

TOWARD THE OPEN FUTURE WE MAKE

ALT-OER 25

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Panel Overview

- How it came together
- Podcast style:
 - 5 areas from 2024 keynote Catherine Cronin & Laura Czerniewicz
Open Education at a Crossroads
- 3 Panelists = interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary
- Panelists opening comments
- Rotation through the 5 areas with 2 commenting & 1 moderating
- Panelist's takeaways
- Audience contributions

Polycrisis

- Wikipedia: Polycrisis - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polycrisis>
- Polycrisis.org explanation - <https://polycrisis.org/lessons/what-does-the-term-polycrisis-mean/>
- Cambridge Dictionary definition - <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/polycrisis>

Connie's Overall Perspective



Indigenous wisdom - Athabasca University Institutional Learning Outcome 6 "... a learner adapts to a changing world with self-reflection, **tapahtêyimisowin** (i.e., *humility, belonging to the category of respect, generosity, and kindness*), curiosity, and confidence" *Learning to be and to become*

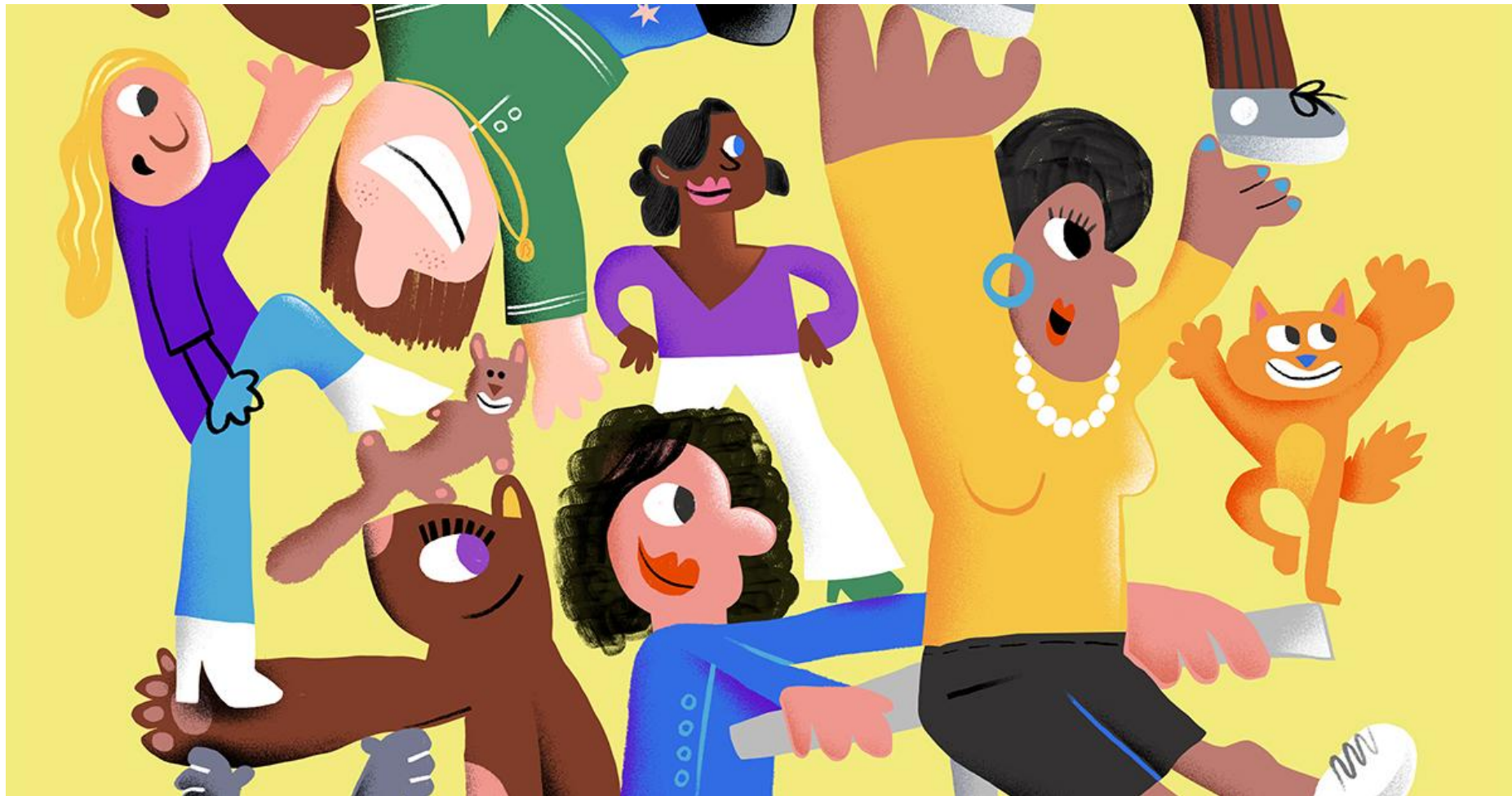
ICDE 2025 New Zealand conference theme is **Ako**: the Māori concept of 'ako' (or *reciprocity in learning and teaching, the exchange of ideas*) as our touchstone. The design of inclusive, scalable, and sustainable education is central to the futures of global higher education, a priority for practice around the globe.

