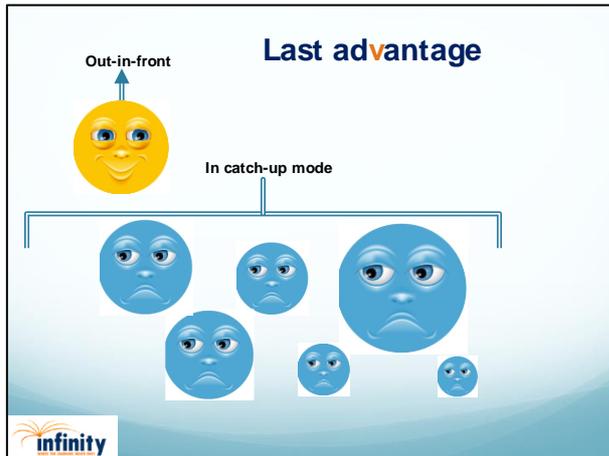


COLLECTIVE ADVANTAGE

Advice for Kāhui Ako, Communities of Learning, School Collaboratives

Annan, B., Wootton, M., Annan, J. 2018

Collective advantage is a concept that can support Kāhui Ako to create success stories. Kāhui Ako are groups of schools and communities collaborating in new ways to ensure that all children and young adults succeed in learning for the future. The term ‘Collective Advantage’ is well-known in the business world and has been in use for several decades, supporting the development of high quality industries. The two frames below illustrate the difference between last advantage and collective advantage.



Last advantage is seen where one organisation gains an advantage from coming up with the next big idea in an industry. That organisation ring-fences the idea and enjoys a time of prosperity while other organisations have to work hard to catch-up. Then, another organisation discovers the next big idea and temporarily gets ahead while the rest of the organisations are in catch-up mode.

Collective advantage involves groups of organisations deciding to prosper

together. Participant organisations retain their own identities and, at the same time, invite innovative staff to work as a collective to create the next big idea. It is one way of collaborating in a competitive environment. Staff collaborators go off and work together, typically in a no-frills site of their choice and, when they make a breakthrough, they report the idea to their CEOs and senior managers. The breakthrough idea is then diffused to staff in all the organisations. Everyone prospers.

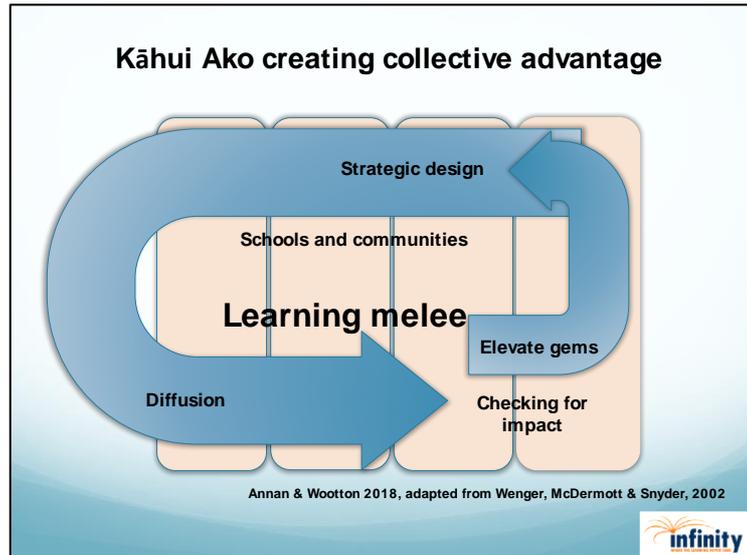


Many industries have learned the value of collective advantage and use it to prosper in the modern world. For instance, a few decades ago, computer companies in Silicon Valley used collective advantage to become world-wide leaders in computer technology. Now vineyards, telecommunications, musicians and sports teams, to name a few, collaborate to advance the quality of their respective industries.

Watch this video to see how collective advantage fits with Kāhui Ako, Communities of Learning, in New Zealand.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUrZafv1zpc>

The video intentionally portrays a busy or messy collaborative learning environment. Tidy matrices and fixed rules do not represent the reality of socially-constructed organisations and networking. That said, it is useful to tidy up the messy picture in the video to capture the five main elements attached to collective advantage. The five elements help define the work of Kāhui Ako.



1. **Create a learning melee** within and across schools and out into communities; collaborations, inquiries, visits, environmental improvement projects, school-business partnerships etc.
2. **Identify gems** that have evidence of effectiveness. Elevate the gems to strategic leaders who can consider how best to support their spread.
3. **Design** is completed by strategic leaders to spread the gems through the community.
4. **Diffuse** the gems across the community to participants who could benefit from knowing about and using the ideas.
5. **Check for impact** of the ideas on student outcomes, teacher practice improvement, parent support improvement and community engagement.

Collaborative roles become clearer when they are attached to those elements.

Everyone in the community has a role to play in collective advantage. Kāhui Ako-designated roles are more concerned with facilitation of learning than leading siloed projects. Want to read more? Go to:

<http://infinitylearn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Facilitated-networks-of-learning.pdf>

As successive learning gems are diffused into the communities, capability will grow among



participants to learn-how-to-learn-and-live in our modern world. As capability grows, a mature Kāhui Ako environment will be akin to meshed networking. The image to the left sourced from *Network Science* by Barabasi (<http://networksciencebook.com/>) captures the fluid and dynamic nature of community groups forming around learning areas of interest and making links to other groups.

Want to discuss collective advantage and how it links to your context? Be in touch...

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