



## 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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

We appreciate that some people are finding it strange that there isn't a more defined programme and familiar format for this event. In some ways, this takes us to the heart of the matter, that we are in one of those pivotal moments where what got us here isn't going to get us where we want to go. (In a similar sense, to the Einstein comment re 'you can't solve a problem at the level at which it was created'). Our programme and process is based on a methodology called 'Theory U', originated in Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and increasingly used across the world, with the 'U' being a physical metaphor for a deep dive to places we don't normally go, to look at things from perspectives we don't normally look from. Such a process puts a lot of emphasis on listening deeply to multiple perspectives and then being creative with what we find and how we collaboratively join the dots and fit all the pieces together. We know all this does sound strange, but in a world of increasing unpredictability, it will be increasingly the kind of thing we have to do. We will be talking more to explain the process and hope we can learn together more about how to present such processes in ways that feel safe and sage enough for people to wholeheartedly engage.

## Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>

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

## Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>

### 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:

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

### Evening:

- Dinner and Entertainment

## Friday 21<sup>st</sup>.

### Morning

- Hatching ideas
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Session in Strands

### Afternoon

- Harvesting and Prototyping

### Evening

- Dinner – Feedback from Keynote Listener (Paul Collard)

## Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>

### Morning

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

### Afternoon

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