

*More of the same won't improve
learning outcomes – it's time for
change in Irish education*

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Re-Imagining Learning, 13th May 2011





CONTEXT





The Gathering Storm

“Ireland’s [education system] is distinctly average, and average is no longer good enough”

(Craig Barrett, Farmleigh, 2009)

Our second level system, produces students who learn to the test; who in ever greater numbers are not learning to think for themselves; who receive spoon-feeding at second level and expect the same at third”.

(Tom Boland, HEA 2009)



Students find that they encounter the most rigid of curriculum structures, and the most traditional of subject-based learning

(NCCA, *Innovation and Identity: Ideas for a new Junior Cycle*, 2010)

More of the same won't improve learning outcomes....

- Examinations
- Rote Learning
- Grinds
- Teacher Led Learning
- The Victorian Classroom
- Flogging a dead horse – don't blame the teachers
- An industrial model of education that has failed us and failed elsewhere



It's time for change in Irish Education



Learning & Teaching for the 21st Century

“Reform of our education system is as important to the international business community as stabilisation of our banking system”

- Martin Murphy, MD Hewlett Packard in *The Irish Times*, 5th October

Set sail on the 7Cs of 21st century learning

- Critical Thinking
- Creativity & innovation
- Collaboration
- Cross-cultural understanding
- Communication
- Computing technology
- Career Learning



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A team-based, technology-mediated model for learning

ABOUT BRIDGE 21





Programme Activity

4 years' operation (2007-11)

- Social Outreach with 2nd level schools
1,200 Transition Year students from 15 schools
- Primary School workshops
600 6th Class students from 15 schools
- Computer Programming Workshops
300 Transition Year students from 40 schools
- Extended B2C Programmes 2009-11
200 Transition Year students from 8 schools



Learning Model



Results to date

Themes emerging from research:

1. Students developed a **personal responsibility** for learning
2. **Teamwork** is a positive contributor to the learning experience
3. Evidence of development of **meta-cognition** & higher order learning
4. Results resonate with international research (**SPRinG project**)
5. Skills students developed during programme carried **back to school**

“I can do things I didn’t think I could”

“You’re responsible for yourself & for your own work”

“I learned how to interact with other people & work together to build anything”

“I like working in a team rather than by myself”

