

YOU HAVE TO BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE

What Happened?

Trying to pinpoint the moment is probably going to be very difficult but this year I have realised (developed a belief) at a very deep level that it is actually impossible for us to redesign education and schools as learning communities unless each and everyone of “the players” – teachers, leaders, administrators, kids, parents, District Supers and Coordinators, State Office Staff, Chief Executives etc etc has experience of the powerful difference between “know about knowledge” and deeply knowing what generative learning feels like and an appreciation of the natural order of living systems. I think this because you can only trust in the learner and trust in the process of learning and believe in the ideas of self organising systems if you have reason to do this – having felt it for yourself, having seen the power of transformation as individuals recognise something that has been hidden to them – the power of becoming conscious. There are many possibilities.

Trying to convince someone to trust in emergence and the power of emergent properties from a living system is just too difficult if you're every waking moment has been focussed on what I now see as the illusion of control – as is woven so tightly in to western thought. This is such a hard construct to let go of – such a frightening prospect to just ‘let it all go’ and see what happens. I remember I used to work closely with a colleague who talked often about the idea of – “Lets just throw it up in the air and see what happens” and I can remember how nuts I thought she was – of course you can't just see what happens – what if what happens is a big mess!! So we satisfy ourselves with veneers of change – seeking sameness, hiding our inner taped voices and denying what ‘feels’ right. The illusion feels safer than the uncertainty of not knowing where we were going or how it will turn out.

I think it was probably the culmination of spending the week with Stephanie Pace Marshall and participating in “The Other Ways of Knowing” retreat with George and Susan Otero which has heightened my insight in to the phenomenal power of ‘trust’ to transform. The range of comments about Stephanie's thinking and work and the strong sense of community developed at the Other Ways retreat made me believe again that true redesign can only come from collective will and energy – BUT – there are so many forces working against this that it often seems an impossible dream.

Why do you think this is a significant change?

I think that these insights are significant because it advises L2L of ways forward into Phase 3 of the project. We do need to involve more people in the conversations and experiences of the Project and connect up networks of teachers, leaders, community members – how we do this though will need to be determined largely by the sites themselves.

How do you know that his has made a difference?

I have no idea how to answer this part – why did we include it again??? I guess I believe very strongly that once the learner has been invited into learning again and “re-engages” as an active participant rather than in passive acquisitional mode – much of what this question seeks just takes care of itself.

Does feeling constitute evidence??? I would hazard a guess that our State Office data people would say not – following some of the conversations we've had this week about what data to collect and why. How do you bridge such fundamental philosophical differences? In some ways this mirrors the conversation at our Learning Circle about whether anyone except the learner can comment on the effectiveness/power of their learning? Such a conundrum!! Stephanie talked about the data as the “Holy Grail” for reformers – that without redefining this we would never move from the factory paradigm of schooling.

So – no – I guess I don't have evidence for these reflections about the power of trust and experience in transformation.