

# Renewing teachers' practice(s): Starting over. And over. And over.

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# Who I am

- A teacher: helping people to learn.
- A lifelong learner.
- Curious about:
  - the types of environments/climates which enable learning
    - particularly practice as the medium of learning e.g. teachers learning through the practice of teaching
    - particularly how time mobilises learning

# 'Learning = change over time'

- Time= (linear) duration
- Change = force effecting learning: a changed or changing environment is deemed to structure learning (and the learner).
- Learning = predicated on an absence, lack of completeness  
(Knorr Cetina,2001)
- Learning = continuing motion, pursuit, travel to reduce the extent of absence
- Learning = becoming (Hodkinson, Biesta & James, 2008)

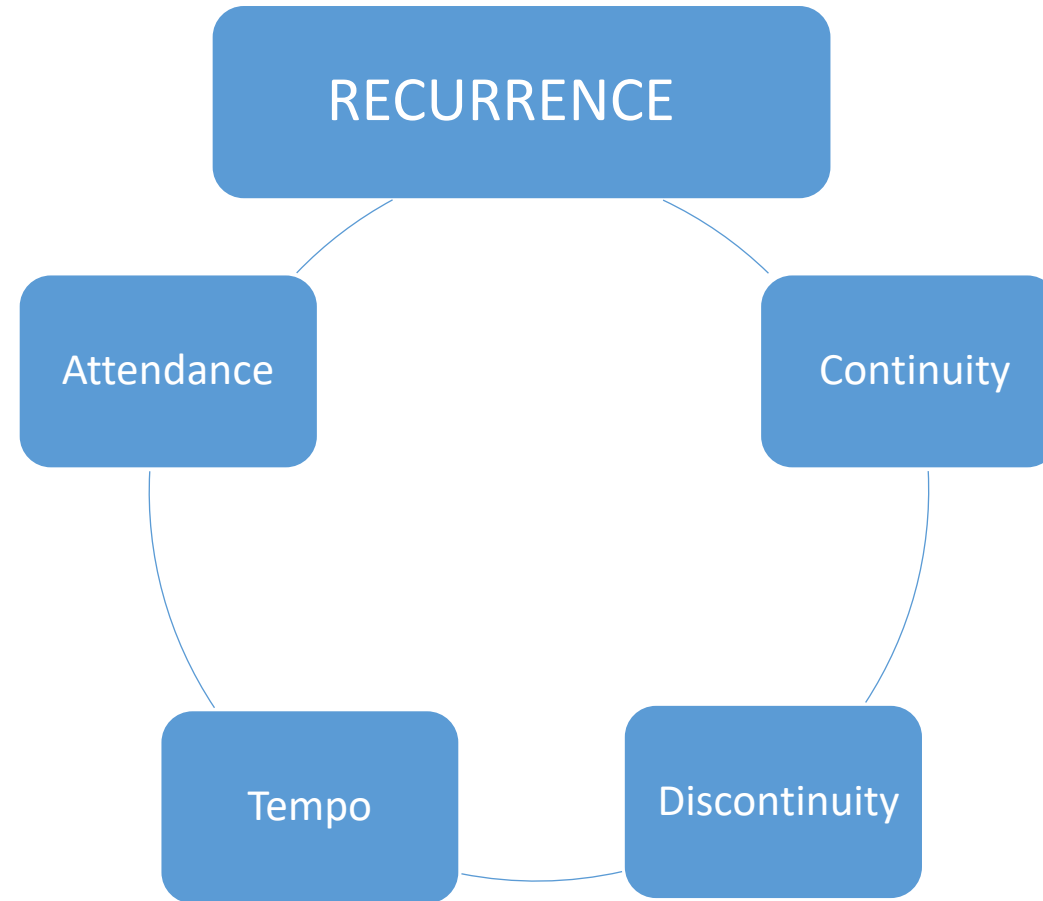
# ‘Why am I still teaching presentation skills?’

Two interwoven imperatives in formal education:

