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 Kenniland

Presentation outline

1. Narratives: an introduction
2. Narratives in practice: Education Pioneers Case study
3. Outcomes
4. Future challenges



I am Marlieke Kieboom from Kenniland and I will introduce to you the complexity of narratives in relation to our experiments with designing the Dynamic Evaluation Process, Methodology and Tools in the case study of Education Pioneers in the Netherlands. I will introduce to you the concept of narratives, show you what we have been able to do with narratives in practice. I will also talk you through the main outcomes and share the future challenges ahead.

3.

 Kenniland

1. Narratives: an introduction



"I know what you're thinking, but let me offer a competing narrative."



There is great deal of literature and studies that theorize **about** narratives, and **about** innovation, but there are not many accounts that show **how** narratives can actually be used **for** innovation processes in practice. In MD we have actually managed to do both.

Now let me start with this cartoon. What do we see here? Three people, with some artifacts, in one space, acting in one interaction. And what might be our interpretation? We may interpret the scene as a classic no-go in well, at least in my

culture: husband is coming home to find his beloved wife in bed with his best friend, or neighbour, or whoever.

This situation has got nothing to do with innovation really, well I think, but nevertheless, like in innovation processes, these people are, like my teachers in my case-study, confronted with unforeseen and rapid changes occurring in the agent-artifact space they are enacting in, making their foresight horizon really *uncomfortably* complex. The next scene will indeed be complicated: the three individual people will interpret their own situation, add meaning to it and act to steer the situation towards a desirable outcome.

The envisioned situation calls for immediate action but how this plot will actually evolve we don't know. We do have some ideas. The husband might interpret the situation as follows: "my wife slept with my best friend!", and guide his follow-up action: "I am going to punch my friend to pieces!". The other guy might offer a competing narrative that, if convincing enough might change the course of his planned action.

What if we want these three people to coordinate their actions in such a way that brings them a sort of sustainable solution that makes them all three in some way or another satisfied, or happy? We are then confronted with a real complication. What the husband perceives as 'a happy ending' might be completely different from what his wife perceives as 'a happy ending': maybe she's aiming at a divorce?! There are endless variations of how this interaction may be *interpreted* by different people in the same situation, on different continents, in different time-zones, in different cultures. And there are also endless variations of how these people might **coordinate** their actions to arrive at the happy end, if that is the socially desired outcome.

History of mankind has taught us that we can not control for these endless variations, and we can not just simply combine the different viewpoint/stories into one happy ending for all. **But what we can do is design a process in which they can share the outcomes of these endless variations into a community who face similarly difficult social situations, and let them specifically share with one another how they have dealt with those type of situations.** But they will not only just share their stories, in those gatherings they are collectively come to an agreement about an ordered structure by listing preferred strategies and outcomes, and enhance the strategies of others by adding their advices and instructions to other people's strategies.

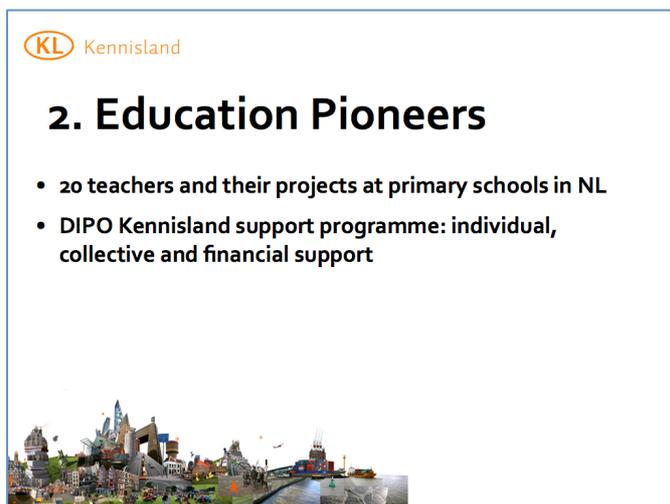
Looking at this ordered logic, which point of view is to dominate, which parts of each story can be isolated and chosen as part of a new story? Finding such combinations is currently the most difficult, manual task for researchers in our Dynamic Evaluation Process: I had to perform data analysis to isolate, choose and combine snippets of stories that appeared to be of high quality as they yielded results in generating action with socially valuable outcomes. From this process new stories emerged, something we call **guiding (convincing, seducing!) narratives.**

Feeding back those type of *guiding narratives* may lead to the **construction of new stories that initiate innovative behavior** that is effective and efficient irrespective of the original situation.

