What is the emerging story of the process of curriculum reform in the open complex system of lower secondary education in Ireland and Scotland?

Emerging Researchers' Conference

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Why Ireland & Scotland?

Both countries have chosen the Process Model of Curriculum to guide their reform which was originally proposed by Lawrence Stenhouse in 1975 and developed further by A.V Kelly in 2003.

The central tenets of the Process Model are a student-centered approach, a shift to learning outcomes, key skills, the professionalism of teachers, more curriculum autonomy for schools and the agency of students and teachers.

Both are working towards educational systems that advances equity, excellence, wellbeing, inclusion, democracy and human rights for all students within high-quality professionally run systems.

# Complexity of Education

1. Diversity

- Human beings with individual interests
- Social, cultural, economic and religious interests
- Political interests
- Global influences
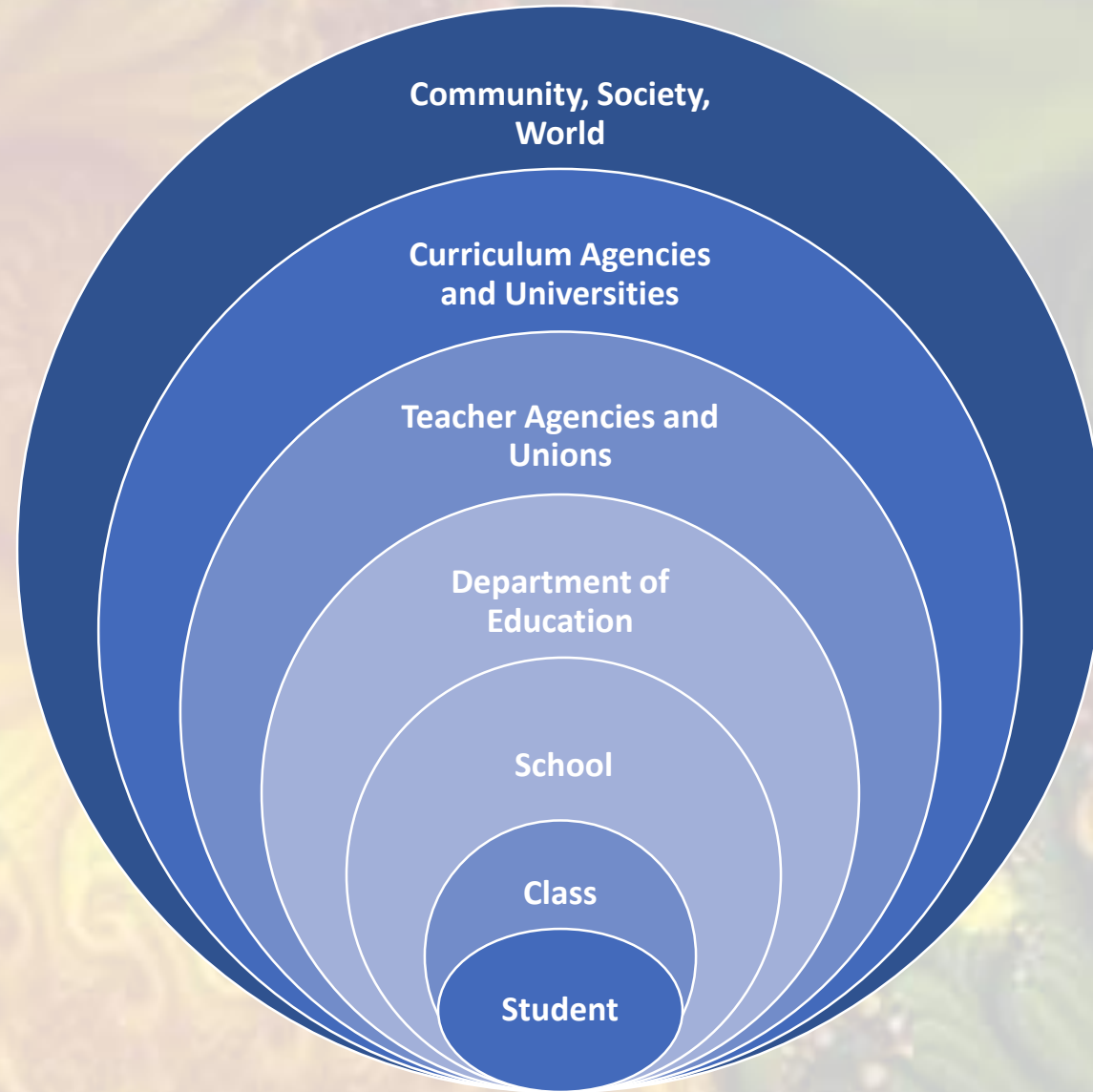- Purposes, interpretations, actions

