



# Futures Thinking in Action

## Lessons Learned

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# Future Thinking

- Why is it important?
- Why is it difficult?
- When does it work?

## Question one

# WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

# Futures Thinking is important

- Our schools need to prepare students for jobs that do not exist yet...
- using technologies that have not been invented yet...
- in order to solve problems that haven't even been identified yet.

*(The Jobs Revolution: Changing How America Works)*

# Futures thinking is important: fluidity

We are doomed to be free (J.P. Sartre)

... and we are getting more freedom all the time

## Futures thinking is important: fluidity

- Social mobility has been increasing
  - Individuals have more freedom to choose their own identity, life style and profession
  - The rules underlying societies are less rigid
  - Boundaries are dissolving between states, spheres of life, organisations
- 
- Futures thinking helps us to clarify options

Futures Thinking is important: complexity

Complex problems have simple, easy to understand, wrong answers (H.L. Mencken)

... and complexity is on the rise

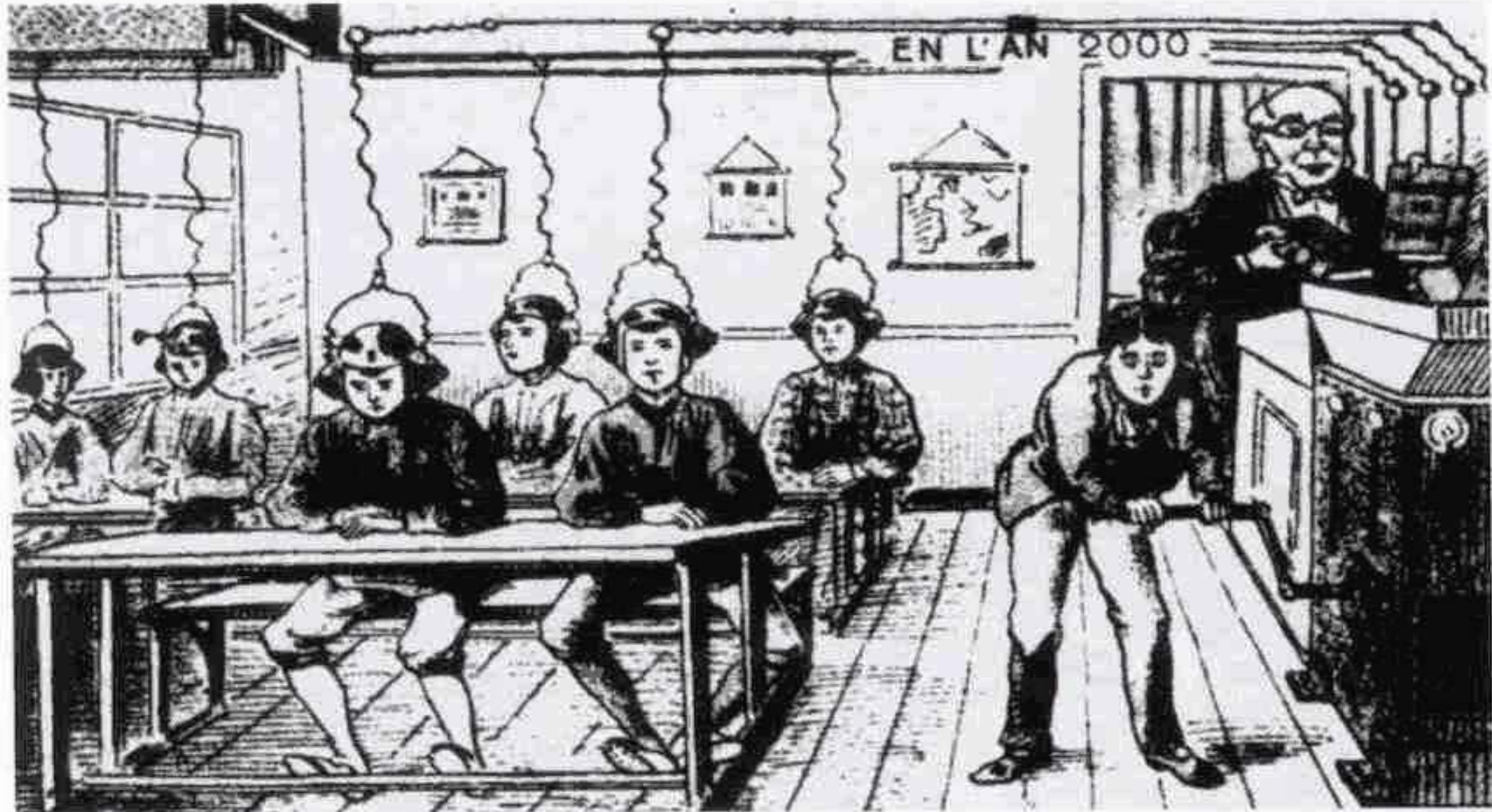
## Futures Thinking is important: complexity

- More diverse stakeholder and objectives
  - More diverse student and teacher populations
  - Demand-sensitivity and personalisation
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- Futures thinking helps us to see the big picture

## Question two

# WHY IS IT DIFFICULT

# Futures thinking is difficult



**En l'an 2000: in the year 2000**

# Futures Thinking is difficult

- Policy making is the art of “muddling through” (Lindblom)
- Policy making is about “puzzling and powering” (Hecllo)

## Question 3

# WHEN DOES IT WORK?

# When does it work?

- What can Futures Thinking do?
  - Create dialogue
    - Ontario
  - Build capacity
    - Victoria
  - Inform Policy and Strategy
    - Finland, Alberta

# When does it work?

- Have top-level (political) support
- Some examples
  - New Zealand
  - Australia
  - Finland

# When does it work?

- Strong leadership and organisation
- Some examples:
  - New Zealand
  - England

# When does it work?

- Use existing momentum
- Some examples:
  - Victoria, Bendigo
  - Sweden, Boras
  - The Netherlands

# When does it work?

- Have capacity available
- Examples:
  - Finland
  - Victoria

# Conclusions?

- Futures thinking works best when most of these conditions are fulfilled:
  - Politicians or high level management openly support it
  - There are sufficient funds to ensure strong leadership and organisation
  - It can be used to give direction to existing momentum
  - With capacities and practical material already developed