.

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