2. Processual

- System
- Schools
- Disciplines/subjects
- Pedagogical & Methodological
- Roles & identities
- All agentic, emerging and contingent

COMPLEXITY THEORY
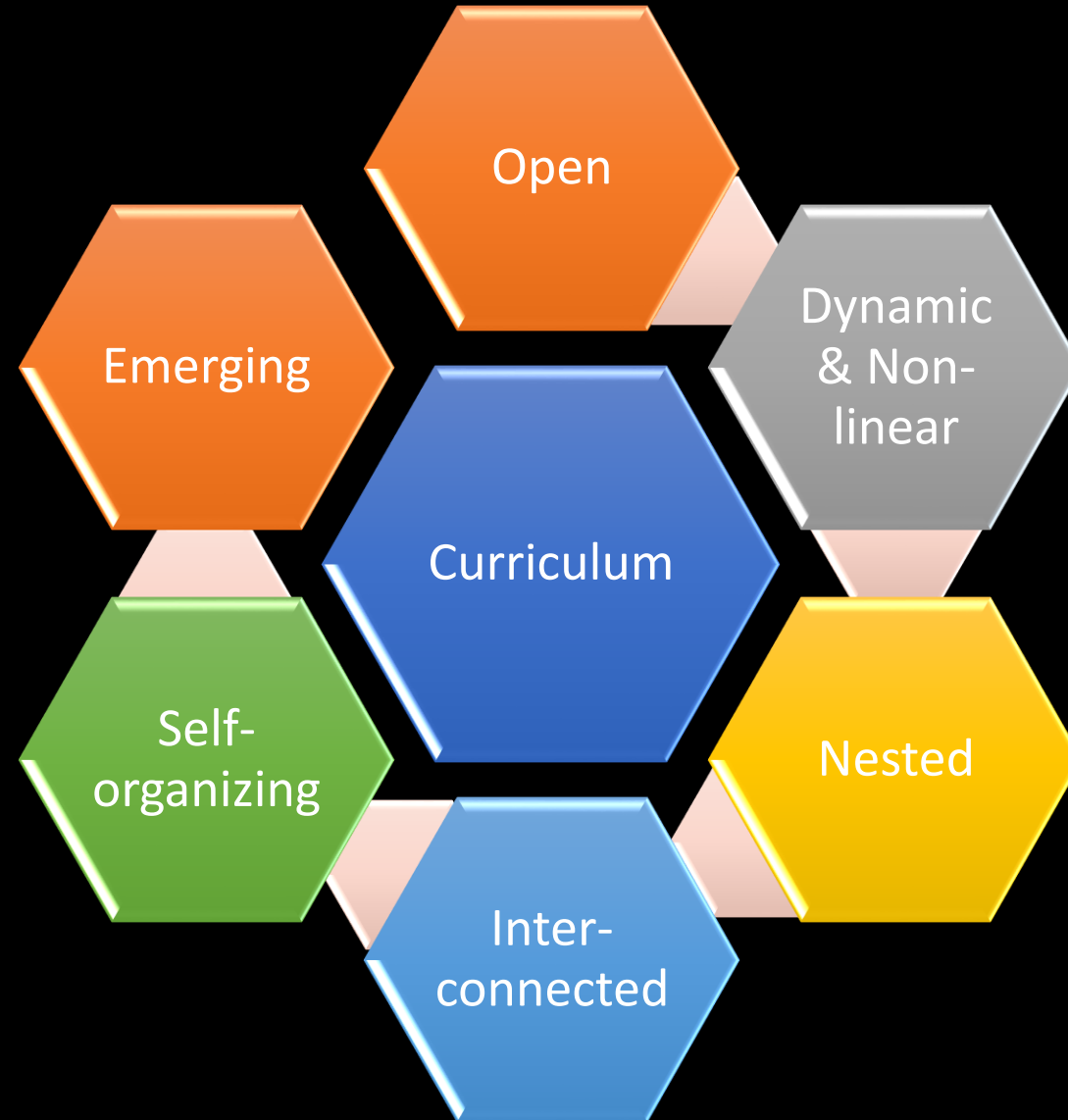
Open Nested Elements of Lower Secondary in Ireland

Research Objectives

To map how the education systems in Ireland & Scotland are open, complex and nested systems.