- To continually produce the new
- To produce excellence

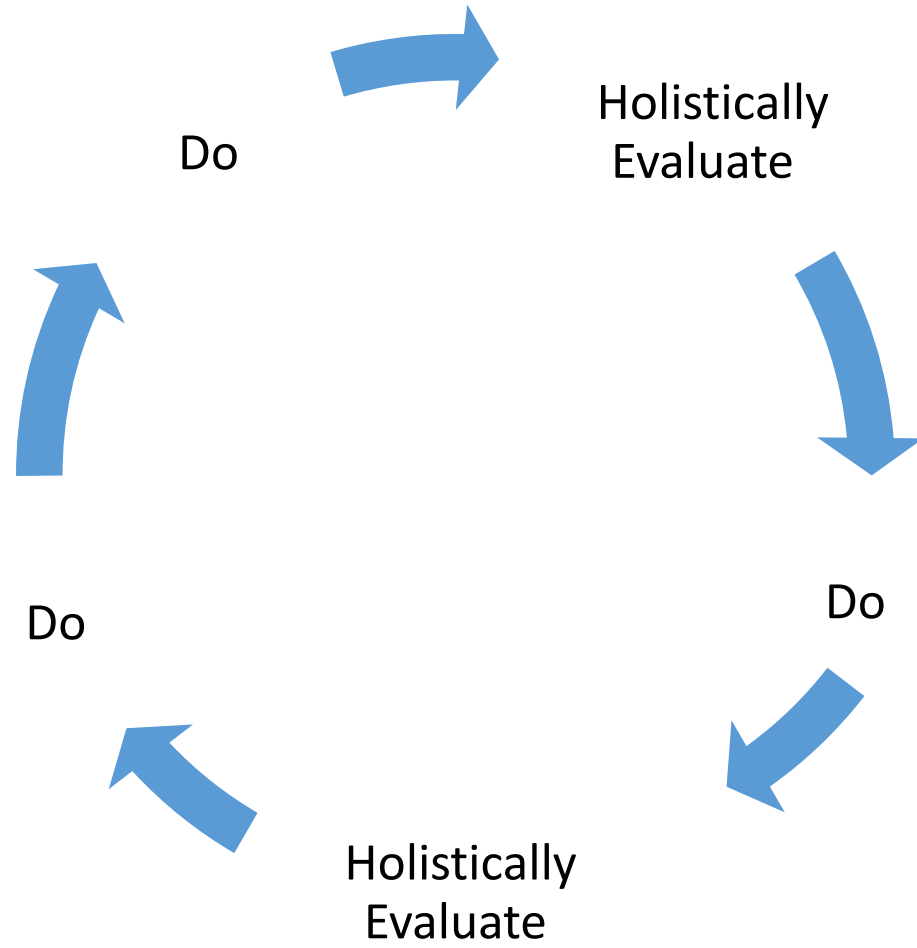
Evidencing excellence = demonstrating innovation

# Five Enabling Temporalities for Learning



Think of something you are good at...

How did you get good at it?



# If you're already good, doesn't repetition just produce stasis?

Generates a cycle of mutually reinforcing confidence/competence building (Shove et al, 2007):

successfully having done something, i.e. achieved some level of competence, engenders confidence to do it again and further enhance competence...

Familiarity through recurrence leads to habit formation/automation:

- not needing to consider everything anew leads to efficiency and optimisation, and 'spare time'
- attention freed up to engage in consideration of the new and meta-evaluation of the habituated practice itself

(Young, 1988)



# Anticipation/expectation of recurrence and re-performance...

## **invites, compels:**

- experimentation, trialling
- creative, explorative, speculative engagement
- absorbing play

## **encourages:**

- seeking out ways to hone practice
- curiosity
- trying to do something differently

# Other ways recurrence also harbours change:

- The persistence of a (cyclical) practice time = subject to some of its elements changing e.g. new participants, materialities....
- Performance is never the same, only similar to previous occurrences: ***répétition sans répétition*** with small changes coalescing over time into bigger changes

# Recurrence both stabilises and unsettles practice: discontinuous continuity or dynamic persistence

- Change is slow, gradual evolutionary, not swift and revolutionary
- New emerges from old: a balance between stability and instability (Young, 1988)
  
- Pace is conducive to genuine learning
- Worth investing in (re)learning to practice a persisting practice since the goal posts are not always moving

# Decentring the changing environment to focus on the changing appreciation of the environment by the learner

- To notice what previously went unnoticed, make the invisible visible (Mason, 2002)
- Greater intimacy, sensitivity, more nuanced understanding, an 'education of the attention' (Ingold, 2000)
- Having time for learning/teaching, investing it with significance through (embodied) attention and deliberation
- Engaging in mindful not mindless practices

Learning:

not (always) = travelling, predicated on an *absence*, about *becoming*;  
= staying put, about *presence* and *being*

# Time quantity and time quality

- Intensification of time = time poor, under time pressure  
(e.g. Menzies & Newson, 2007; Ylijoki & Mäntylä, 2003)
- Acceleration of time: hasty time, instant time (e.g. Macnaghten & Urry, 1998)  
iTime (Agger, 2011)
- Future-time orientation (Clegg, 2010): emphasis on planning, future performativity self-surveillance, self-improvement, (self-) promotion, career progression

# From problem solving to problem setting

- Do we teach the same ‘things’ or different people each academic cycle?
- Do we have to/choose to teach in the same way – or does the recurrent nature of teaching afford us possibilities/compel us to renew our practice(s)
- Does ‘experienced’ just mean doing the same teacherly things better- or continuing to extend experience by seeking/trying out the new?
- Does ‘new’ (have to) mean innovation, continual becoming or being: remaining where we are now, recombining/reassessing the known/familiar into fresh, deeper understanding
- How much is L&T and teaching innovation driven by institutional imperatives e.g. the ‘excellence’ agenda, rather than by genuine pedagogical concerns to do the fundamentals well enough?

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