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Paola's Overall Perspective







[We Can Only Move Forward Together](#), by [@jonhanlan](#) for [Fine Acts](#), CC-BY-NC-SA

Jonathan's Overall Perspective

I used to have a binary heart, I measured everything in bits, in 0s and

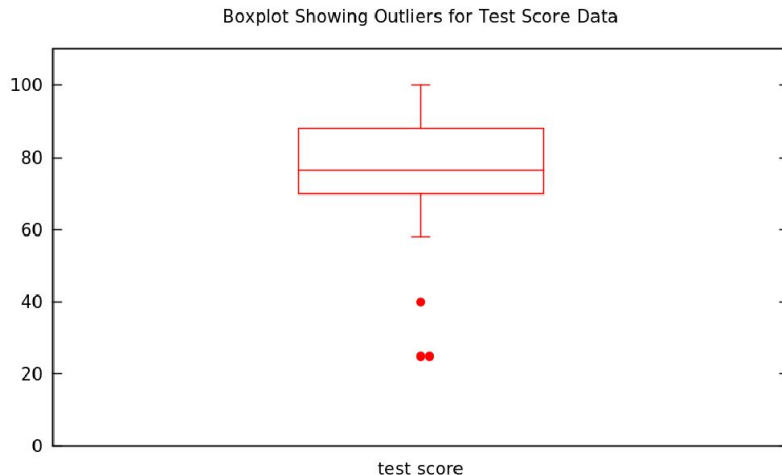


Aside:

The word “bit” was coined by mathematician John Tukey as a shortening of “binary digit.”

He invented the “box-and-whisker plot” [AKA “boxplot”] beloved of statisticians everywhere: →

Tukey also seems to be the first person to have used the word “software” in a publication.



Example boxplot of test score data from [Lies, Damned Lies, or Statistics](#) by [Jonathan Poritz](#), released under [CC BY-SA 4.0](#).

A good place to start?

*Institutions of higher education are **conducted for the common good** and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.*

Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning.

emphasis added

[American Association of University Professors
1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and
Tenure](#)

A beautiful idea for the *how* of education:

Si tu veux construire un bateau, ne rassemble pas tes hommes et femmes pour leur donner des ordres, pour expliquer chaque détail, pour leur dire où trouver chaque chose... Si tu veux construire un bateau, fais naître dans le coeur de tes hommes et femmes le désir de la mer.

Antoine de Saint Exupéry

...but, alas, this is a false attribution! This closest to a quote in his actual work, from [Citadelle](#), is:

Créer le navire ce n'est point tisser les toiles, forger les clous, lire les astres, mais bien donner le goût de la mer qui est un, et a la lumière duquel il n'est plus rien qui soit contradictoire mais communauté dans l'amour.

Which is, more or less:

To create the ship is not to weave the sails, forge the nails, read the stars, but to give the taste of the sea which is one, and in the light of which there is no longer anything contradictory but community in love.

Speaking of love:

And this is what Jesus means, I think, in this very passage when he says, "Love your enemy." And it's significant that he does not say, "Like your enemy." Like is a sentimental something, an affectionate something. There are a lot of people that I find it difficult to like. I don't like what they do to me. I don't like what they say about me and other people. I don't like their attitudes. I don't like some of the things they're doing. I don't like them. But ... love is greater than like. Love is understanding, redemptive goodwill for all men, so that you love everybody.... This is the way to do it. When the opportunity presents itself when you can defeat your enemy, you must not do it.

