Call to Action for Leadership:
EDUSummit Report from Leadership Committee
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Introduction

The leadership committee at EDUsummIT discussed societal shifts in leadership away from the “hero” leader who holds the vision, the resources, and the power to making sweeping changes, and towards one of “service” leadership that builds the skills for distributed human and social capacity of the organization. However, such changes are not pervasive. The ecologies of education are complex with nested hierarchies of educational, political, professional, and commercial dimensions that operate at different levels of the system from the classroom to the global arena.

The committee discussed how distributed leadership supported by information and communication technology (ICT), helps engage people at different levels of the ecology to effect change that flows throughout the system. Some new practices in teaching with technology are designed by teachers and shared with other teachers and beyond the school. However, access to technology accompanying visions and goals for instructional use also come to the classroom from the different levels of the educational system. And new tools and innovative uses of technology enter the classroom from the side as researchers and developers build knowledge and tools to shape education.

The wide-ranging introduction of technology into schools suggests that shared leadership from different points within the ecologies of education is needed. Anyone within the educational complex, who engages in learning can develop new skills that are of value to others in their community of practice. Sharing these skills develops social networks of informal leaders. When informal leaders reach beyond the local sphere and work with others to externalize the knowledge of the community and share emergent knowledge across distances, they often are moved to formal roles of leadership--building new knowledge with and about technology.

When thinking about its charge to consider a “call to action,” the committee challenged themselves to model the use of technology in the calls for action. Researchers, developers, educators, and leaders can model innovative and participatory use of information and communication technology as the evolve methods and practices to work with educators. For example, writing a book to share knowledge about participatory collaborative technology is possible, but does not model the use of the technology as both the medium and the message.

In a model of distributed leadership, the responsibility for leadership is shared throughout the educational community. The members of the committee recognized that modeling the value of distributed leadership, would involve not only seeing themselves as creators of the call to action but also as the recipients of the call. In the hero model of leadership, it is easier to make assertions about what leaders and organizations need to do. In the participatory model of leadership employing emergent technology, this call to action is also an acknowledgement that all participants share the responsibility to play active roles in developing the change.

In our discussion of leadership the committee recognized that leadership in the design of new practices supported by the technology enters the system (1) from inside the classroom as teachers share practice, (2) beyond the classroom in the form of educational policies and organizational support, and (3) outside of schools as knowledge building research and commercial development provides new ideas and tools. Our call to action addresses each of these different levels of the educational hierarchy.
CALLS TO ACTION

From the Classroom: Call to Action for Educators

Educators need to conceptualize their work to include personal learning and development. A quality teacher is one who is learning every day through practice. In order for teachers to engage their students in knowledge building rather than knowledge reception, teachers themselves have to be engaged in knowledge building using the collaborative tools that support this work. This is not something that they do as a project from time to time. It should be an everyday part of their work. Teacher teams that rise to levels of leadership because of the knowledge of technology enhanced practice that they are building should be rewarded. Peer review is a much better way to judge the quality of teachers than using students’ performance on standardized tests. The committee reviewed a number of recognized processes for teachers to develop skills for learning from and through practice:

a. **Action Research**
   Action research is a rigorous form of progressive problem solving from practice by teachers who collect and analyze data and then engage in collective and individual reflection on data in an ongoing cyclic pattern. Action research becomes a disposition toward learning, values evidence, and develops a reflective stance towards deep understanding of the underlying causes of change. Action research with technology has been demonstrated to produce deep knowledge of how technology is changing learning.

b. **Lesson Study**
   Lesson study is a focused examination of a lesson by a group of educators who work together to understand the learning processes in students that occur when the lesson is delivered. Lesson study is a way to create learning contexts that is open to student knowledge building and yet prepares the teacher for how to best deal with the multiple approaches that students bring to the learning context. When lesson study is used on lessons that implement technology, it generates deep knowledge about the role of technology in learning.

c. **Collaborative protocols for examining student work**
   Looking at student work is a powerful way for teachers to focus on the practices that lead to improvement in student learning. Student work, rather than performances of tests, is a better indicator of learning and with the use of computer tools for assessment could become standardized assessments of student learning.

d. **Professional learning communities and networking**
   Forming professional learning communities is a way of formally structuring the social networking in a school to increase the flow of expertise among teachers. By externalizing the knowledge of the group, teachers learn how to make use of the intellectual resources that are distributed throughout the school. Forming professional learning communities around the use of technology has the potential to enhance the flow of technical expertise through the school. This networking can be productively extended beyond the school with teachers assuming important roles in
this knowledge-building process. A wide application of this idea could result in rethinking the way we assign teachers’ workloads such that teachers can engage in work beyond the classroom as well as teach in the classroom.

