



Leading Into Our Futures

Stephen Downes - Mont Tremblant, Quebec - July 8, 2017
Colleges and Institutes Canada Leadership Institutes
<http://www.downes.ca/presentation/471>

Leading Into Our Futures

This is a design exercise

We will consider a series of concepts and issues and engage in a series of 'what would you do?' exercises. The Scenario: what if education were a startup? How would we design the system from scratch?

Objectives of this approach

- To emphasize the complexity of the topic - we are not looking at simple on-off choices
- To provide experience in distributed and non-consensual decision-making, ie.
 - Each person retains their own perspective
 - The output of the workshop is *emergent* from individual decisions
 - This outcome is a complex pattern, not simple statements

Schedule

9:15 - drivers and attractors

9:35 - stakeholders and benefits

9:55 - affordances

10:15 - break

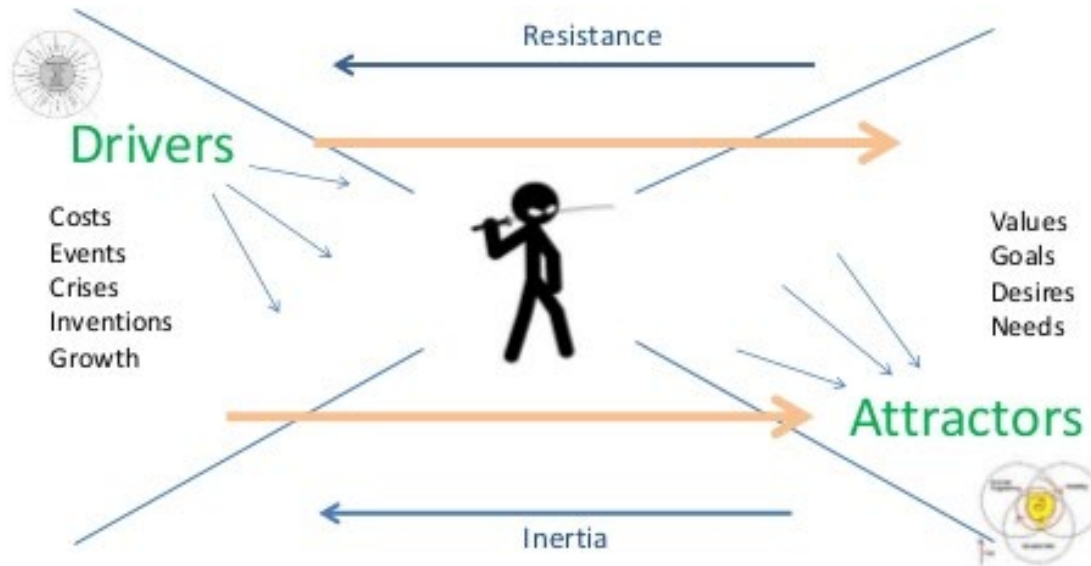
10:30 - impact

11:00 - services and trends

11:30 - designing the future institution

Drivers and Attractors

Concept: do we shape change, or react to it? Do we work toward something, or work to avoid something?



Activity

Core questions:

- What is driving change in our field? (eg., tech, economy, climate change, etc)
- What are the attractors in our field (learning, prosperity, etc)

Method - groups of two, in two stages - discuss and then select *one* driver; *one* attractor (record on [index card](#), place as cluster on wall)

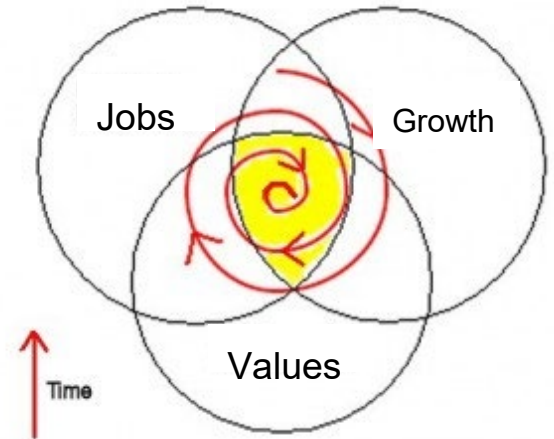


Stakeholders and Benefits

Concept: why are we doing what we do? If we assume directionality, toward what are we working?

