

Innovating Teacher Education Together

Learning at the Boundaries Between Teacher Education and School Practice

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Question

How can teacher education institutions and schools jointly develop innovative teacher education practices that respond to the challenges of contemporary and future education?



- Contemporary Context
- Rapidly changing educational practices
- Increasing diversity among learners
- Tensions between innovation and quality assurance

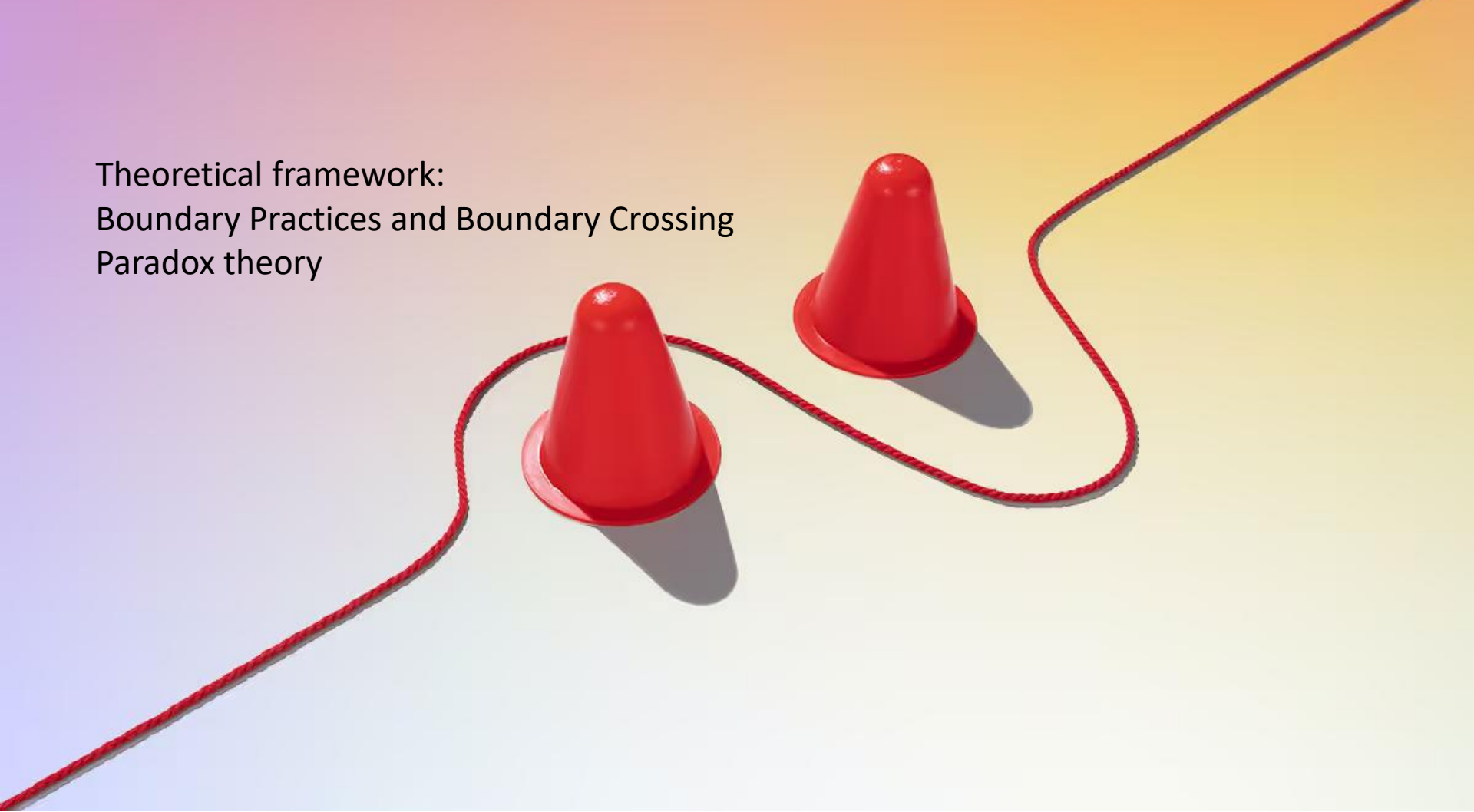


"Which developments in your educational context require a different kind of teacher than ten years ago?"

