

Conversation with Will Richardson

Current context

- This is a profound moment and opportunity for education and learning
- We are learning our way through this crisis
- We're on the verge of the "no normal" and once the current situation is over, our instinct will be to return to "normal" but we need to take this opportunity to figure out how to work and learn differently

Online schooling vs online learning

- There is growing tension about what school is and should be, but this crisis has shifted the discussion and thinking to people accepting that the school system needs to change
- Currently many schools are applying traditional systems and trying to fit them into an on-demand context rather than try to offer a meaningful online learning programme
- Schools and educators are stressed in response to pressure from leaders and parents to not "lose" content and curriculum completion and keep kids engaged
- There is high concern over kids not falling behind, nor losing track of the curriculum, with some schools even sending home homework packs and maintaining same lesson plans and in physical class environment

Giving up control

- Students and young people are learning but not perhaps in the way we expect or according to traditional standards and curriculum
- This is a moment for immense creative opportunity and we need to give students the space to explore this creativity for themselves to find self-chosen learning paths and direction
- Innovation will come from learners themselves and, having found alternatives to the current status quo, for example students setting up their campus in Minecraft as a way to celebrate graduation, they will not want to go back to the way things were before
- The current situation has highlighted the "unpleasant truth" that schools don't equal learning and now more than ever has shown testing to be redundant

The future of learning

- The conditions required for deep and powerful learning to happen are the same face to face as they are in the online world. They focus on providing a safe learning environment, learner agency, fun, etc rather than curriculum, sitting in rows, same age grouping etc.
- In a world of real uncertainty and fast change,
- This moment is forcing us to identify what we truly value about the experience of school and choosing what to un-do about schools -- IB exams, grades, fixed schedules, etc - we are choosing to un-do many traditional practices and the question will be what will we keep un-doing after this is over?
- How many of the practices we're currently setting aside will be brought back when there's a return to "normality" or will we ask ourselves 'why were we doing them in the first place'?

Four big questions to ask yourself

- How do you define learning and how have you shared that definition? Are you living it?
- What are you learning about learning? Have open conversations about learning with teachers, students and families.
- What are the values, systems and structures that matter most right now? What are you prioritising with your kids right now and what does this say about your values?
- How are you "learning into" the future? And how are you sharing the learning that you're doing into the world?