Core questions:

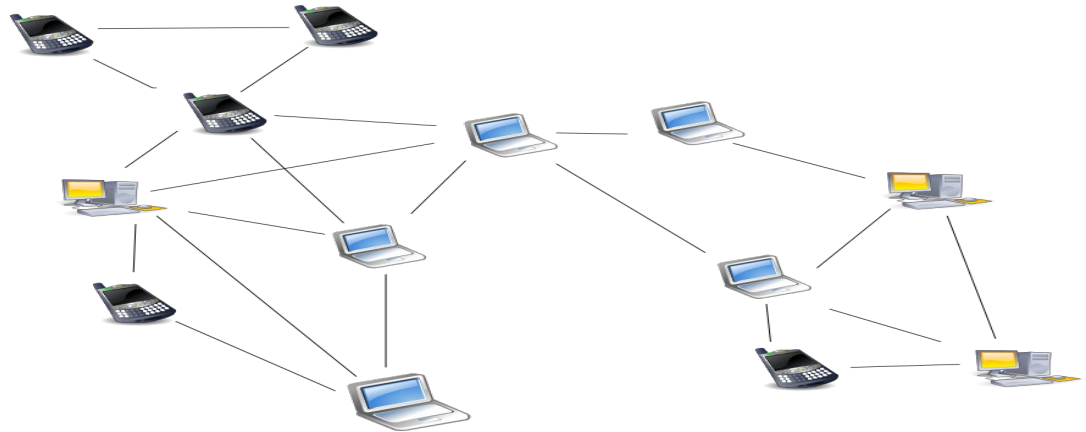
- **Who do we serve?** (students, industry, governments, society, etc) - but we want to focus - 'government' eg. is too vague, do we mean 'support the party in power', 'further a policy agenda', 'work for broad social goods' etc?
- **What is the benefit** - not just the good that is produced (graduates, certifications, etc) but the value that is produced (jobs, growth, prosperity)



Activity

Method - groups of two, in two stages - discuss and then select *one* stakeholder; *one* benefit (record on index card, place as cluster on wall)

Reflect: do we see any connections between the cards on the wall? - draw connections with **string or thread**



Building the Diagram



Affordances

Concept: what new things will we be able to do?

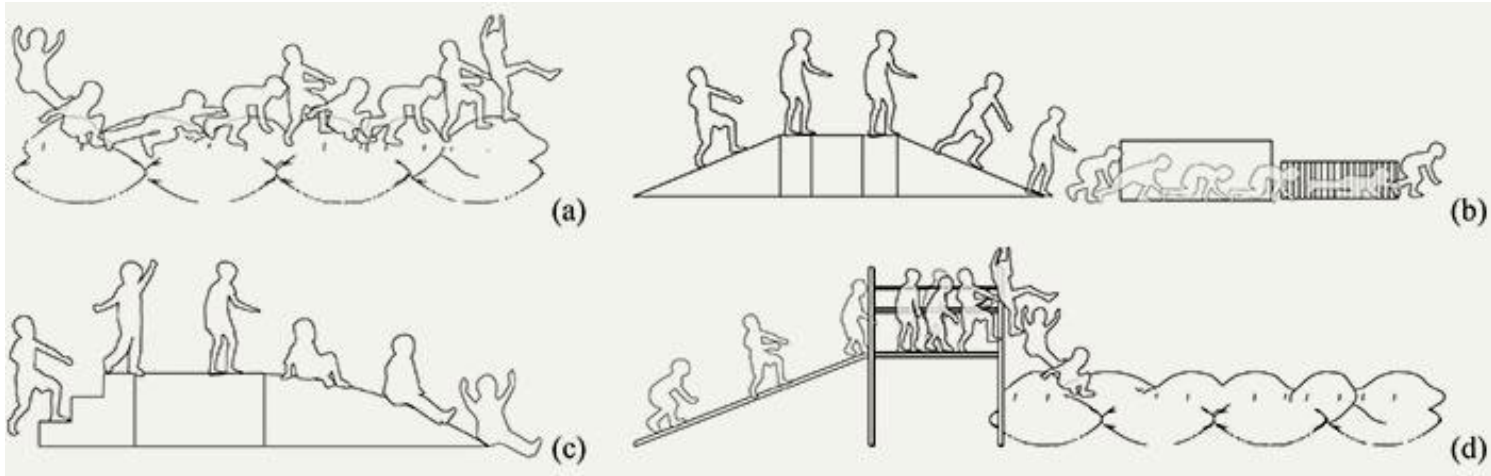
Core questions:

- How is technology changing?
 - bandwidth, computing power, social media, internet of things, new interfaces and VR, analytics, etc
- What new things can we do?
 - Immersion and simulating, making, predicting, analyzing...