Many schools feel that traditional teacher education programmes do not adequately prepare future teachers for innovative educational concepts and emerging professional roles



Theoretical framework:
Boundary Practices and Boundary Crossing
Paradox theory



Boundary practices emerge when two worlds collaborate:

- Teacher education institutions
- School practice

These settings bring together different cultures, perspectives, priorities, and ways of working.

Drawing on the work of Akkerman and Bakker (2016; 2011), learning often occurs at the boundaries between different practices.

Boundary crossers

- School-based teacher educators
- University-based teacher educators
- Coordinators of school–university partnerships
- Student teachers

Bounday objects

- Tools and artefacts that support collaboration: Assessment forms
- Internship guides
- Portfolios
- Joint assignments



FOUR mechanisms



1. Identification

Who are we, and who are they?

The image features a complex network of thick, braided ropes in various colors: purple, green, red, blue, yellow, and grey. Each rope is adorned with a series of knots, creating a web-like structure that fills the frame. The ropes are interconnected, with some crossing over others, suggesting a system of relationships or a shared network. The background is a plain, light grey, which makes the vibrant colors of the ropes stand out. In the center of the image, there is a yellow rectangular box containing text.

2. Coordination

How do we align our work?



3. Reflection. What can we learn from each other's perspectives?



4. Transformation

Can something genuinely new emerge?



Which learning mechanism is most visible
in your context of learning?

Paradox theory

Examples

Pole 1

Pole 2

Stability

Innovation

Control

Trust

Structure

Freedom

Theory

Practice

Care

Courage

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Courage ['k
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Care	Courage
Careful development Broad support and ownership Incremental improvement	Fundamental redesign Experimentation Risk-taking

The research suggests that sustainable innovation requires both approaches

"Where would you position your organisation on the continuum between care and courage?"

Agency & Affordances

Agency refers to the capacity of student teachers to:

- Take initiative

- Make informed choices

- Assume responsibility

- Shape their own learning process

Affordances are the learning opportunities offered by the environment.

Examples include:

Teaching lessons

Observing colleagues

Conducting inquiry or research

Participating in professional learning communities

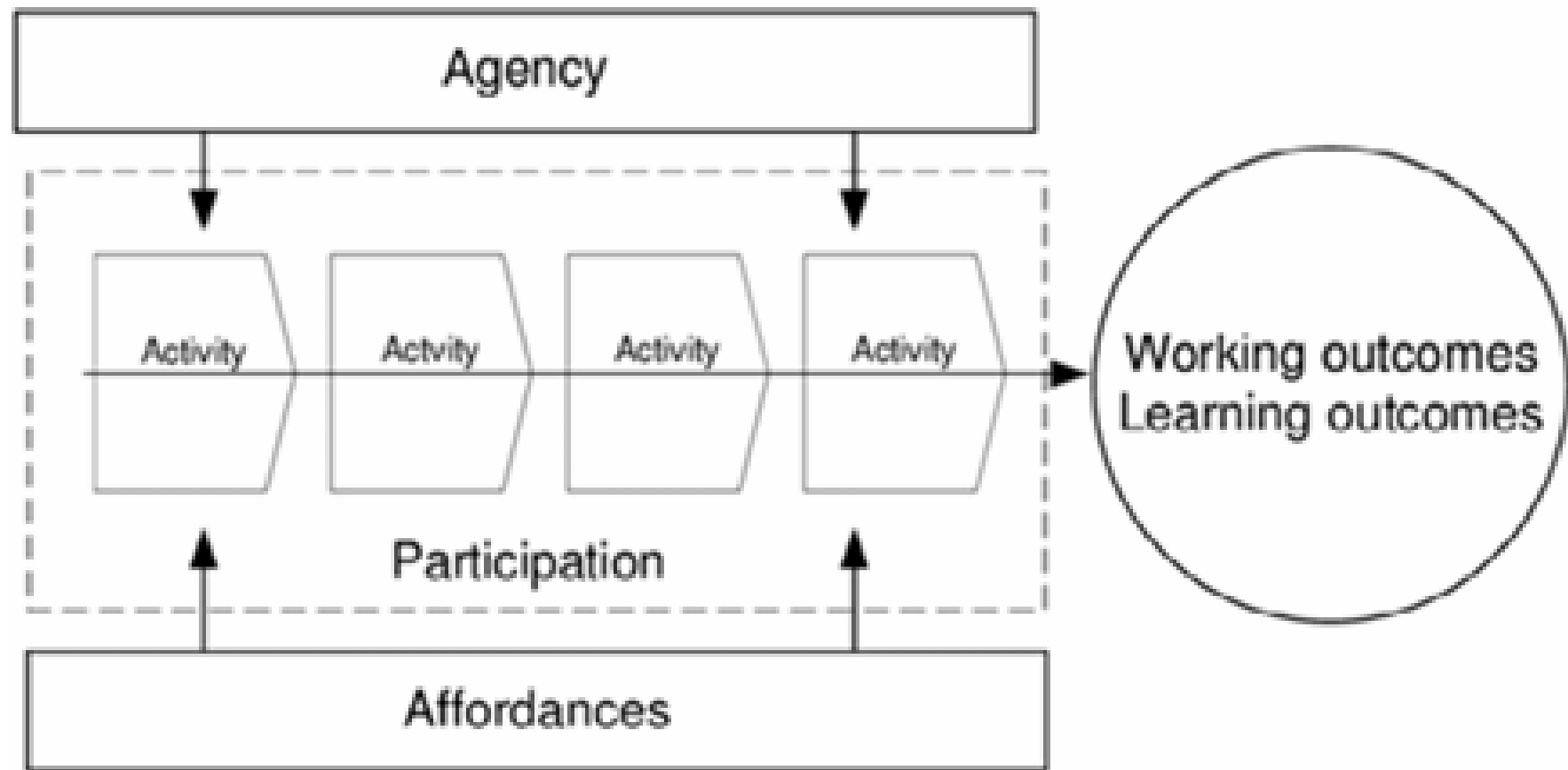
Key insight

Learning emerges through the interaction
between:

What the environment makes possible

+

What the learner does with those possibilities



Four Forms of Agency Identified in the Study

1. Agency in One's Own Learning; Self-regulation and professional growth.
2. Agency in Professional Communities; Contributing to collaborative learning among colleagues.
3. Agency in Students' Learning; Influencing and supporting pupil learning.
4. Agency in School Development; Contributing to educational innovation and organisational improvement.

Key findings - 1

Collaboration is often strongest during the initiation phase of innovation.

Afterwards, teacher education institutions tend to take ownership of curriculum design, while schools become more involved again during implementation.

As a result, the full potential of boundary practices is not always realised.

Key findings – 2

Existing quality assurance frameworks can constrain innovation.

Examples include:

Accreditation requirements

Assessment regulations

Established institutional structures

This creates tensions between innovation and accountability.

Key findings – 3

Student teachers are rarely involved as co-designers of innovation processes.

Yet their perspectives are crucial for meaningful curriculum development

What to learn?

For Teacher Educators:

Develop and use an explicit Theory of Change.

Make paradoxes visible and discussable.

Intentionally design for agency.

Learn from innovations in other institutions.

For School Leaders:

Participate actively in curriculum design teams.

View teacher education as a shared responsibility.

