

Theme: Teacher professional learning needs to be fostered that can cultivate teachers who are able to meet the emerging needs of the net generation

Definitions

The Net Generation

- seamlessly transitions between their 'real' and digital lives
- demands immediate response, expecting answers at the click of a mouse
- uses technology to be constantly connected with more people, in more ways, more often
- brings a consumer orientation; education is a commodity to be consumed, acquired, and accumulated
- expect to be engaged by their environment, with participatory, sensory-rich, experiential activities (either physical or virtual) and opportunities for input.

Changing roles means sustained **Teacher Professional Learning** (cf Professional Development)

- Implies learner-centred, learner controlled as compared to training or mandated courses
- Includes self-directed learning, critical reflection, experiential learning and learning to learn

Professional Learning is predominantly through **Teacher Professional Inquiry**

- Designed to improve professional practice and upgrade professional competence
- Concerns-based, through guided, personal, reflective inquiry into teaching practice

Global influences

Indicators suggest that society's shared beliefs, values, customs and behaviours are being reshaped by globalisation and technology. As a response, there is a call in many countries for transformative changes in education.

Micro level influences

Student needs and expectations, the technological and pedagogical tools available, and what it means to be educated in the 21st century are leading educators to envision education that is interactive, engaging and challenging.

An ongoing challenge is changing educators' mental models and assumptions about learners, technology, and the skills needed in a global economy.

Thesis

That the development of a disposition of professional inquiry into teaching practice can help to address ongoing challenges that arise as emerging technologies are integrated with learning and teaching.

That a disposition of teacher professional inquiry can be supported at the individual, school, state and national level.

Projected technology related trends that will impact on education over next 5 years (from educause forum)

A distinct shift to new technologies or Web 2.0 tools that can be combined for multi-pedagogical and multi-technological experiences.

With increasing numbers of students learning online, more attention will be paid to usability, particularly to understanding the user's experience.

Content will become more and more disaggregated and learner created. Open source educational materials will be co-invented by educators from around the world and will be uploaded onto searchable websites. There will be issues of quality control.

E-Learning will become an integral part of the face to face classroom with students at all levels learning to collaborate meaningfully with others school around the world.

Mobile devices will move from only audio devices to increasingly visual devices. An increased interest in digital video for learning.

There will be increasing interest in informal learning

Search engines will continue to dominate by becoming the learning tool of choice for individuals.

Changing roles of learners and teachers

Questions:

- Is knowing something or knowing how to make a decision more valuable? If so, what are the implications for testing and assessment practices?
- In a world full of images, audio, and spatial relationships, do schools put less emphasis on reading and print and more on other skills?
- Is individual effort most important, or has thinking become a distributed activity – among people, devices, and digital resources?
- What does developing academic material mean in a world of co-creation? Does it mean students should be learning how to co-create or remix material rather than authoring it?

To address such challenges requires

- sustained professional learning for educators that fosters reflective inquiry, and supports and promotes effective innovations in teaching practice
- change in the way professionals regard in-service training, with a focus on transforming schools rather than tinkering through short courses off campus
- education policy that embeds sustained, whole school professional learning

Hargreaves;

“A transformed education system will include a teaching force encompassing a far wider range of expertise, with radically improved skills in innovation, data handling and use of research knowledge, and the ability to adopt and adapt teaching strategies designed for diverse learners and purposes.”

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