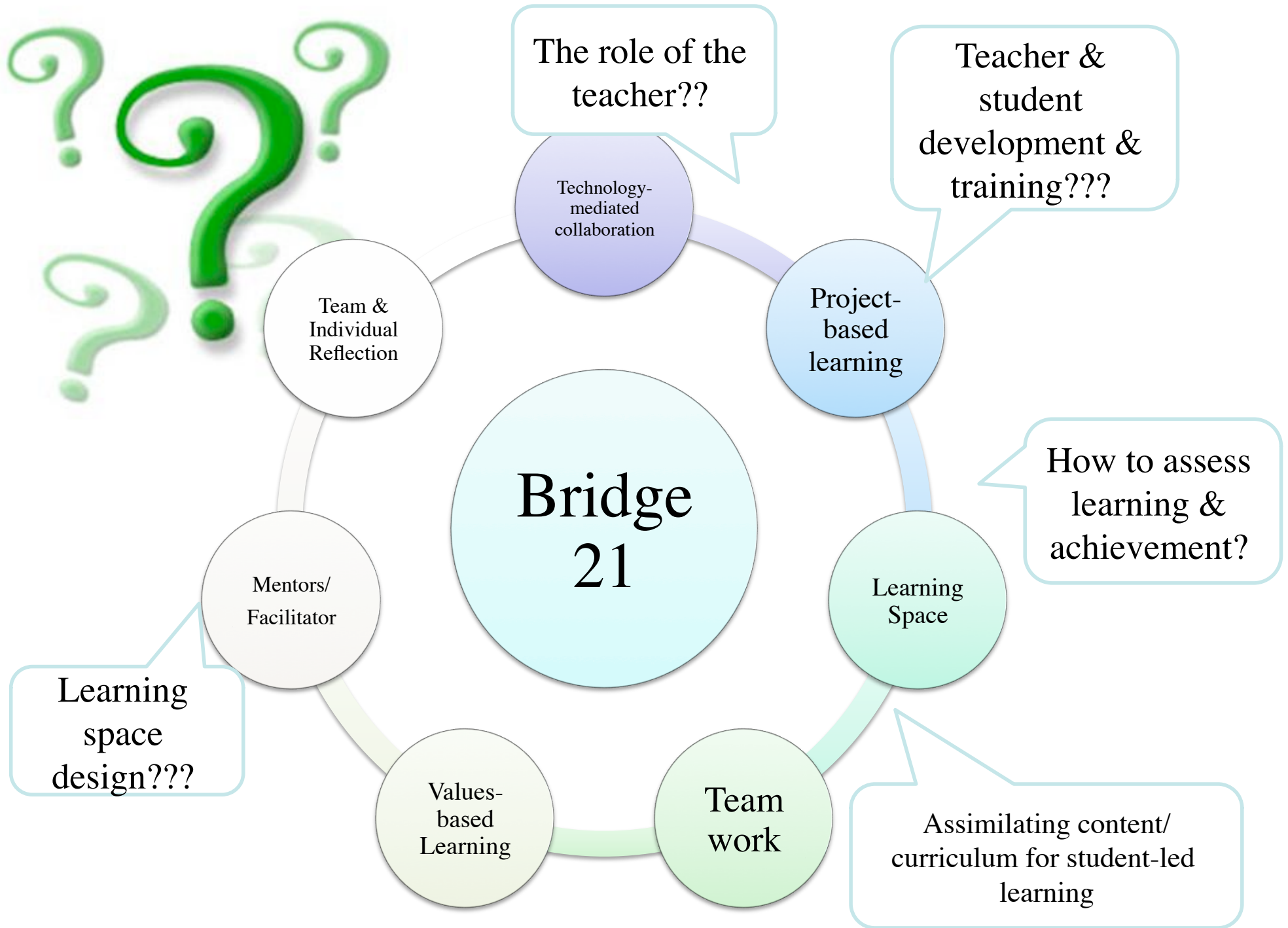


SPRinG (Social Pedagogical Research in Group work), UK

Findings	Implications for education
Group work can have a stronger influence on academic progress than other forms of teaching and learning.	We need to rethink pedagogical theories which favour teacher-led activities and individual work.
Pupils' behavior improves because they spend more time on task and engage in higher level discussions.	Given space and time to develop pupils' group working skills, teachers can transform the learning environment.
Relationships improve between teachers and pupils and among pupils themselves.	This suggest an alternative to current approaches to school discipline which aim to control rather than eliminate the problem

(Blatchford, Kutnick, Baines & Galton, 2003)







Challenging formal practice

A **pilot programme** to implement key elements of the B2C model in the formal classroom:

- Team-based learning
- Technology-mediated collaboration
- Project-based, cross-curricular learning

A shift in focus from the teaching of individual subjects, to the teaching of **key competencies** and 21st Century **learning skills**.

The development of a pedagogy that is based on **collaboration, social learning** and the creative use of technology.



Why teamwork?

- Enhance **motivation** & attitudes towards learning
- **Active engagement** in learning
- Academic **achievement**
- Develop the **ability to learn** from & **with peers**
- Develop **communication** skills
- Encourage **personal responsibility** for learning & behaviour
- **Improved relationships** with peers & teacher
- **Leadership** development
- **Critical & analytical** thinking skills

