

Thinking Tertiary

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Why “tertiary”? Why “system- ness”?

(semi)Rigid boundaries between, and biases about, academic, technical and vocational education and training (VET/TVET) are blocking learning pathways & innovative thinking.

Various terms: post-compulsory, post-secondary & tertiary system comprising mixture of academic, technical and vocational colleges, HEIs and universities.

Demographics, technological/labour market changes mean “job for life” as redundant as “education for life”.

Emphasis on collaboration, strategic capacity and joined-up thinking → coherent educational eco-system increasingly with regional focus;

Varied set of FEIs and HEIs, each performing a different function according to mission within the system.

System architecture and governance with more attention given to developing *coherent and integrated pathways* between parts of the system.

Some International Examples of 'Systemness'

Nancy Zimpher, former
Chancellor, SUNY

“Beyond the individual strengths that each of our 64 campuses possess, there is a powerful and unmatched capacity to reach our most ambitious goals together and to realize our highest achievements.”

California Master Plan (1960) - differentiated between community colleges, state/regional universities and research-intensive universities via statutory framework (Donahoe HE Act, 1960). See also SUNY system.

NZ Tertiary Education Commission (2000) single coherent/comprehensive central structure to facilitate desired differentiation/complementarity.

Basque VET ecosystem - integrated approach to training, applied innovation and active entrepreneurship with strong co-operation between all providers & SMEs – linked to EU Smart Specialist strategy

Ireland – HEA & SOLAS but policy to encourage greater coordination via new FE/HE department.

Wales – Proposed new integrated governance arrangements under new Commission for Tertiary Education & Research (CTER) (2015) – due by 2023