

Teacher professional learning and development for a future-oriented education system – a “wicked problem”?

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Plan

1. Background
 - future-oriented education 'story'
 - 'problem'
2. The project
 - preliminary findings
3. Issues

Future-Oriented Education – last 10-15 years....

The world has changed forever.
Education hasn't kept up.
Major change is needed.

Why?

Today's system was set up to meet 20th century, Industrial Age needs

We're now in the Network or Knowledge Age



Things are different

System change is needed, *not* "school improvement"

Why change is needed – the usual gloss ...

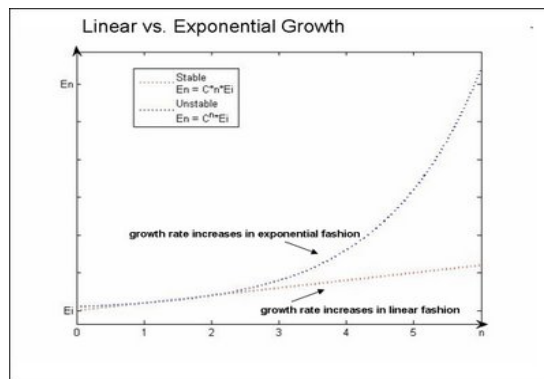


1. The system needs to **do better** ...

- need **higher achievement** by **more** students
- need nearly **everyone** to be “**tertiary ready**”

2. Globalised **economic** change

→ intense focus on **knowledge**
knowledge has a **new meaning**



3. The **digital revolution**

exponential growth in **power** and **reach** of digital technologies

BUT...

1. Many people think **future-focused education** means doing more or less **what we do now** - but with **better technology** ...



- ▶ Digital pedagogies
- ▶ Modern Learning Environments
- ▶ Digital resources
- ▶ Connected learning ...
- ▶ MOOCS
- ▶ Khan Academy
- ▶ Flip the Classroom

2. All the focus on **students'** learning needs

- little work on demands this places on **teachers** educated in **20th century** system
- teachers being asked to imagine/create a system way **outside** their **experiences** and/or **ways of knowing**.



The problem

1. “future-oriented” education – sloganised, superficial
 - uncritically accepted (or rejected)...
2. much of what is happening under this banner likely to make things *worse*, not better ...e.g....
 - exacerbate existing inequalities
 - reduce opportunities for epistemic progress - breadth not depth

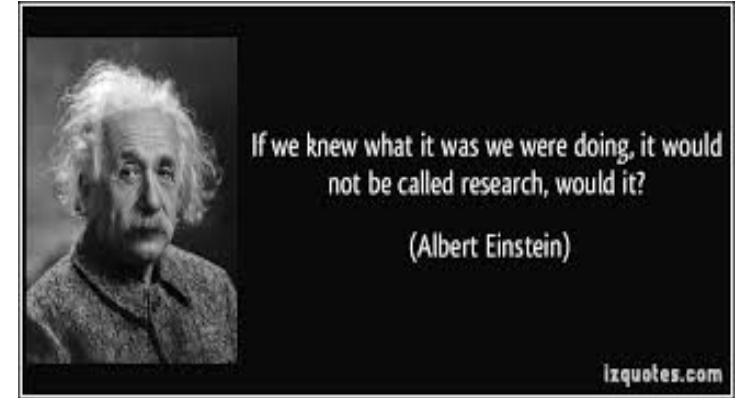
→ Teachers need access to opportunities to **think critically** about “future-oriented education discourse

3 levels

- i. functional/decoding
- ii. cultural
- iii. critical

→ Research project “On the Edge”

- ▶ small pilot 2012 7 participants
- ▶ funding (TLRI) 2 years (2013-14)
now **33 participants**



Part 1: Teacher PLD programme

- ▶ University Masters level course (*Educational Futures*)
students enrolled invited to participate in research project
- ▶ Workshop on adult development

Part 2: Research project

- ▶ Interviews before course, immediately after course, & a year later
- ▶ Monthly “double loop” reflections
- ▶ In-course observations
- ▶ Interviews with PLD providers.



Action research

- ▶ long-term relationships
researchers — PLD providers —
participants
- ▶ multiple parts - inextricably connected

“Object/s of Inquiry” ...

Δ teachers' thinking

→ relationships → networks → systems

- “informational” vs “transformational” learning
- teachers experiencing kinds of thinking they are supposed to be providing for their students

What did we find out?

Was the PLD transformative?

- *I don't think it's changed me except that it's given me more ammunition and an authority to speak and a passion to speak – a sense of urgency of the need to keep talking about this and begin some action.*
- *It's actually shifted my whole perspective on the world.*
- *I'm not the same person I was 8 weeks ago.*

How did participants feel about the PLD?

- *...as painful as it was I really, really valued that.*
- *It's scary – it's fun but it's scary!*
- *It's exciting but it's doing my head in!*
- *It's daunting – and fascinating*
- *I swing from being absolutely frozen to absolute excitement.*

Helpful components of PLD

- Journal reflections on the “readings”

To read it to the level where I could review it and form an opinion on it that was quite a big step in terms of making me think about things, making me challenge my own thinking.

- Work load

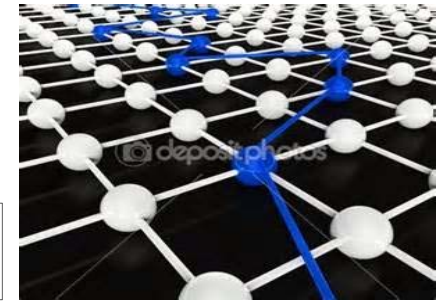
It's like running a marathon

- Opportunities to discuss ideas with others

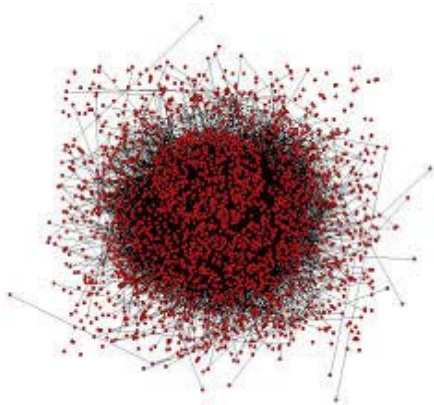
Acting differently

- *It's quite challenging to do when a school culture is already quite successful*
- *I'm aware that I'm no longer being challenged and that feels dangerous. I'm worried I won't continue to examine ideas critically and I will slip unwillingly towards complacency.*

Shift in project over time ...



Tracking **individual thinking** processes



Participants individual **agents/actors** in a **system** - that they are *constructed by*, but also *contribute to* ...



Education as **complex system**

- “spaces between” parts
- possibility of **emergence**



Have we achieved what we set out to do..?

Not really ... project has produced more questions than answers...