

# **A better future or an improved past?**

**Graham Donaldson**

**Goodison Group in Scotland, 12 March 2019**

# November Goodison Report

“...the status quo isn't an option if our young people are to be equipped to navigate the challenges the future is likely to bring.

If we agree our future world is complex and unpredictable, and we are committed to driving change in the education system, what leadership is required to 'lead out?'"

# International Context

## Finnish Minister of Education – Sanni Grahn-Laasonen

...our success and prosperity must be based on knowledge, learning and education. We live in a world where **everything is changing at an ever faster pace**. I believe that **learning to learn, being able to acquire new skills, and thinking critically and creatively** are some of the key factors for the education of tomorrow. Equal opportunity for everyone is an important value...

**A school system is never finished, and teachers are the change makers.** The answer to your question lies, I believe, in three steps: First, **grasping the need for a fundamental change, then making the right conclusions, and finally putting the conclusions to work.**

# International Context

Shaping the Twenty-First Century  
Community Education

**“...no education system can remain static. The world is changing rapidly, Technology is transforming our lives. **The skills needed in the future will be very different from those needed today.****

**Education offers each individual and nation the best chance of navigating an unknown future – coping with uncertainty, adapting to evolving conditions and learning how to learn.”**

Lee Hsein Loong, Prime Minister of Singapore 2012 (Oceans of Innovation, IPPR 2012)

# International Context

“Many of today’s schools are not teaching the **deep knowledge that underlies innovative activity.**”

“...if the economy is no longer an industrial-age factory economy, then our **schools are designed for a quickly vanishing world**”

“The standard model of schooling emerged during the industrial age and it has been effective at generating the kinds of graduates needed by the industrial economy...**Existing schools should redesign themselves**...to develop new models of learning for the future.”

Sawyer ‘*Learning to Learn Learning to Innovate*’ OECD (2008)

# International Context

“We are facing unprecedented challenges...driven by accelerating globalisation and a faster rate of technological developments...The future is uncertain and we cannot predict it; but we need to be open and ready for it...**Schools can prepare them for jobs that have not yet been created, for technologies that have not yet been invented, to solve problems that have not yet been anticipated.** It will be a shared responsibility to seize opportunities and find solutions.”

Andreas Schleicher (2018) *The Future of Education and Skills Education 2030*

# International Context

“To navigate through such uncertainty, students will need to develop **curiosity, imagination, resilience and self regulation.**”

“**Education can** equip learners with agency and a sense of purpose, and the competencies they need to **shape their own lives and contribute to the lives of others.**”

Andreas Schleicher (2018) *The Future of Education and Skills Education 2030*

# International Context

## OECD 2030 PROJECT

- **Small world of the curriculum and big world of learning**
- **Students who are best prepared for the future are change agents.** They can have a positive impact on their surroundings, influence the future, understand others' intentions, actions and feelings, and anticipate the short and long-term consequences of what they do.
- The concept of **competency implies** more than just the acquisition of knowledge and skills; it involves **the mobilisation of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to meet complex demands. Future-ready students will need both broad and specialised knowledge.**

# Future Opportunities and Challenges?

- New markets and jobs but also volatility, insecurity and migration
- Complexity, diversity and inequality
- Technology serving and driving
- Ambiguity, 'alternative facts', populism and citizenship
- Connectivity, collaboration and cybersecurity
- Personal and collective learning
- Innovation or obsolescence

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning?

## Importance of

- connected, coherent and authentic knowledge
- deeper conceptual understanding
- strong basic skills including digital competence
- applied learning – critical thinking, creativity and problem solving
- learning in collaboration and to collaborate
- ethics and values
- personal agency

**Move from what students should be learning towards what they should become?**

**(Priestley and Biesta 2014)**

# National Context - Curriculum

- Statements of values, purposes and principles.
- Capacities are about longer-term applications of learning
- Capacities mediated through single framework 3-18 of 8 curriculum areas, cross curriculum responsibilities, experiences and outcomes.
- Broad general education and curriculum levels
- Lateral and vertical progression
- Pedagogy, active learning, inter-disciplinary learning
- Assessment for learning – achievement encompassing attainment
- New qualifications
- Less prescription/more engagement/decluttering

# Improving Schools in Scotland OECD 2015

The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is an important reform putting in place a coherent 3-18 curriculum around capacities and learning. There is **a holistic understanding of what it means to be a young Scot growing up in today's world promoted by the curriculum...**It rests on a **very contemporary view of knowledge** and skills and on widely-accepted tenets of what makes for powerful learning.

**BUT**

It **needs an ambitious theory of change and a more robust evidence base**, especially about learning outcomes and progress.

