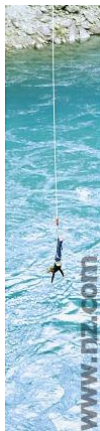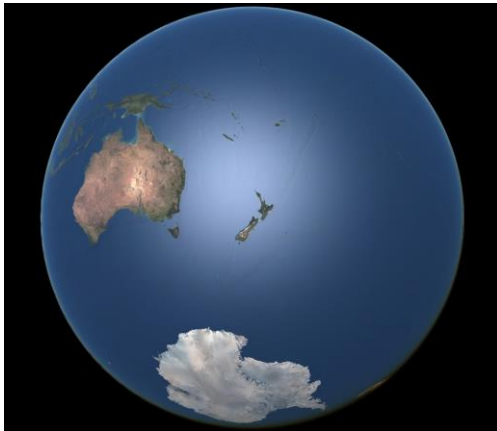# The Need for Innovation in Professional Learning

Professor Emeritus Helen Timperley
The University of Auckland
New Zealand

Why Do We Need Innovation in Professional Learning

Because most professional learning and development has:

‣ Little impact on teaching
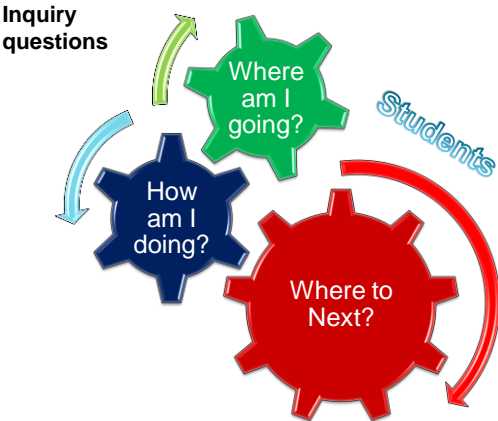‣ No impact on student learning

Compliance
OR
Curiosity and Commitment

Shifts to Inquiry Mindsets: Student learning in the past

Transmission

The Students' Point of View

From	To
‣ My job is to learn curriculum content determined by the teacher	‣ My job is to actively engage in identifying my learning goals and co-construct their meaning with my teachers
‣ Assessment – I receive marks from my teachers and this reflects my ability	‣ Assessment – I work with my teachers to identify what I know and need to know next to reach my goal

Inquiry questions

Where am I going?

How am I doing?

Where to Next?

Students

Teacher learning in the past

Teacher Learning Now

The Teachers' Point of View

From	To
‣ Professional development is something I do to improve my teaching	‣ Professional learning is about improving outcomes for targeted students
‣ I receive knowledge and skills from experts to help me improve my teaching	‣ I need to identify PL goals and actively problem-solve teaching- learning challenges to meet them
‣ I assess students to find out about their ability and what they know	‣ I assess students to find out about the effectiveness of my teaching and what I and the students need to learn next

Inquiry questions

Where are we going? | Students

How are we doing? | Teachers

Where to Next?
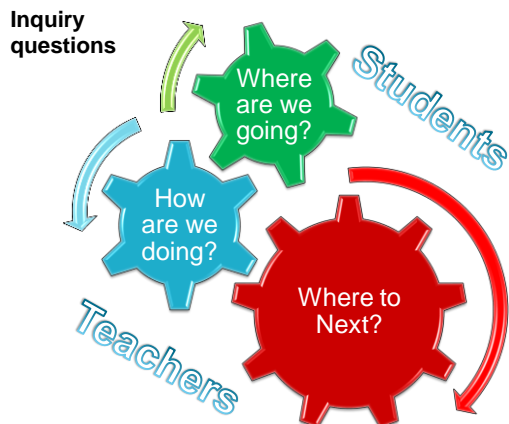
Video of Three Students Demonstrating Curiosity and Commitment

- Demonstrates intellectual and social engagement

- Mt Roskill Primary School in New Zealand
  ◦ low socio-economic multi-ethnic school
- Students in Year 6 (NZ); Year 5 (Australia)
- Speaking to 200 first time principals about their learning goals

---

For you to discuss

- What did the leaders and teachers of these students need to **learn** and **do** for the students to be so clear about their goals and learning

An inquiry approach ensures active learning and problem solving on the part of teachers

So, what's the evidence?