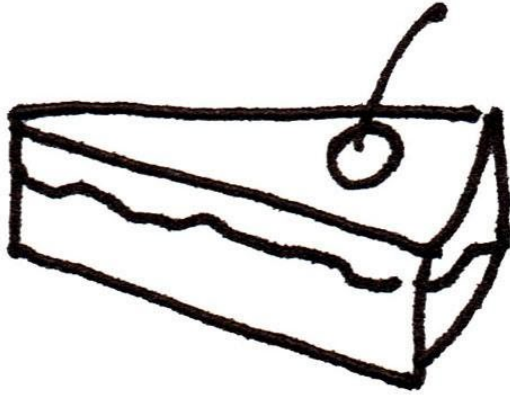


Activity

Method - in groups of 4 or 5, make an inventory of 10 or so key new affordances - give each member of the group a copy



Break

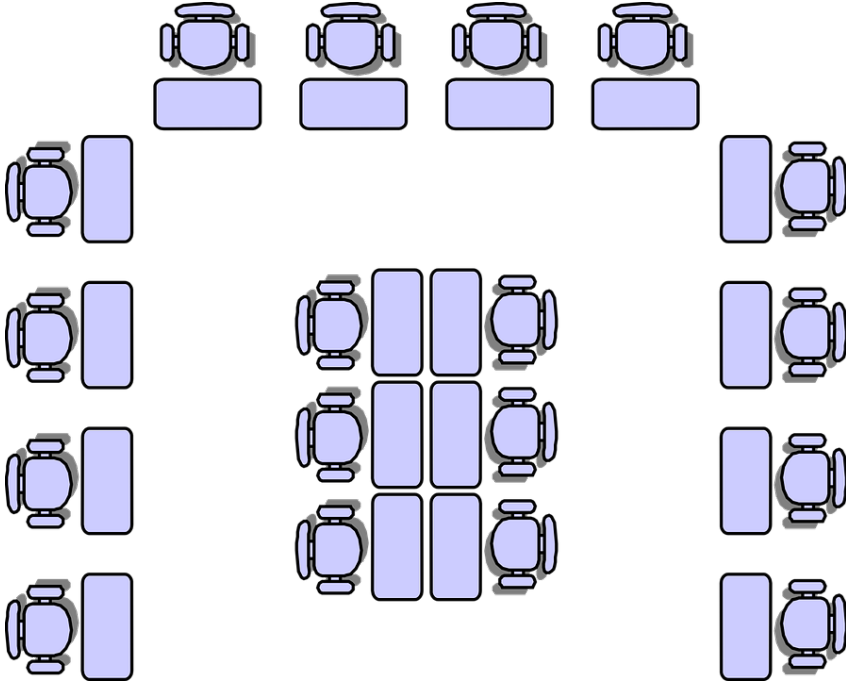


Take a break

Impact

Concept - how will 'normal education' change as a result of new affordances?

- classrooms
- cohorts
- resources (texts, etc)
- assessment
- credentials



Activity

Method - shuffle the groups - then, for each of the five items, using the affordance inventories available to the group, agree on a key change in existing practice; create an index card for each and place in the cluster of index cards on the wall

Reflection - draw connections between the existing cards on the wall and the new cards, and indicate them with string. Do we have any outliers? (ie., things not connected with string) Do we have any conflicts? Mark the connection as a conflict with an [explosion icon](#)

Services and Trends

Concept - given what we understand so far, how would we assess and/or use the major 'trends' being identified? (Or would you identify *new* services?)

Here are some of the major trends:

- Personalization & Predictive Analytics
- Bots and automation
- Virtualization & distributed networks
- From medium to environment (from content to field)
- *more?*

Activity

Method: in groups, for these and other trends:

- Assess the trends and select one of more trends to focus on. Create an index card for that trend.
- Compare the trend(s) against the cards on the wall
- Can we see these trends as *outcomes* of what we've already identified? I.e., do they *deliver* what we've targeted thus far? Connect with a string.
- Can we see these trends as *opposing* what we've already identified?

Reflection - draw connections between the existing cards on the wall and the new cards, and indicate them with string. Do we have any outliers? (ie., things not connected with string) Do we have any conflicts?

Designing the Future Institution

Concept - how would we now design the education system from the ground up...

- Defining the logic model:
Stakeholders - benefits - attractors - affordances - impact - services
- What is the business model? How do we sustain?
 - Have we achieved greater efficiencies?
 - Have we generated greater value?
 - What is the nature of the value produced? (economic, personal, social, cultural...?)



Designing the Future Institution

Concept - how would we now design the education system from the ground up...

- What is the strategy?
 - How do we structure our institutions
 - (or do we even have institutions)?
 - What are the services and value offered
 - Positioning and marketing
- What are the outcomes?
 - What constitutes 'success' in this future environment?
 - How is it measured?



Activity

Method (Converting the Network into a System?)

- In group or as individuals:
 - Study the collection of cards on the wall
 - Identify patterns of connectivity - this will define the logic model connecting stakeholders - benefits - attractors - affordances - impact - services
- Describe inputs and outputs
 - Inputs - external resources (funds, people, whatever)
 - Outputs - the 'product' delivered by the system

Stephen Downes

<http://www.downes.ca>



<http://www.downes.ca/presentation/471>