

## Yeah, but...Isn't Redesigning School Models Impossible?

The school redesign process is actually straight forward and within the reach of any community willing to give it a go, but who reading this believes that statement? If so, feel free to skip this post and take a look at [An Overview of the School Redesign Process](#). Most people, however, don't believe it. They may believe it is absolutely necessary and want it to happen, but they have a perception that it is a bridge too far.

There are two primary reasons why no one at any level has truly redesigned the school model. These are the beliefs that it is far too complex for anyone except brilliant experts and that it would be outrageously expensive.

Underlying these reasons is the sheer inertia of our current, fully-institutionalized model. To most people, redesigning our school model is akin to ending poverty or eliminating crime. Both would be great, but they believe it is far too complex and expensive to happen anytime soon. I can't speak to poverty and crime, but this is absolutely false thinking for redesigning education.

There is a third obstacle that does or will arise should people start to believe it is not as complex as they thought and that it can be done with little or no money—that the risks to children are far too great to do anything very different than what we're doing now. Let's look at each of these obstacles.

Our current educational model is exceptionally complex to operate BECAUSE it is out-of-date, inefficient, and actually creates almost all its own challenges that then add to the complexity. Consequently, those working in the current model require extensive knowledge and training to work within the model and to squeeze the most possible productivity out of it. However, facilitating learning is not, itself, very complex, which means almost anyone can contribute to designing new models of education if they are part of a collaborative community-based team.

Similarly, our current educational model is exceptionally expensive to operate BECAUSE it is out-of-date and inefficient and, in addition to the costs of instruction, has numerous other costs related to the challenges the model creates. Since we've already squeezed all the productivity out of the model, trying to get more academic gains requires more money. Here again, the actual cost of facilitating learning does not need to be costly as long as the design of a new model is informed by current research and understanding of how the brain develops and how learning occurs.

The final big obstacle is the perceived risks of turning our children over to an entirely new model. Fully addressing this obstacle will require more space than I want to devote in this post, but the simple truth is that the current model poses significantly greater risk to our children than designing a new model.

The current model delivers instruction on a twelve-year schedule broken down by subject area. Any given lesson or activity is aimed at what someone has statistically determined to be the average student readiness for that subject and day or week.

What are the chances that a given child is at the correct readiness for every lesson in every subject over the course of their twelve plus years in school? I know that chance is significantly less than 1% based on work by Dr. Todd Rose in his book *The End of Average* and countless other work on learning and brain development. That is because every child is at different readiness levels for each subject at different times, sometimes being ahead of the average readiness and other times behind.

Consequently, the ability of the current model to meet the needs of all the children even to a small degree is very low. On the other hand, if a group of caring committed people from a community—people who

had a stake in creating the best possible outcomes for all the children in that community—came together to design a new model of education, they would absolutely ensure that model would facilitate learning more effectively than the model it will replace.

Further, because these people are members of the community, they will do this voluntarily with virtually no costs and, because they are dedicated to the best possible outcomes, they will educate themselves about the factors that will come into play during the process.

What all this means is that the very things that were obstacles or excuses for not redesigning our school model have actually contributed to the current model's shortcomings. The complexity scared away those who best know what the community needs and who most care about its children—the community members. The cost perpetuated itself and kept people from demanding change because the “experts” needed to make the change were too expensive. And the risk is actually with the current model, not a redesigned one.

All of this is getting right back to my original contention, the school redesign process is actually straight forward and within the reach of any community willing to give it a go. I strongly encourage you to continue exploring the school redesign process through my related posts and free resources.