One of the top performing
multi-lingual,
multi-cultural systems in the world

http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/provincial/education.
aspx

Teacher Professional Learning in High Performing Systems

▸ Inquiry – based
▸ Collaborative
▸ Linked and coherent
▸ Takes place over time
▸ Professionally led
▸ The 'right' focus

http://www.learningfirst.org.au
http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/talis.htm
Teaching and Learning International Survey

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Professional Development Project in Literacy

Over 300 primary schools in New Zealand
Writing: Average gains 2.5 to 3.2 expected rate
        over two years
        Lowest 20% 5-6 times expected rate
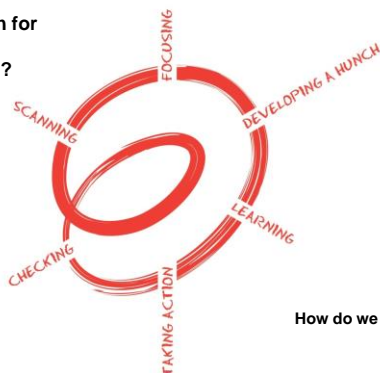
Reading: Average gains 1.5 to 1.9 expected rate
        over two years
        Lowest 20% 3 times expected rate.
Sustained over the three year monitoring period

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What's going on for our learners?

SCANNING
FOCUSING
DEVELOPING A HUNCH
LEARNING
TAKING ACTION
CHECKING

How do we know?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
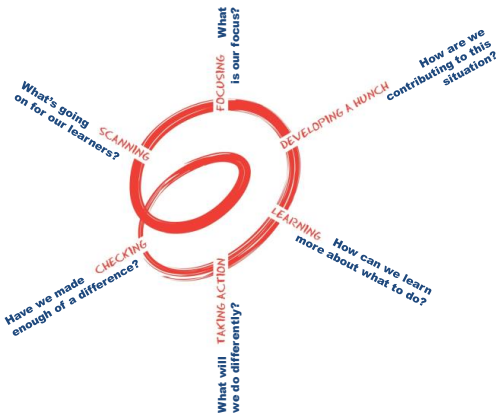
Requires New Ways to Think about What It Means to be Professional: Adaptive Expertise

Adaptive Expertise

Educators who:
- Are responsive to the needs of students
- Constantly seek new knowledge and understanding
- Actively explore alternative solutions
- Think evaluatively and check impact
- Welcome different perspectives
- Act transformatively

Le Fevre, Timperley, Twyford & Ell (forthcoming

Routine to Adaptive Expertise

Routine Expertise	Adaptive Expertise
• Apply a set of skills with increasing fluency and efficiency	• Flexibly retrieve, organise and apply professional knowledge
• Own beliefs are taken for granted and not open to discussion or scrutiny	• Aware of own beliefs underpinning practice and when they get in the way
• Based on notions of novice to expert – practice makes perfect	• Recognise when old problems persist or new problems arise and seek expert knowledge

Routine Expertise response

Adaptive Expertise response
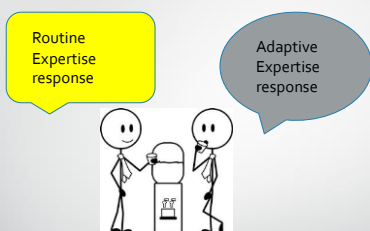
Two students are often off-task in maths. They do not appear to be motivated to even attempt the work.

An example from assessment

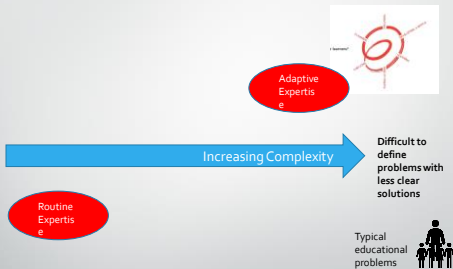| Routine expertise	Adaptive expertise
• Assessment and learning are sequential	• Assessment and learning are integrated
• Assessment results reflect student capability	• Assessment results are about the effectiveness of teaching
• Investigating the impact of teaching undermines professionalism	• Investigating the impact of teaching is essential to improvement

Slide 1

Why Worry?

