

# BUT WILL WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Facing the challenges of  
transferring and embedding  
the riches of our knowledge

Roger Collins

# PURPOSE

1. THE SYMBOLISM AND IMPORTANCE OF BEGINNINGS
2. OUR STEWARDSHIP FOR KNOWLEDGE, ITS TRANSFER AND APPLICATION.

# AGENDA

1. The potential of beginnings
2. Are we stewards for the Theory - Practice gap?
3. Some thoughts about closing the gap
4. So what can we reasonably conclude?

# THE POTENTIAL OF BEGININGS

## THE POWER OF SYMBOLS

- OUR VENUE
- ATTENDEES
- APPLICATION ARENAS
- TOPICS
- PROCESSES

**THERE MAY BE FEW HEAVIER  
BURDENS THAN A GREAT  
POTENTIAL**

**Lawrence J Peter**

## SO TO REALISE SOME OF THE POTENTIAL OF THIS CONFERENCE:

1. LIVE WHAT WE KNOW IN OUR INTERACTIONS
2. LOOK OUTWARD BEYOND OUR OWN INTERESTS
3. REMEMBER THAT OUR PRIVILEGES BRING RESPONSIBILITIES

# ARE WE STEWARDS FOR THE THEORY - PRACTICE GAP ?

1. The existing and potential riches of our knowledge
2. Is there a gap and should we be concerned ?  
The case for " yes " and " no "
3. How can we explain the gap ?
4. What options do we have to close the gap  
( should we so wish )
5. Factoring in these issues to our thinking, discussions and outcomes.

# WE HAVE CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION!

1. Much of our knowledge is anchored in rigor
2. We are dealing with the fundamentals of the human condition
3. We know that the knowledge, appropriately applied, has impact
4. The concepts and theory have wide generalisability: they have utility across levels of analysis and contexts
5. Interested stakeholders are characterised by diversity

# IS THERE A THEORY - PRACTICE GAP?

1. Gaps are universal
2. Consequent issues include:
  - \* Just how wide and deep is our gap?
  - \* The lag time: what is reasonable?
  - \* The social, economic and personal consequences
  - \* Do we individually or collectively have responsibilities for the gap ?

A SECOND GAP EXISTS  
BETWEEN THE  
STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

THE CONCLUSION:

**MORE WORK REQUIRED**

**Lessons from economists and  
environmentalists**

# SHOULD ANYONE BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE GAP ?



NOT US !

Charles Hulin  
Harold Weiss

YES WE MUST BE

Kurt Lewin  
Chris Argyris  
Albert Bandura  
Michael Beer  
Gary Latham

# EXPLAINING IS MORE COMPLEX THAN DESCRIBING THE GAP

	KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS	
	WITHIN	BETWEEN
CONTEXT & STRUCTURES		
DYNAMICS		

# THEORISTS & RESEARCHERS

1. Reward and promotion systems
2. Our discipline
3. Our research methodologies and analytical procedures
4. Our educational curricula
5. Our own practice
6. Our core and bridging journals
7. Our lack of agreement on what is "fact"

# CONSULTANTS

1. Have the advantage of regular face to face contact with practitioners
2. Their survey data is often limited
3. Pressures to sell solutions

# JOURNALISTS

1. Can over rely on stories and anecdotes
2. Can be vulnerable to fads, hot topics

# PRACTITIONERS

1. May lack a disciplined approach to knowledge and its application
2. May be employer oriented
3. May only cope with limited amounts of "new " knowledge

# CLOSING THE GAP

Lawrence and Lorsch

Differentiation and integration

The challenge of building  
quality connections: respectful and  
mutually informative