To explore how the interrelationships and connections between stakeholders in the system allow self-organisation and emergence.

To focus on how the enactment of the new curriculum perturbed the system from equilibrium to the edge of chaos.

To discover how the emerging trajectories in the lower secondary system take account of the actual pattern of change of a system.

To answer the big question how can we interrogate the local to understand how things have come to be as they are and how they might be made different.

Balancing

Epistemology
Ontology
Axiology
Methodology
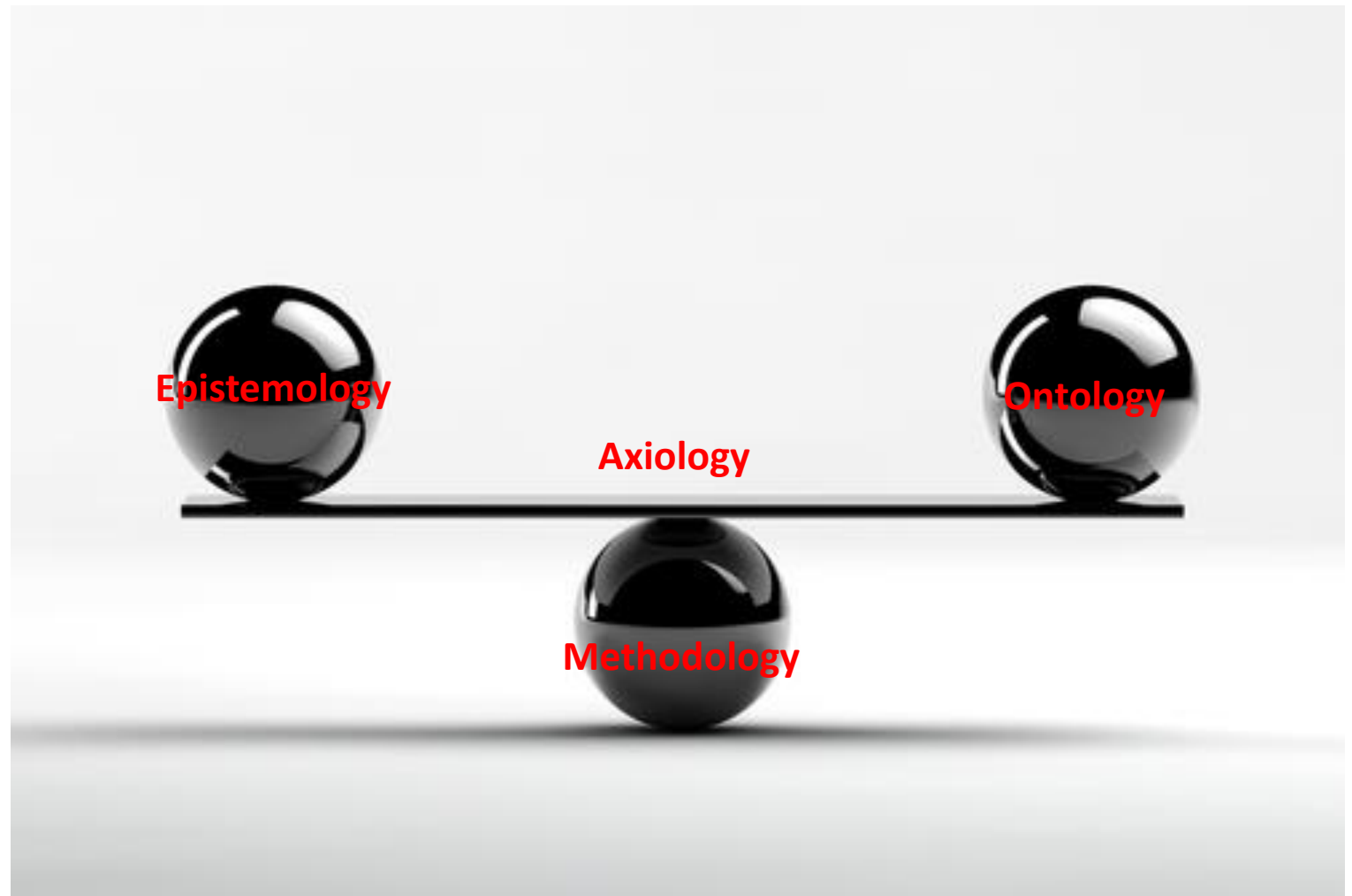
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Holistic Approach – from the macro to nano	Multiple perspectives of how it *is* not how it *ought* to be	Interrelationships and interdependencies in the system – ecosystem	Change understood at its level of emergence –local level
Researcher must be nested within the system	Multiple trajectories and causation is complex	Exploring bifurcation points	How the system moves to the edge of chaos