Unless a range of **metrics** is available **that reflects the full ambition of CfE**, the nature of quality and equity always risks being reduced to the most readily measurable. Develop **metrics that do justice to the full range of CfE capacities** informing a bold understanding of quality and equity.

**Move the Curriculum for Excellence on from ambitious underpinnings to an approach to curriculum, assessment and pedagogy, with supporting leadership and capacity-building**, that is a genuine 21st century system to be among those leading the world.

# National Context

- The stated aim of government policy is to create a **school and teacher-led education system**.
- More **direct funding** to schools.
- Scottish Improvement Partnership Programme.
- Scottish Attainment Challenge
- National Improvement Framework
- Scottish Government/COSLA Joint Agreement
- Headteachers' Charter
- Regional Improvement Collaboratives
- Leadership and professional learning

# ICEA Report 2016-18

- The Curriculum for Excellence remains forward looking and is the **cornerstone of educational transformation** in Scotland
- The ICEA notes that it is important to **retain the vision and holistic approach of CfE**, alongside the drive to deliver the specific measures set out in the NIF...
- Formulate a detailed implementation plan ... with co-ownership and engagement across the system, that would ensure that each of the components could be sufficiently **embedded and sustained for the benefit of future generations.**
- Set out an **explicit theory of change**
- Policy imperatives – **empowerment, responsibility and ownership**

# Issues to address

- The scope and pace of change in society and the economy creates unpredictability and multiplies expectations about desirable educational outcomes, posing **serious challenges to the why, the what and the how of teaching and learning.**
- How can schools remain **relevant** in the face of complexity and unpredictability?
- **Established approaches to change are insufficient** in an increasingly complex environment.
- We need much better long-term strategy and **much greater engagement** of schools and teachers.
- The original purposes underpinning CfE reflected these challenges and the ‘school and teacher-led system’ policies provide **new opportunities.**
- We need **learning professionals in learning schools in a learning system** serving confident young people excited about learning.

# Established Approaches to Leading Change?

**‘...there is strong evidence from a variety of sources that two decades of reform have not led to anticipated levels of educational improvement, and certainly not commensurate with levels of investment in education, but have led to widespread teacher and headteacher dissatisfaction’**

*Hoyle and Wallace Educational Leadership: Ambiguity, Professionals and Managerialism 2005, pp. 4-5*

**The impact of policies has been, at best, mixed.** Neither general nor targeted interventions have, thus far, demonstrated substantial sustained improvements that can be spread widely.

*Kerr & West BERA 2010 Insight 2*

**“We have in education a long history of innovation but it rarely touches but a chosen few.”**

*Hattie, Visible Learning (2009) p254*

# Is leading change in a modern education system simple, complicated or complex?

Change can be difficult but simple – linear cause and effect/ what works and best practice models.

Change can be difficult and complicated but can be addressed through systematic and evidence-based approaches. Cause and effect relationships can be determined.

Change can be difficult and complex and requires exploration and responsiveness. Unpredictable effects and relationships.

**The answer is “yes”. They all apply but we tend to adopt approaches that are geared to simple and complicated issues.**

# Approaches to Leading Change

## From

- Mind the gap – rational attempt to bridge the gap between intention and outcome.
- Objectives, levers and drivers, targets, measures.

## To

- Set strategic direction, nudge and engage
- No single right answer

# A New Approach to Leading Change?

- VALUES AND PURPOSE LED
- RECOGNISE COMPLEXITY AND UNPREDICTABILITY
- CONTEXT – ADAPTIVE, INTERCONNECTED SYSTEMS
- CHALLENGE
- HUMILITY
- ENGAGEMENT
- COLLABORATION
- EXPLORATION – FORMATIVE EVALUATION SERVES LEARNING

Too many of the developers take the McDonald's approach: the significant thinking and planning are done at corporate headquarters and the franchise holders are expected to adhere to corporate policies and regulations...Developers have both idealized and simplistic notions of educational leadership'



## **FAITHFUL IMPLEMENTATION**

'Why should any effort at innovation be expected to be other than a first approximation of what needs to be done?...The educational reform movement has been almost totally unaware that its initial models are...just that: first approximations...that would lead to better ones'



## **LEARNING THROUGH STRATEGIC EXPLORATION**

# Key Messages

- The context for learning really matters and is becoming increasingly complex.
- Policy must address simple, complicated and complex issues.
- The policy challenge is to create the vision and the conditions for education to meet the complexity challenge
- Schools and teachers can shape that context more than in the past – dynamic leadership that learns
- We need policy, schools, leaders and teachers that use learning as the engine of improvement.
- How far can we use the reinvigorated emphasis on autonomy and collaboration to create rich and challenging contexts for learning?
- Developing a learning culture provides a path through current complexity