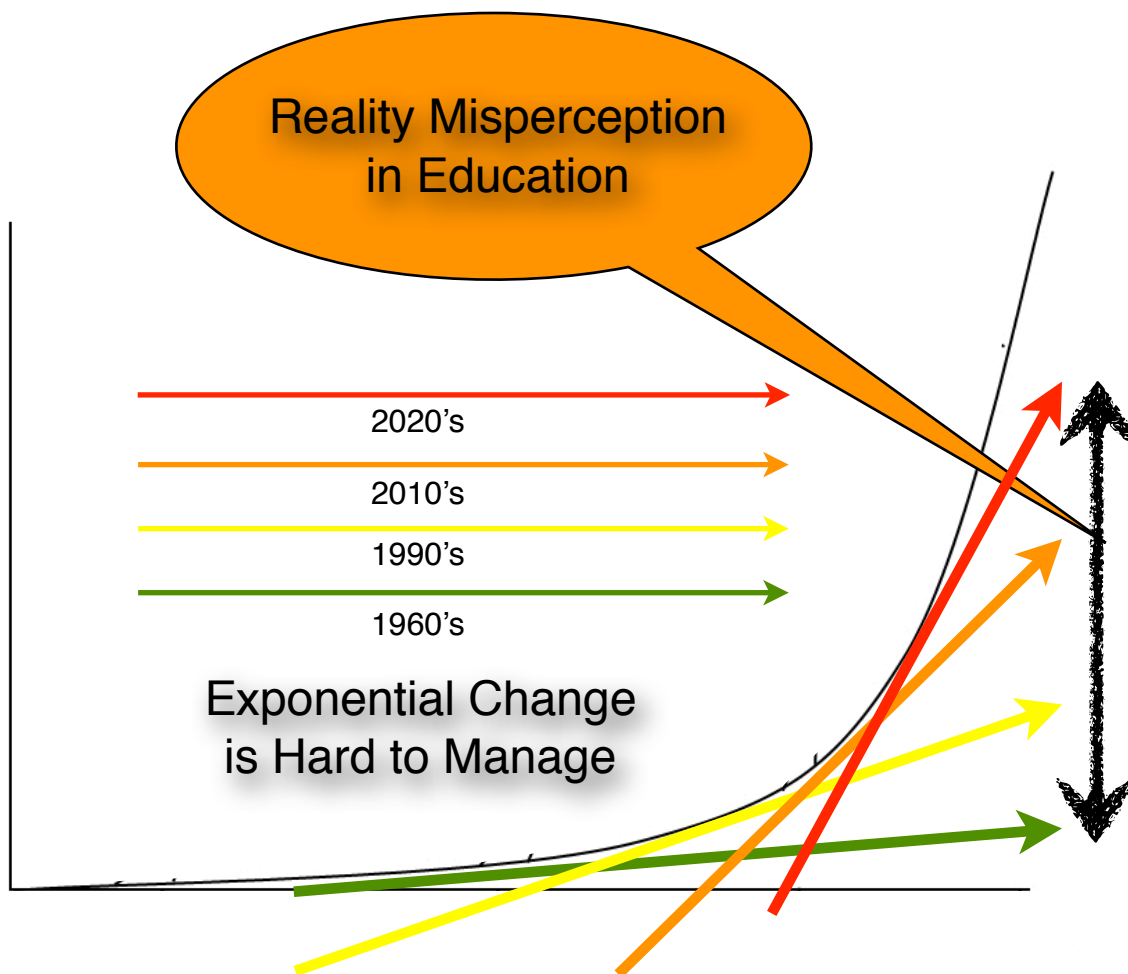


I've been doing some thinking and wanted to take a moment to share some observations. These are best described in a chart and then discussed with words. Here is the chart of what I think is happening in a qualitative fashion.



Let's examine at the **Green Line**

There was a time when methods, practices, and technology were not changing very rapidly in the educational world. The 60's were pretty stable: jobs that existed then would more than likely exist in the next 10 years. Textbooks, teacher education, 2 season education was standard (School and then Summer Break), teachers were left in their classrooms to teach subjects to kids.

When society is changing slowly, education was in good harmony.