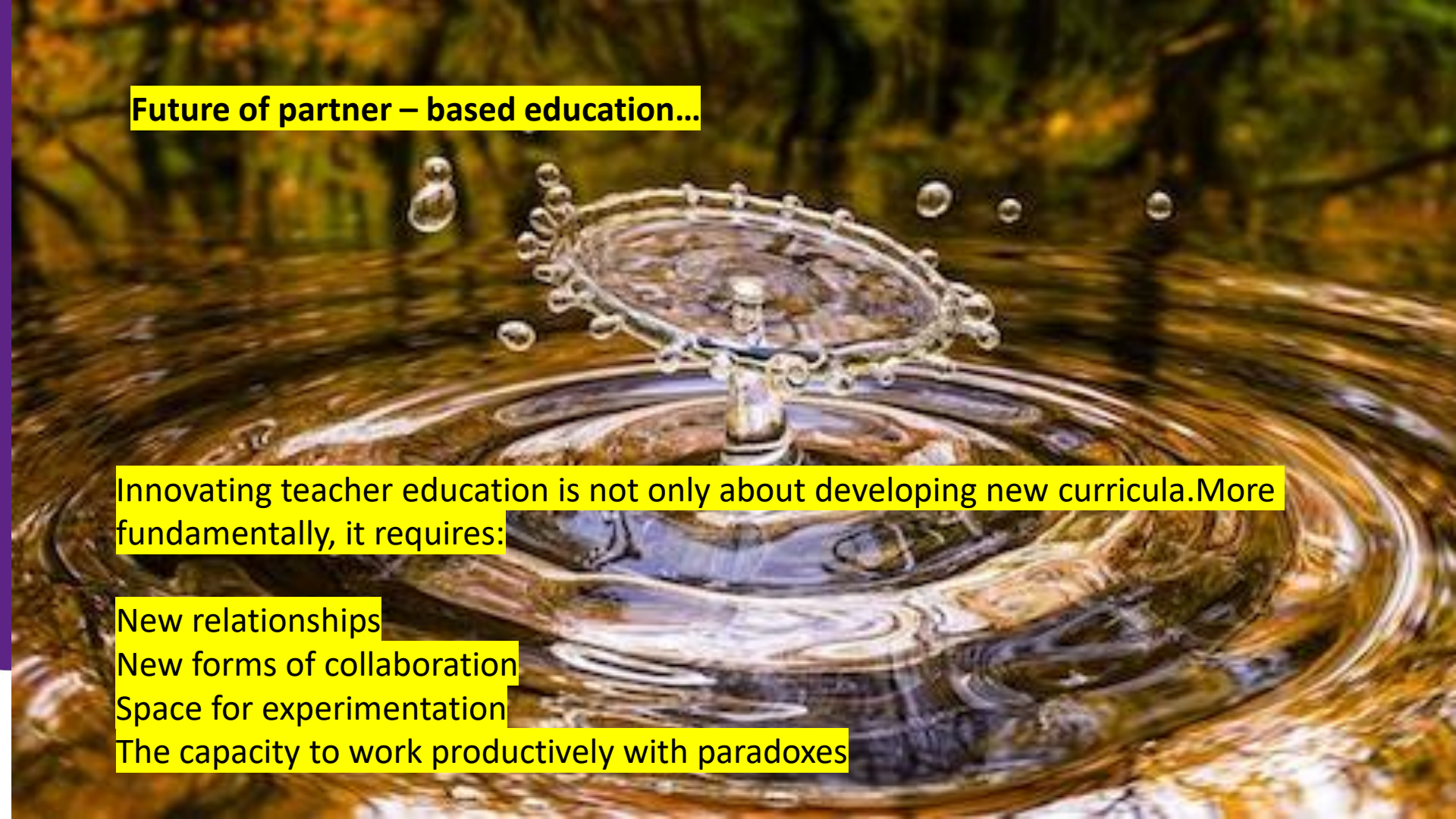
Develop a common vision of the teaching profession.

For Educational Leaders and Administrators:

Create space for experimentation.

Invest in research and development capacity.

Recognise and support boundary crossers.



Future of partner – based education...

Innovating teacher education is not only about developing new curricula. More fundamentally, it requires:

New relationships

New forms of collaboration

Space for experimentation

The capacity to work productively with paradoxes

A photograph showing several hands of different skin tones (light, medium, and dark brown) reaching up from the bottom and sides to form a circle. The background is a clear blue sky with a few wispy white clouds. The hands are positioned as if they are about to clasp or are already clapping, symbolizing unity and collaboration.

“Innovation does not emerge within the safe boundaries of existing systems, but at the places where different worlds meet, challenge one another, and create something new together.”

Let's play!