- Routine expertise works in stable situations with some certainty
  - Standard teaching procedures get the job done well (efficient)
  - Still requires expertise to do so
- Adaptive expertise needed in a changing and unpredictable world
  - Difficult to codify practice
  - Diverse learners in complex settings interacting in unpredictable ways with an uncertain curriculum

Slide 2

Adaptive Expertise

Routine Expertise

Clearly defined problems with clear solutions

Increasing Complexity

Difficult to define problems with less clear solutions

Typical educational problems

From Le Fevre, Timperley, Twyford & Ell, forthcoming

Slide 3

Apply to different types of problems

Technical problems	Adaptive Challenges
Can be solved with new information or a new skill-set	Have no predictable known solution
Are relatively easy to identify	Usually feel uncomfortable to identify and are easy to deny or resist
Have known solutions	Cannot be 'fixed', but can be navigated through
Solutions can be taught	Solutions usually require changes in how we think and act
Can look up the answer - usually a technical problem	Solutions require taking action – experimenting to make new discoveries

Adapted from Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009) The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Technics for Changing your Organization and the World. Harvard Business Press.

Slide 1

Responsiveness

Increasing Complexity

Adaptive Expertise

Routine Expertise

Clearly defined problems with established solutions

Difficult to define problems with less clear solutions

From Le Fevre, Timperley, Twyford & Ell, forthcoming
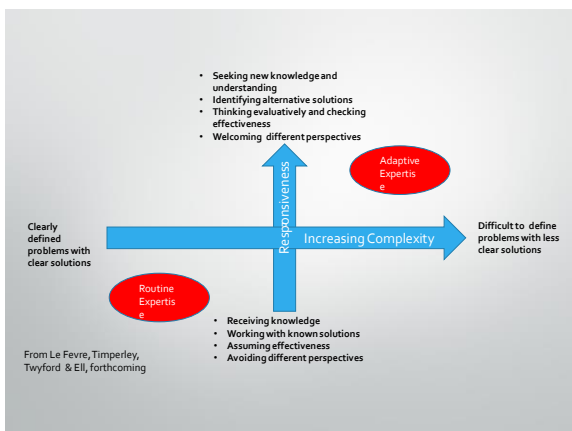
Slide 2

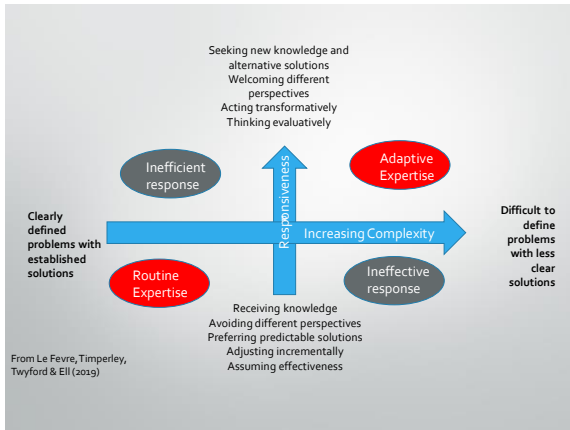| Technical problems	Adaptive Challenges
Can be solved with new information or a new skill-set	Have no predictable known solution
Are relatively easy to identify	Usually feel uncomfortable to identify and are easy to deny or resist
Have a known solution	Cannot be 'fixed', but can be navigated through
Solutions can be taught	Solutions usually require changes in how we think and act
Can look up the answer - usually a technical problem	Solutions require taking action – experimenting to make new discoveries
Best supported by a teacher > learner relationship, where the teacher is the expert (may be PD provider > teachers; leader > teachers)	Best supported through collaborative inquiry

Adapted from Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009) The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Technics for Changing your Organization and the World. Harvard Business Press.

Slide 3

- Seeking new knowledge and understanding
- Identifying alternative solutions
- Thinking evaluatively and checking effectiveness
- Welcoming different perspectives

Responsiveness

Increasing Complexity

Adaptive Expertise

Routine Expertise

Clearly defined problems with clear solutions

Difficult to define problems with less clear solutions

- Receiving knowledge
- Working with known solutions
- Assuming effectiveness
- Avoiding different perspectives

From Le Fevre, Timperley, Twyford & Ell, forthcoming

Seeking new knowledge and alternative solutions
Welcoming different perspectives
Acting transformatively
Thinking evaluatively

Inefficient response

Adaptive Expertise

Clearly defined problems with established solutions

Responsiveness

Increasing Complexity

Difficult to define problems with less clear solutions

Routine Expertise

Ineffective response

Receiving knowledge
Avoiding different perspectives
Preferring predictable solutions
Adjusting incrementally
Assuming effectiveness

From Le Fevre, Timperley, Twyford & Ell (2019)

For too long …

We have been trying to solve complex problems with routine expertise