Let's examine the **Yellow Line**

As change began to increase its presence in society, and particularly in the presence of digital devices more demands of the schools were required. Teacher training was still in the 1960's, expectations of the parents on how run a school was in the 60's, the rates of inflation in society were slowly growing faster than salaries in the classroom, new classroom instructional methods were attempted to counter the change in viewpoints of education, business models of school management began to invade the echelons of administration. There was an increase in the 'we' of the admin, and the 'they' of the classroom.

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Let's look at the advent of the first decade of the 21st century: the **Orange Line**. Now things are really getting obvious. Evidence is mounting that whatever 'educators' are doing, it's not working to produce the kinds of children we desire to achieve. Our factory model widgets just don't seem to behave in the manner that we wish. The difference between the lives of the children out of school, and their lives during school, is increasing. Schools start to play catchup, modernizing everything, and in a decreasing budget setting. They hope that by measuring more closely, more often, we could make correct changes in the product during the manufacturing stage. Increased pressure to perform on the teaching staff causes exodus of many seasoned, professional teachers. Paying for performance causes a huge division in the teaching profession. The economic influence of the business model completely crushes many teachers underlying motives of why they became teachers. Inflation adjusted pay decreases and economic downturn of many cities pension and benefit programs further drives the teaching profession downward.

Let's really study the **Red Line**

Currently we are stuck in keeping the older paradigm of education alive. Parents have children, they send them to school during the day, want safety, food service, before and after school child care, summer vacations and not all year schooling, sex education and contraceptive use training, and do not want any involvement in the PTA. Students perceive education as out of touch with their sometimes difficult lives. Tension has grown to extremes. The government promises that their next presidential initiative will straighten out all matters. Every United States president has claimed to be the 'Education Reform' person. It's such a popular, political, heart tugging matter. Implementing digital technology in a large school system is a constant expenditure of a lot of money. It requires huge investments in personnel, staff training, and obsolescence planning. A textbook was a one time, 3-5 year investment. Period. Technology is a continuous replacement of infrastructure pieces. The directors who happen to be in place in schools have not been trained in managing this kind of never ending expensive program. Legislatures are seeking a one time solution. Fear drives security to extremes, data gathering is voluminous, frustrations increase everywhere: students, teacher, parents, society.

What happened?

It's simple math: the human being is not programmed for exponential change. We are good at taking care of immediate problems but extremely poor at future planning. We are more satisfied with putting a cork in the proverbial leak than looking at the fact that the dyke is going to collapse. Our elected political system is in complete gridlock in suggesting that sacrifice is needed to solve a program. One doesn't get elected with those kinds of promises! Exponential change is happening simultaneously in: population, peak oil, soil depletion, viral expansions, electrical usage, water availability, social connectedness...

So as the rate of change of everything has increased faster than our adaptation we get an increased difference between our currently maintained system and that which is currently required or possible. Few companies or school systems or biological entities thrive in quickly changing environments.

Is it time that we put in practice individualized education for all students?

Do we allow students to leave the 'cohort class lockstep to graduation' and let them be free from their age?

Allowing them to pursue their interests in life and learning along the way?

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Have we admitted that there is a need for a complete redesign of education in light of our becoming so out of touch with reality?

Excepting a major collapse, or highly insightful and energized persons, it is highly improbable.

Solution Mantra:

We must mutate our educational goals, methods, practices, examining every single aspect of our current system. We might not even keep any of it.

We will have to be small to survive, quick to change and adapt, aware of civil and governmental predators that may be threatened by our newly founded reputation. Big systems have huge momentum, smaller things can move quickly in new situations.

Children are born to assimilate, categorize, seek understanding of how things are connected, desire to communicate and be understood. Given the proper nutrition, light, and care they will see the emerging world differently than their teachers, yet grateful for the preparation, become ably responsible for 'the future' and with exemplified wisdom given to them be ready to continue the changes necessary in the world.

Think small, be quick, don't listen to the preachers of older reality systems. Keep moving. Keep changing. Don't get sidetracked with compromise. Let's begin the complete rewrite of the educational programming, and enjoy the freedoms that change has opened for us.