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Teaching to sustain and to disrupt: education in times of systemic global dysfunction

How do we teach young people to live well, equitably and within planetary boundaries; when structures, values and assumptions upon which we are building our lifestyles make living in such a way nearly impossible; when we as educators don't really know either and don't live in that way either; when there is confusion, sometimes intentionally created, about how dysfunctional and urgent things are and what should be done? And how do we prevent that we all slide into a stage of permanent fear and despair since the challenges seem so overwhelming?

What is becoming increasingly clear is that sustainability is not something that can be taught, that it is not only about sustaining what we might deem to be good, but also about disrupting what forces us to live in unhealthy ways. Creating environments that 'breathe' sustainability and a culture that invites critical thinking, transgression and action, is becoming a new challenge for our schools. In this talk I will outline a systemic response from education that involves the whole institution as a part of a wider community and require boundary-crossing and forms of learning that are transformative and transgressive learning. I will also discuss the kinds of capacities teachers and students alike, will need to deal with complexity, ambiguity, socio-scientific disputes and to facilitate boundary crossing within a critical whole school approach.