Rev Dr Martin Luther King, Jr.

["Loving Your Enemies," Sermon Delivered at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church](#) in Montgomery, Alabama, on 17 November 1957

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

also MLK, conclusion of a sermon during commencement at Wesleyan University in 1964

Some more dichotomies

Idealism

Practicality

Love

Like

Revolution

Evolution

Speak the truth, don't *gaslight*
your listeners

Say what your listeners are able
to hear, in this moment

Return to, and build off, some
earlier, better days for ed

Innovate: the world is changing,
adapt or become irrelevant

Optimism of the will

Pessimism of the intellect

a manifesto for Higher Education for Good

**NAME &
ANALYSE**
troubles of HE

**CHALLENGE
& RESIST**
hegemonies

**MAKE
CLAIMS**
for just, humane
& globally
sustainable HE

Courageously
IMAGINE
& share fresh
possibilities

**MAKE
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here and now

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1. Naming and analysing the troubles of opened in this moment of accelerating polycrisis

Connie & Jonathan

Paola - Moderator

Jonathan, Naming:

1. Disruptive impact of new technologies such as genAInt.
2. The problem of “sustainability.”
3. Fundamental OE values such as DEI, anti-racism, anti- colonialism, the value of the liberal arts, *etc.*, under attack by a newly emboldened right.
4. Declining open ed interest and knowledge, at least in some places.

Jonathan, Analysing:

1. GenAInt – and, one suspects, automated HW systems, VLEs, other “edtech” is largely about deskilling, distorting labor markets, training faculty and students in obedience rather than critical thinking, and concentrating power and money.
2. “Sustainability” is largely an issue because we in OE have internalized an image of what OER should look like, and academic labor should be.
3. There’s no point to doing the work of (open) education without values.
4. So many fires to fight, feelings of betrayal by so many colleagues.

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2. Pointing to the assumptions and hegemonies most in need of challenge now

Paola & Jonathan

Connie - Moderator

Jonathan, pointing to questionable assumptions/hegemonies that

1. education should be primarily workforce preparation, not liberal arts;
2. it makes sense to teach students skills that machines can do (better);
3. fundamental structures like HW at home and grades can survive rethinking the above;
4. reward/organizational structures of higher ed can remain unchanged;
5. there are no bad actors in education, only misguided ones;
6. the Turing test made sense;
7. neoliberalism makes sense in the context of education (or any other!).

Paola on how we can challenge/resist:

1. “Education should be primarily workforce preparation, not liberal arts.”
What about modern literature, arts and music? What about theatre?
We *learn* from artists even when we don’t *like* what they create.
2. Examine who benefits from GenAI tools massive use, and whose voices or knowledge systems are marginalised or misrepresented, especially given AI’s tendency to reproduce dominant group perspectives and systemic biases.
3. Use GenAI to reclaim time and intellectual space from bureaucratic and performative academic tasks, redirecting energy toward critical, relational, creative and transformative educational practices
4. Foster communities of practice that co-create, adapt, and remix AI tools and outputs, prioritising collaboration and local relevance
5. Support, develop, train and use of open-source AI models and datasets.

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**3. Laying claim to a just, humane, and sustainable open ed that
can thrive under today's pressure**

Connie & Jonathan

Paola - Moderator

Connie's thoughts

Learn more about GenAI - it's history and how it has been shaped (e.g. Harari, 2024, Christian 2020)

Technologies are not additive - they are *ecological* (Postman, 1998)

Consider the *intentional* use of GenAI and AIED

Know your *values* about:

- open education
- ecological footprint
- uncertain times/polycrisis

Jonathan, laying claim:

We must retain our commitments to DEI, anti-racism, anti-colonialism: see the keynotes at Open Ed by [Jasmine Roberts-Crews](#), [James Glapa-Grossklag](#) and [Joy Shoemate](#); our commitments to accessibility; our commitments to supporting migrants who seek an education; ... if not, what are we doing?

Aside from growing evidence it does not support real learning, genAI nt devalues human connections, further concentrates wealth and power, explicitly deskills human workers of all kinds, and is built on explicitly colonialist and eugenicist ideologies (see works of Hao, Gebru, and Torres).