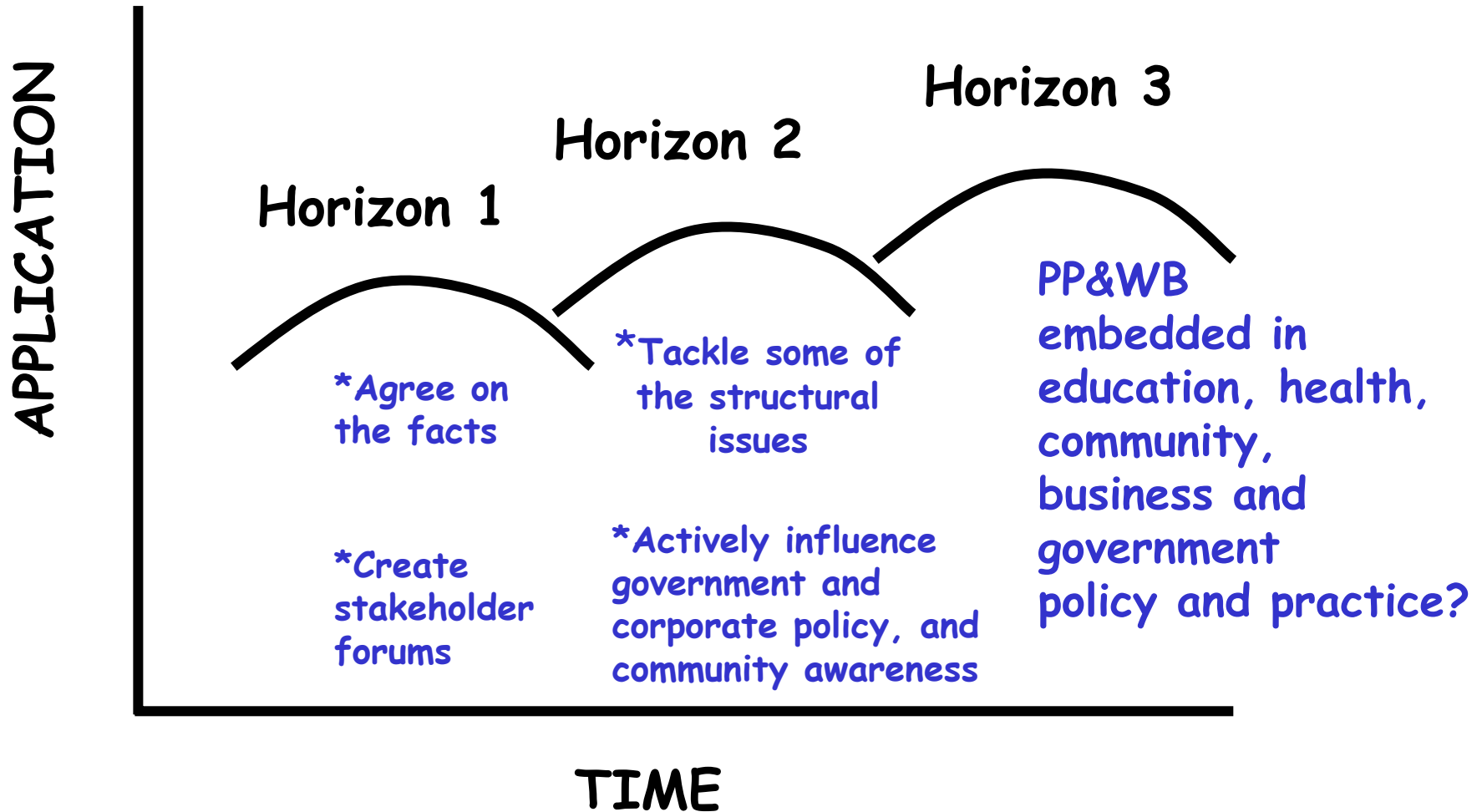
# LET'S TRANSFER SOME KNOWLEDGE !

- Fringe Dwellers as innovators?
- 3M: idea generators, sponsors, fairs and decision makers
- Everet Rogers: diffusion of innovation. Early adopters + fast followers can create tipping points
- Malcolm Gladwell: The law of the few. Mavens, connectors and salespeople

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

# A STRATEGIC APPROACH



# IN CONCLUSION

1. This conference can be a microcosm of the future we are seeking to develop. This can imprint future initiatives in ways that will enhance our prospects of success.
2. The opportunity cost of poor knowledge transfer is enormous
3. Individually and collectively we need to take a decision on the nature and extent of our responsibility for, and role in the integrity of the body of knowledge and its transfer

4. The challenges of rigor, relevance, collaboration, transfer and impact are considerable, but if we do what we know, then contributing to the common good will bring more than adequate rewards to all involved.

But consider the second order consequences !

"The future is not a place to which we are  
going.

It is a place we are creating.

The paths to the future are not found but  
made

and the activity of making them changes both  
the maker and the destination."

*Martha Cleary*



Based on what I know about PP & WB, what are two things that I and two things that we can do to ensure the success of our conference ?

I can 1.....  
2.....

We can 1.....  
2.....