From Beyond the Classroom: Call to Action for EDUSummIT Organizers and International Agencies

While informal social networking can be effective, more intentional work at an organizational level will be required to make the distributed projects described above successful. Establishing and supporting the collaborative spaces for international groups to work in partnership to develop knowledge sharing practices could be led by Kennisnet (The Netherlands), BECTA (UK) and ISTE (USA) --perhaps supported by UNESCO. This group could model the form of distributed, service leadership that we seek to extend throughout the educational ecology. Fostering links between national organizations at different levels in the ecologies could be a priority. Specifically this coalition might:

a. **Call the international community together with more EDUSummIT conferences.**
   Working summit conferences bring groups from different disciplines and leaders from around the world to foster cross-pollination and to address issues of leadership with and through technology. These conferences could be sponsored by a coalition of different groups under a joint banner to create an international focus.

b. **Fostering links between national conferences and journals with a focus on ICT.**
   These organizations and conferences could be encouraged to give priority to research that focuses intently on learning and how technology can best be used to support learning in changed learning landscapes. This could include a discussion of how technology-centric approaches are less helpful in evolving the knowledge of the field.

c. **Lessen the divide between research and practices.**
   Establishing review processes that reward researchers who work with practitioners to develop implications for practitioners in all research publications, including print and on-line journals is called for. Research that merely dips into schools and develops findings to share only with researchers are not developing knowledge that is improving schools. Networks and connections between practitioners and researchers need to be developed because the present system is not useful, and not being used by educators.

d. **Leadership in the establishment of a clearinghouse and or database of practice.**
   There is a need for better vehicles to share action- and design-based research, policy, and innovative ideas related to IT in education that is informed by an understanding
of the changing landscapes, including information about adoption and impact (possibly building on former initiatives such as ISTE’s CARET database).

e. Advocate for funding agencies to support the evolution of new research ecologies.

If priority, including funding was accorded to multi-level multi-role engagement in research then teachers, principals, technology coordinators, curriculum and education policy makers would have time to conduct the action and design research described above. The McArthur foundation funding for digital media and learning coordinated with dissemination of research about ways that media are changing the society and our understanding of learning exemplify this idea. It needs to be reproduced.

1) From the side: Call to Action for EduSummIT Members and Researchers:

a) Participatory knowledge building –The International ICT-WIKIWEB.

The handbook uses print technology to convey information about a field that is emergent and engaged in rapid shifts that are reshaping the way we work together. New technologies make it possible for large numbers of people to write documents that live and change over time. These living documents are different than traditional publications as they do not go through the sequential process of writing, editing, reviewing, and final publishing. Instead these processes take place continuously in parallel, or in never ending cycles. There is no final publication but rather an evolving changing publication. This process challenges the way we think about knowledge building. The Wikipedia is a demonstration of how millions of people worldwide can create a living document that has value.

The first action is a call to the participants of EduSummit to create a wiki handbook of innovative uses of technology for learning and teaching. The current handbook (citation) can inform the initial structure but, of course, this structure will evolve over time. Each author of a handbook chapter could be asked to write a single page that highlights the most important messages for their chapter with links to where more information can be found. The one-page entry is a roadmap to resources on the topic. One of the key resources will be the chapter but the one-page entry provides an opportunity to link to other resources. An entry would be monitored by the person who initially posted it, but anyone in the world could share in the revision process suggesting different ways of thinking about the issues. If each handbook author agrees to monitor the writing on their topic, the site will immediately have 75 authors. If each of the attendees at the EDUsummIT authors a page, then we will begin with 150 different topics.

This activity would be an example of distributed leadership. It will take some organization and seed funding but the start of this activity does not have to be extensive. None of the authors received any funds for writing their chapters in the current handbook. It is possible that being identified as a topic editor on a project
author with international participation will be compelling enough to create the next, more interactive version of this important undertaking.

b) Call to Action to Support Practitioner Research in Education

Across the research community there needs to be more support for developing practitioner driven research agendas. This would help to promote the shift to community or distributed forms of leadership in education. The use of ICT to support and develop this research agenda and collect and share stories of change is the intent of this call.

Action research with technology is one form of change. The development and promotion of conferences, web publications and practitioner presentations at major conferences engages teachers in the process of knowledge building. Learning from practice is the first stage of leadership and schools need to be transformed into places that support teacher learning. If teachers use and learn from evidence based knowledge, then they will become better consumers of research. The present research-development-dissemination model in which researchers conduct studies some other agency translates these results for classroom use is a failed model. The most avid consumer of research is someone doing similar research. If teachers are researchers learning from practice, then they will more effective researcher partners for larger scale studies and more likely to attend to and use the outcomes of research studies.

The products of reflective practitioner research are not likely to be research reports. New participatory technology makes it possible for them to share their work in other formats and mediums. For example, teacher researchers could share video and graphic narratives. This database of narratives could be sponsored by any number of organizations. This is similar to TeacherTube but could be more narrowly focused on research around the use of information and communication technology in the classroom. This might be a participatory international construction of something similar to Edutopia, perhaps with support from the George Lucus Foundation.

c) Development of the International EDUSummIT Community

While creating the International ICT-WikiWeb or practitioner based narratives might be community products, there could be other activities that help to the build a community from the initial EDUsummIT conference. While other tools might emerge, the initial use of NING could serve to connecting people past the conference. It could also be a place to share and coordinate the work of a global community.