We can employ open, innovative, humane, critical pedagogies like ungrading, authentic (even if not “renewable”) assessment, course designs which center students’ lived experiences (e.g., Ribadeneira’s courses, and entire degree program at CSUPueblo).

We can appreciate “the beauty of ugly OER”, which are more sustainable, humane, and often more pedagogically effective.

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4. Sharing imaginations of new possibilities of open ed

Paola & Connie
Jonathan - Moderator

Paola, relating:

1. “Can’t help myself”, by Sun Yuan & Peng Yu, Biennale di Venezia 2019 → renamed as “Couldn’t help myself”
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czHS8p2EtJM>)
2. Involve **artists** and **creative thinkers**, they open doors and windows we often see as closed
3. Look at how **nature** as already been solving complex problems for just a few millennia
4. **Intentional exercise** (also in every small projects!) to see what is doable, what is desirable, what is possible, what is preferable. Then **point to preferable!** (Nohr et al. 2023; Nørgård et al. 2024)



Connie

The power of the imagination - “what if”?

Speculative education - futures we create (Ross, J. (2018). Speculative Method as an Approach to Researching Emerging Educational Issues and Technologies. In *Building Research Design in Education: Theoretically Informed Advanced Methods*. Bloomsbury)

Practicescapes “are offered as a speculative learning design climbing frame that could take us from dreams of possibility to enlivened and embodied presents” para 1 (Costello, E., McDonald, J., Macgilchrist, F. *et al.* Speculative Practicescapes of Learning Design and Dreaming. *Postdigit Sci Educ* (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-024-00465-5>)

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5. Relating where we are able to act, here and now, to make positive change

**Jonathan & Paola
Connie - Moderator**

Jonathan, relating:

Maybe there are some basic principles which always apply, such as

1. Support students, colleagues, and all others: show kindness and humanity.
2. Be open minded; believe in, respect, listen to expertise, and learn from it.
3. To the extent that it is possible to do so safely, speak truth and avoid gaslighting.
4. Choose your battles based on your beliefs and capacities. Maybe you can follow Dr Martin Luther King in "[Loving Your Enemies](#)" or maybe Noor Hindi's "[Fuck Your Lecture on Craft, My People Are Dying](#)" is where you are.

Paola, relating:

1. Can we intentionally continue pushing beyond our current and future boundaries, involving all people? People might surprise us
2. Call to action to notice more all the local nuances of the word “**important**”
3. build futures (plural, because there might be different contextual needs and priorities)
4. How can WE help? How would WE support the practitioners, whichever their level is, in our context, with our role, with our decisions? Here and now. All acts are political.
5. Bridge global, regional, national, and local scales with the support of trusted intermediaries (libraries, academic institutions, universities of applied sciences, orgs...) to help translate high-level policies into contextual change and ensure alignment with different communities' priorities.