*“What children
can do together
today, they can do
alone tomorrow”*

- Vygotsky, 1978



Group-work

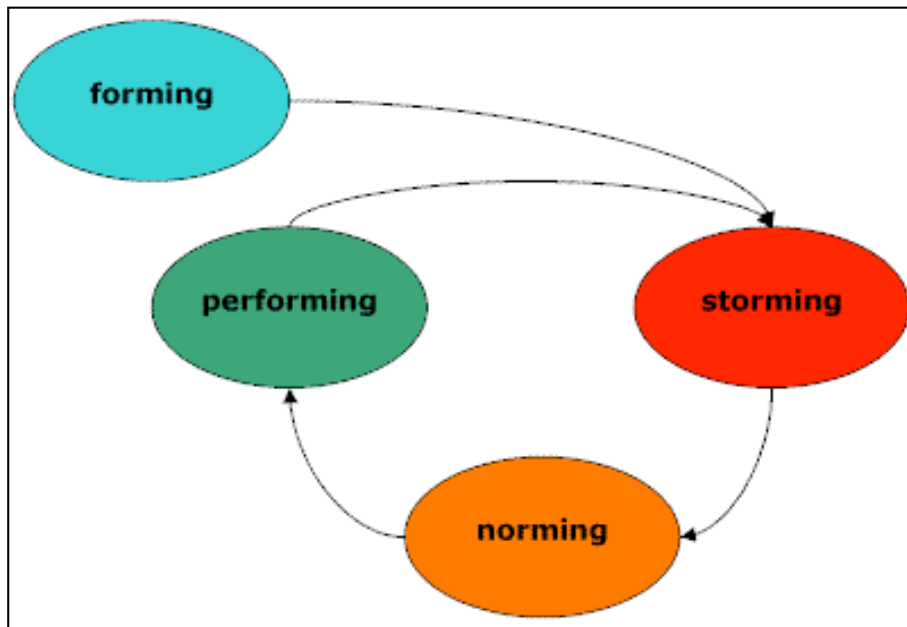
Collaboration

Cooperation



Teamwork

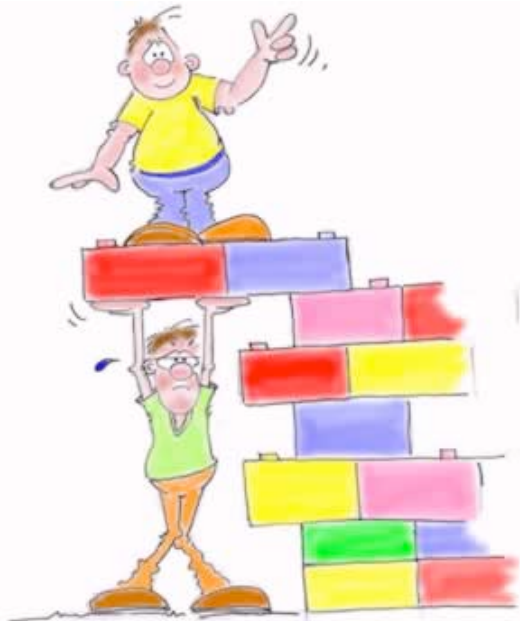
*“The evolution of a **group** to become a **team** involves the resolution of interpersonal and team dynamic challenges” (Tuckman, 1965)*



Scout Patrol:

A learning community by which a group of young people support each other's development, commit themselves to a shared project and interact with similar groups (Bénard 2002)

Teamwork in the Classroom



Group-based learning: A Classification

<i>Type</i>	<i>Task demand</i>	<i>Intended outcome</i>	<i>Example</i>
Seating Group	Each pupil has a separate task	Different outcomes: each pupil completes a different assignment	Writing stories on themes chosen by the pupils
Working Group	Each pupil has the same task	Same outcome: each pupil completes the same assignment independently	Mathematics worksheet
Co-operative Group	Each pupil has separate but related task	Joint outcome: each pupil has a different assignment	Making a map
Collaborative Group	Each pupil has the same task	Joint outcome: all pupils share same assignment	Problem solving e.g. discussing a social or moral issue





Teamwork is...

- More than students sitting in a group
& asking them to work together

...students sharing their talents & working together to achieve a common goal

- Transferring the balance of ownership / responsibility from teacher to students
- Involving the students as co-learners
- Cooperative & inclusive – incorporates all types of learning together (e.g. Peer-tutoring)



Pilot Programme 2010-11

Schools	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd level • Diverse socio-economic backgrounds • Single sex & mixed gender • Previously established track record from B2C programme • Principal = strong, visionary leader
Teachers	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary participation • 10 subject areas (Maths, Science, English, Geography, Irish, History, French, Business Studies, CSPE, Home Economics) • A 'shared journey'
Students	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Year (ages 12-13) • Mixed ability