Methodology

"Critique is not a matter of saying things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, [on] what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices we accept rest". (Foucault 1988, p.154)

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Post-Qualitative Approach
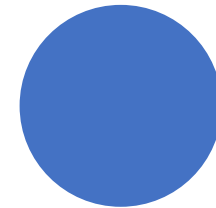
1

Desk-top analysis of documentation from both countries to understand the history, trajectories and emergence of the system
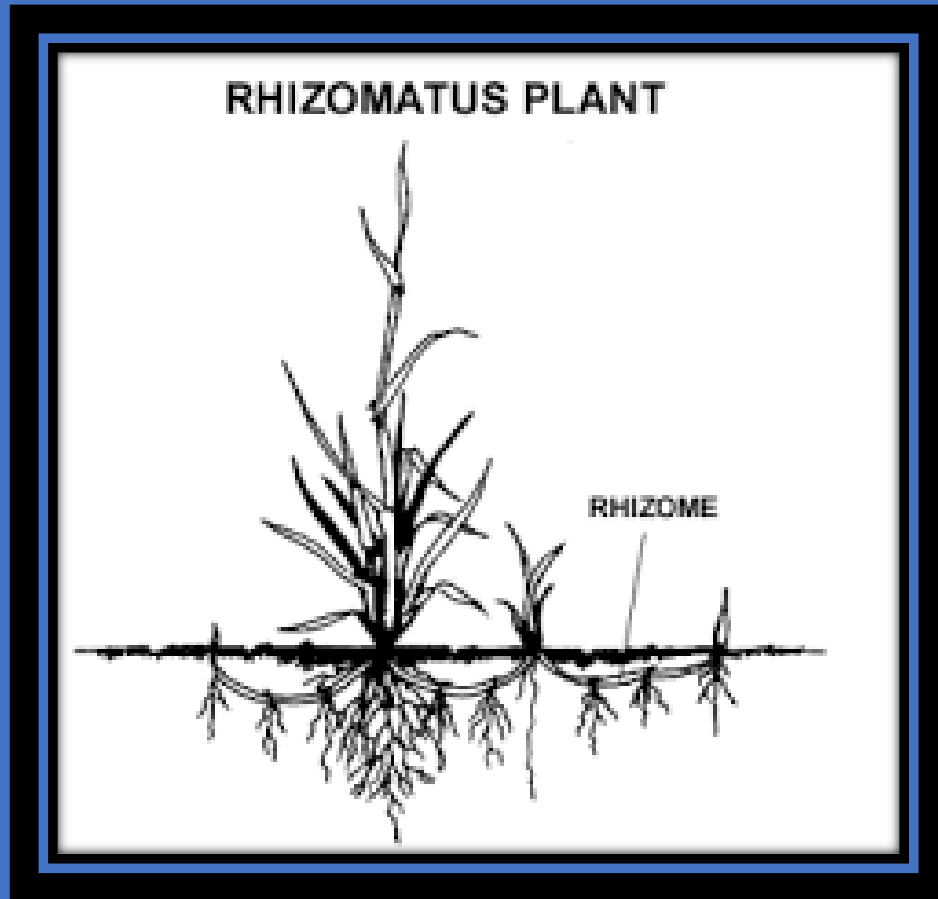
2

Interviews of representatives of all stakeholders in the system from the macro to the micro

3

Focus group interviews with students

Case Study

Tools of Analysis - Rhizoanalysis

RHIZOMATUS PLANT

RHIZOME

- An imaginary not metaphor

- Start in the middle

- Molar lines

- Molecular lines

Intermingled

- Lines of flight

- Mapping –the unconscious

- Nomadic –travelling the plateau

It is about generating mileu/s of mo(ve)ments from/with/in/of/ liminal spaces towards thresholds of understandings. (Marge Sellers 2015)

Thank you