Connie's Take-aways



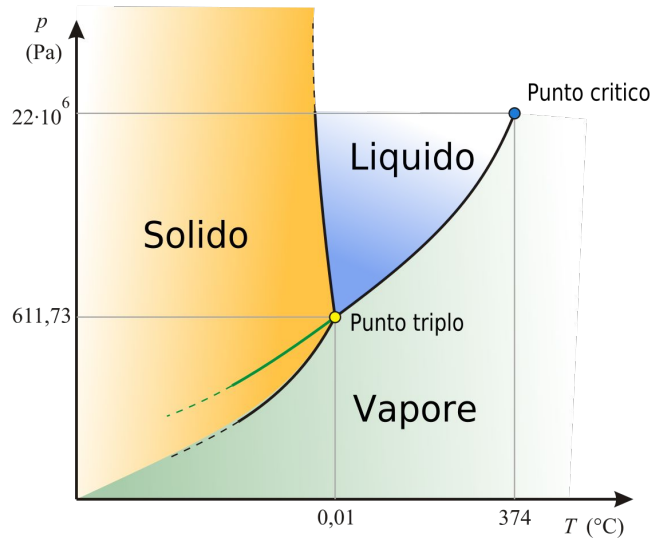
Paola's Take-aways



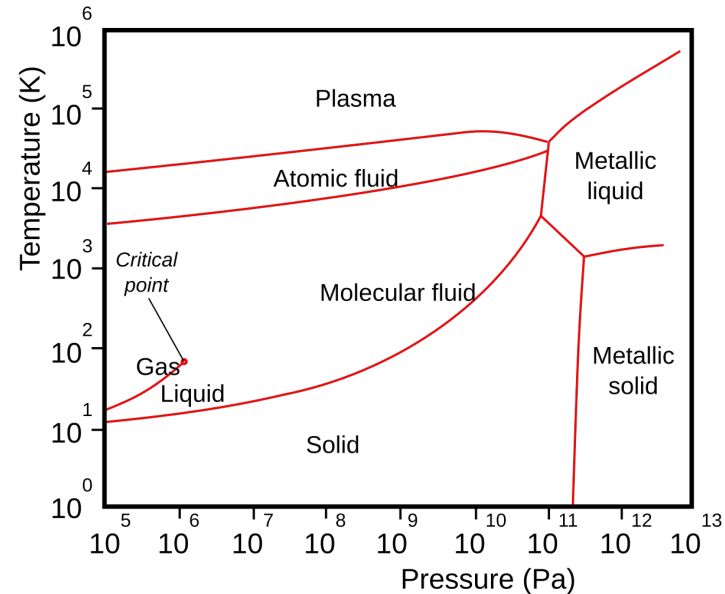
Pando in fall colors, by John Zapell, [CC0](#)

Jonathan's Take-aways

In physical chemistry one makes *phase diagrams* which show the different phases of a material depending upon the temperature and pressure. They can be simple or complex:



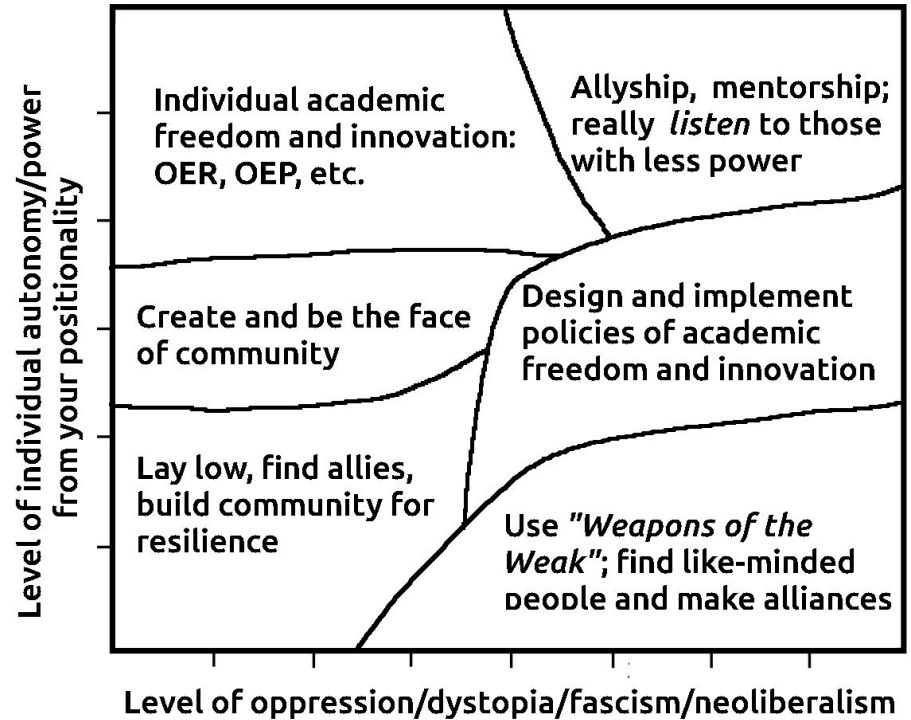
[WaterPhaseDiagram](#) it by [Daniele Pugliesi](#) via Wikimedia Commons
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[Phase diagram of hydrogen](#) by [Tretyak](#) via Wikimedia Commons
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Perhaps we must place ourselves on this *autonomy/dystopia* phase diagram, where there are presumably regions labelled

- Allyship, mentorship, listening
- Meaningful academic freedom: OER/OEP/ ungrading/flipping classes/resisting AI *individually*
- “Weapons of the Weak”
- Direct departmental or institutional policies for OER/OEP/ungrading/flipped classes/
- Lay low, build community



Audience Contributions

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Professional Reading

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