



Symposium: Design & Outline Programme

Governing Questions – Creating the Right Conditions

The 'what' of a more creative education system is clear enough to many within the field of education. The greater challenge is the 'how' of bringing this about:

- How to enable the transition towards a more creative education system that is as productive and rewarding as possible for all concerned?
- How, practically, to build trust, confidence and coherence amongst the educational partners, alleviate the pervasive sense of overwhelm and fatigue and create the conditions that facilitate the educational partners to play their part in the systemic shift which greater creativity requires?

A tried and tested Conversational Process

We are inviting a diverse group of students, teachers, principals, academics, institutional leaders, artists, policy makers and others to creatively consider these questions and to engage in conversations that don't normally happen. All are invited to leave representational affiliations at the door and enter into a common creative endeavour to discern the contours of the way ahead.

The design of the process draws on [Theory U](#), a technology of social change for complex multi-stakeholder systems, developed by Dr Otto Scharmer at MIT. Theory U recognizes that change in these circumstances calls for a deeper level of engagement than is possible in our traditional ways of working. Working at this level is facilitated by being in a welcoming place in the ancient Burren landscape, hosted by the creative presence of an art college. Safe from fear of attack, participants have the freedom to think and test out fresh ideas.

Critical issues will be explored at multiple levels - teacher/student, whole school and whole system. We are seeking to better understand existing patterns as well as future aspirations and what is required to deliver the education system that is fit for purpose in the 21st century.

The programme is both creative - allowing space for fresh perspectives and increased mutual understanding to emerge – as well as being action-oriented. The objective is to ensure we leave with practical next steps agreed.

Outline Programme

Wednesday 19th

7.30pm: Reception at [Newtown Castle](#) - welcome, introductions, scene-setting and 'plate of food for the traveller'.

Thursday 20th

Morning:

- Clarifying Systemic Problems (multiple perspectives)
- Taking Inspiration from Nature
- Commencing work in Strands

Four interwoven Strands

At 3 points in the Programme, we will move from plenary sessions in the Gallery to 'Strands' taking place in different locations across the College. The 'Strands' will enable deeper exploration, with smaller groups drawing on the creative resources of the College to explore the:

- (i) MICRO - Creative Change in the Classroom
- (ii) MACRO - Creative Change in the wider System
- (iii) VISIBLE - Making more visible what we may not usually see so clearly and
- (iv) UNSPOKEN - Exploring the things we may not normally say.

After each session of working in a strand, there will be a plenary 'harvest' where insights are shared between the four strands and 'harvested' by our graphic recorder. Strategic musical interventions by Martin Hayes will help open the space to creative possibility.

Afternoon:

- 2nd Session in Strands and Harvest
- Recognition of what we need to 'let go' of

Evening:

- Dinner and Entertainment

Friday 21st.

Morning

- Hatching ideas
- 3rd Session in Strands

Afternoon

- Harvesting and Prototyping

Evening

- Dinner – Feedback from Keynote Listener (Paul Collard)

Saturday 22nd

Morning

- Action Planning
- Structuring to Ensure Delivery
(Lunch will be provided)

Afternoon

- Optional Walk in the Burren (open to families).