

Learning for Well-being Magazine ⑤

Published by the Learning for Well-being Foundation
www.l4wb-magazine.org

Abstracts

1

Why We Need an Education Revolution

By Richard Dunne

If we are to take seriously the idea of a sustainable future, then the current education system is not fit for purpose. The author, a head teacher at an English primary school, offers his perspective on the need to re-contextualize learning, to join it up around project-based enquiries that provide students with a much more holistic view of how the world works and their part in it. He describes current education practices as teaching for separateness – dividing learning into separate subject silos often with no apparent connection. Conversely, he notes that the natural world works systemically. Based on his practical and ongoing experience in applying the principles of Nature to learning, he proposes and describes experiments with building learning projects around enquiries or big questions. It is an approach that offers hope of a new story for education.

2

How Can a Living Systems Perspective of Learners Contribute to How We Think About Education?

By Jean Gordon

No minister of education or policymaker would suggest that our education systems should aim to produce fragmented individuals. There is a general acceptance by educators, researchers and some policymakers of the importance of taking a holistic approach to education in order to support deep learning and nurture the well-being of learners. The purpose of this article is to look at how a living systems perspective of education and learners can open more avenues for thinking differently about education. The relevant key aspects of living systems theory that are referred to are the notion of wholeness (the individual, the class, the school, etc.), being open to other 'systems' (other schools, clubs, etc.), encouraging interactions and recognizing interrelatedness both within the individual and among different types of 'systems.'

3

The Systemic Development of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Three Countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Syria, the United Kingdom (UK)

By David Parkes

This article is concerned with systemic change at national level in the vocational education sector. A **systemic** change may be defined as one experienced by the whole of an organization or a country and not just particular parts of it. The article explores such change in three very different countries and circumstances and in different periods of time – the late 1980s, the late 1990s and early 2000s. The three countries, indicated in the title, are examples of applying major change in an education sub-sector with a key question: ‘how to make systemic change work **in practice** within the complexity of politics, people, social policy, bureaucracy and the overall environment?’ a question also asked in Jean Gordon’s article in this publication when associated with developing the whole person in relation to his/her overall environment (largely the education environment). Here, we concentrate on approaches and mechanisms to bring people(s) together to reach consensus in political (small and big ‘p’ contexts). The mechanisms are intended to provide the means (and the money) for individual actors to reach consensus over ways forward.

4

Has French Decentralization Fostered Systemic Approaches to Employment, Training and Guidance? The Example of Further Vocational Training

By Frédéric Bruggeman

Through the example of further vocational training this article sets out to present how the very entrenched habit of working in ‘silos’ makes it exceedingly difficult to design and implement public policies to the benefit of individuals who, by nature, do not fall into a ‘one size fits all’ category. It also shows that, rather surprisingly, the process of decentralization that progressively reinforced regional political power over the last 40 years has helped in challenging this state of affairs and fostered a more systemic approach. However, imagining and implementing new approaches that are systemic in their vision, that seek to bring together all the key actors and cross the boundaries of different professional ways of working is far from simple. This article proposes to briefly examine (1) why the French further vocational training system became less and less effective, (2) what has recently been done to put things right and (3) what could be done to further improve the situation.

5

Lobbying for Well-being

By Georg Jürgens

A paradigm shift from the European Union’s economic focus towards well-being-oriented policies does not happen all by itself. It requires engagement with multiple systems and the active involvement of those concerned by political decisions. To this end, all stakeholders need to understand what lobbying is, why it is needed and how it works in practice. In order to be successful, they should have clear objectives, understand the vertical and horizontal

complexity of the EU political system, know and manage the political arena, tailor their lobbying strategy to the various stages of the policymaking process, form effective alliances with like-minded partners and understand the importance of good communication.

6

Employing Values, Silence and Dialogue to Bridge Gaps in Status, Culture, Gender, Age, Role and Purpose By Nick Foster

This article explores some of the intrinsic systems influencing an international conference and training centre in Switzerland. For more than 70 years, peace-building and reconciliation activities have been taking place, focused on the principle that 'change begins with me.' Diversity, experienced in the absence of local hierarchies of power and political agenda, brings people of difference together in an unusual manner. Adding to this experience the necessity to serve one another, and encourage participants to self-reflect, the effect can be fun, profound and enduring. The ambition is to 'inspire, connect and equip' leaders and change-makers at every level of society. Various embedded videos provide insights into the experiences of speakers, participants and organizers.

Viewpoint 1 Facing the Inevitable By Susan Booth

Seasons and cycles are essential processes of any living system, including a human lifetime. While we celebrate birth and all the in-betweens, we somehow are good at ignoring our own inevitable death. In this viewpoint, Susan Booth describes a discussion group, 'Let's Talk About Death and Dying,' which she co-designed to facilitate meaningful, shared conversations about our own and our loved ones' deaths. Each of the 10 sessions is designed to encourage thoughtful reflection on what it means to die, what we have to do to prepare ourselves, and, very important, how we most want to live until it's our turn.

Viewpoint 2 Arts Reflecting Living Systems By Nik Dee Dahlstrom

This viewpoint presents an experience in which the reader is asked to engage. The author summarizes: Performing arts is a living system reflecting a living system. It is a collective process where the separate entities play their parts in order to contribute to the whole. As is the orchestra or a film-production. How then does that compare with living systems as artistic monograms presented by the single artist? Is the meeting of the creator and receiver a passive or active one or even interactive and collaborative? And in a world of new technology; what is that artistic reflection versus reality, versus virtual reality, versus augmented reality?