

Where do we stand on learning through the arts and where can / should we go next ?

A provocation
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“To light a candle is to cast a shadow”

A Wizard of Earthsea, Ursula Le Guin



Experiment with a bird and air pump
Joseph Wright of Derby
National Gallery





Some Questions

- What are the drivers for policy-making in the current education landscape – how and why is policy being made?
- Are there mechanisms for a collective approach to policy-making? i.e. are there collaborations or alliances that the arts education sector should be seeking in order to make progress?
- What are we to make of the deficit in the system created by a long period of austerity and deliberate withdrawal of the State?
- How can we best understand the current landscape so that we can (in time) be ready with the best policy and support?





The Shadows

- The (hidden/ hard to uncover) power of not doing things
 - Rolling back the state – the power of omission – and see saws (E.G. ESFA)
 - Rolling back spending - but ‘winning’ elections
- Marketisation through “choice and accountability” mechanisms
- Radical traditionalism – via new curriculum and assessments
- Via
 - Delivering irreducible minima- e.g. recruitment and retention and school places in ways that maximise choice
 - (Very) sparing, short term, targeted initiatives through competitive bidding for small sums to plug gaps, SSIF, bursaries v teacher pay
 - Insider networks
 - Underfunded, Weakly evaluated bottom-up support e.g. N/SLEs, NLGs





Shadows - the landscape

Fragmentation in the system

- Harder to make and sustain networks
- Harder to get an overview
- The loss of infrastructure (LAs but HE too) and overview – (Lukes)
- MATs can help but average size is 6 and median is 4
- The rise in accountancy-oriented governance and serious challenges re strategic governance
- Hard looking from the outside in - but hard looking out too
- The loss of focus on place



Shadows - The landscape

- The fruits of austerity and early 2010 policies
 - Schools –face more intense socio economic and wellbeing needs – and try to meet them. The pull of pupils needs tomorrow & status quo is huge
 - Radical decline in school resourcing/capacity plus increasing financial responsibilities and rolls
 - Over-mechanistic, sometimes assessment driven NPQs
- Recruitment and retention crisis – visible but ignored for too long
- Preoccupation with narrower forms of evidence generating a drive towards easy-to-measure interventions in search of problems: and on implementation





The wax - who is left standing?

Collaborations, alliances and target policy makers at each level

- *National* - Government and its agencies, DFE, OFSTED, OfQUAL, ESFA, EEF. National Teaching Schools Council (TSC)? Expert Groups? Third sector?
- *Regional* - (DFE now + RSCs) Regional TSC, LAs, Opportunity Areas
- *School level*
 - Primary schools, families of schools, secondary schools, Trusts and governing bodies MATs, TSAs, LAs, research schools
 - *School leaders*- and their associations ASCL, NAHT, The Leadership Advisory Group
- *Teachers* - College of Teaching, Associations, ResearchEd?





The Flame - Opportunities

- Curriculum reforms
 - Breadth and depth - especially in primary and KS3
 - The emphasis on why pupils are learning what they are learning
 - Increasing emphasis on well being
 - Beyond phonics and decoding – wider understanding of literacy barriers to accessing the curriculum at KS3 (e.g. social and cultural capital)
- The research about curriculum and its relationship with CPDL...
- Research about learning and the arts???
- The Curriculum Fund? If properly theorised...
- Multi Academy Trusts – especially small ones still emphasising local discretion whilst seeking to expand what individual schools can do for their communities





The Flame - Opportunities

Continuing professional development *and learning*

- Teaching Schools, Teaching School Super Hubs - but beware “to those that have” paradox
- The CPD standards update and implementation strategy
 - New NPQ in teacher learning/ development/ education...
 - Emphasis on depth of specialist contributions (but of e.g. Kennedy)
 - Much more exemplification of the Standards
 - Quality assurance of, commissioning external, and internal provision
- Early Careers framework? Massive investment e.g. in mentoring and materials thus, potential - but silent on content so creative approaches to space for arts are needed...
- Place based energy and leadership





Flickering flames - a collective approach?

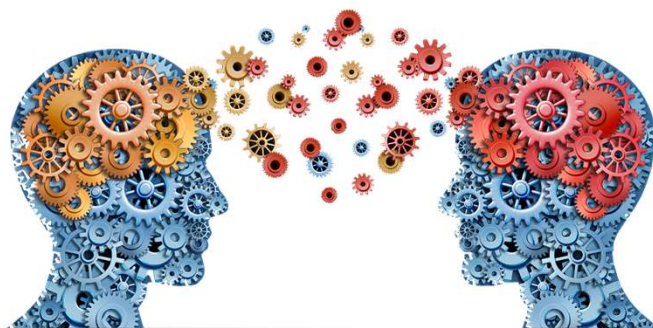
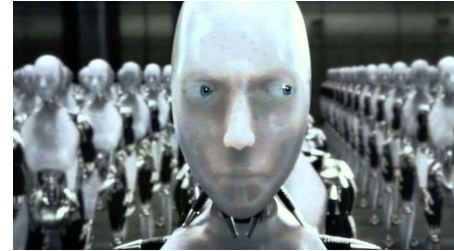
- Accumulating evidence?
- Funding streams?
- Working in slip streams:
 - Movements/ campaigns
 - Working through school leaders' organisations
 - Working through school leaders – especially through tools which
 - address the pain in the system or the drivers imposed upon them
 - through the lens of learning benefits for pupils





Flickering flames?

- In the middle of such fragmentation and challenge...
- Where do school leaders sit in your thinking?
- Where should they sit?





A global view

- England is an outlier in many of its approaches - especially so in:
 - the **degree of autonomy given to school leaders; and**
 - **the degree of high stakes accountability they are exposed to**
 - Unsurprisingly, school leadership collectively compares very favourably
 - It may have come about because of a desire to:
 - emancipate and recognise their skills at some moments; and
 - saving money and or shooting the scapegoat at others .
 - But school leaders are pivotal. Even centrist future governments will have to work through them
 - Creating a coherent, dynamic approach to embedding learning through the arts in education against the odds - means working with them
- The question for policy making - is how?





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