Banking vs Problem-Solving

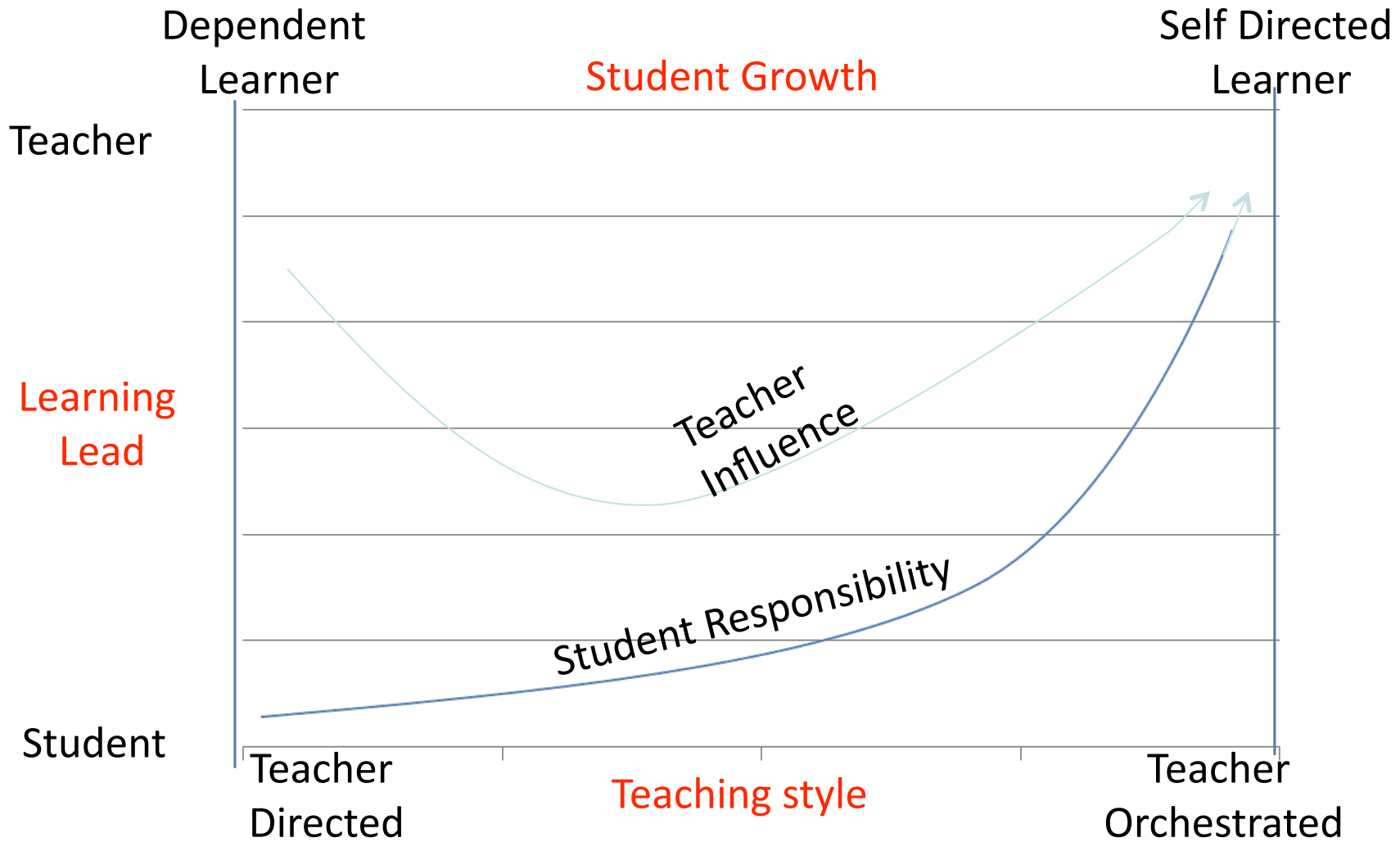
“To resolve the teacher–student contradiction, to exchange the role of the depositor, prescriber, domesticator, for the role of student among students, would be to undermine the power of oppression and serve the cause of liberation.”

- Paulo Friere (1972)





Changing the Influence and Responsibility Paradigm



BRIDGE²¹



THE POWER OF LEARNING

More of the same won't improve learning outcomes so we should embrace the totality of Learning