The role of these type of *guiding narratives* is **to align a collective of change agents, who will then re-structure their experiences so that they may support their own activities in their own complex settings.**

Looking at this inconvenient truth for the threesome, I could not really yet arrive last night at a guiding narrative that would help these three to positively steer them out of their unpleasant situation. I would maybe if I would ask all of you to share with me your similar experiences and practice some real-time dynamic evaluation, but I'll be kind and let you ponder over this one in silence, while I move to our case study and show you how we've experimented with a process design that **allowed us to tease out those guiding narratives in Education Practices in the Netherlands.**

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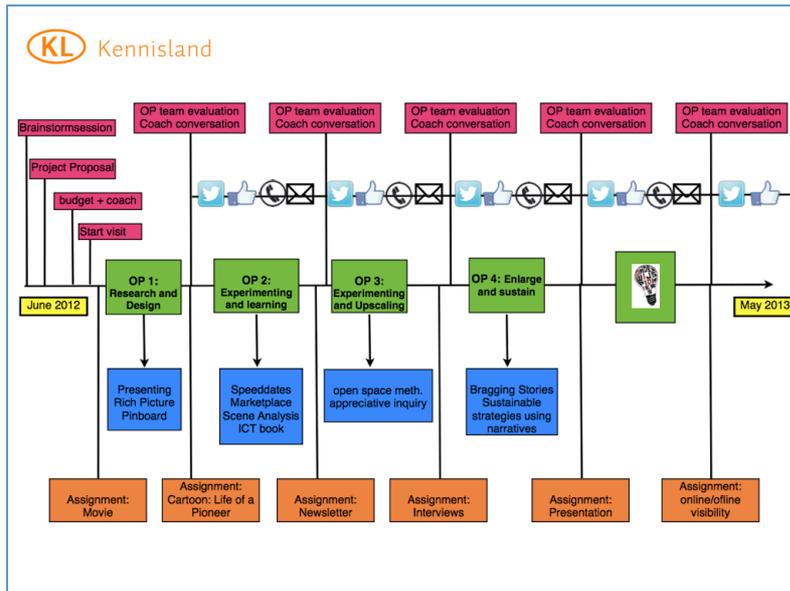
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2. Education Pioneers

- 20 teachers and their projects at primary schools in NL
- DIPO Kennisland support programme: individual, collective and financial support

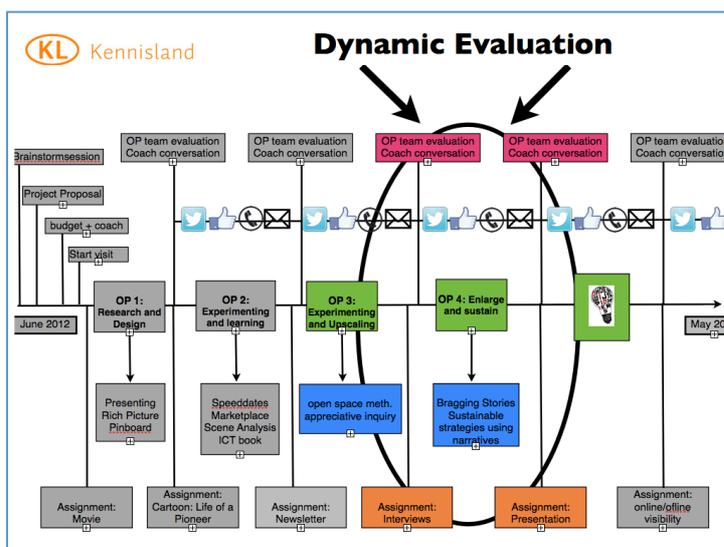
For the dynamic evaluation case study KL has selected the **Educational Pioneer programme**, a project in which teachers (the Education Pioneers) working in primary schools throughout the Netherlands have been awarded **a financial budget and individual and collective support to develop and implement a self-developed idea to improve their practice.** The 20 projects run for the duration of a school year (September 2012 -May 2013). The projects are supported in achieving their goals by Kennisland through continuous personal coaching and internet communication (Facebook, Twitter, Email). They are also supported in four events (Education Pioneer days) throughout the duration of the projects in which all agents could physically meet and share their experiences to strengthen the implementation of their ideas to ultimately reach sustainable practices.

5. Support Structure Education Pioneers



Kennisland (an independent think- and do-thank, Amsterdam) and funding partner role was **to design and deliver an innovative support structure** that actively stimulates the teachers in achieving their envisioned goals throughout the year.

6. Dynamic Evaluation Feed Back Loops



The Dynamic Evaluator (DE) was appointed at the start of the project and worked together with the KL project leader (and its team) and the 20 teachers. Based on the theory of Lane **on enhancing the generative potential of relationships**, the DE built in **two new, constant both virtual and non-virtual feedback loops into the EP programme that allowed the project team and the participants to** : 1) actively and timely detect early signals of change and the social consequences that could be induced by it, 2) in order to help the agents to steer the resulting cascades of change towards socially positive directions. One feedback loop has been installed between the project team and the teachers, and one **between the 20 teachers themselves**.

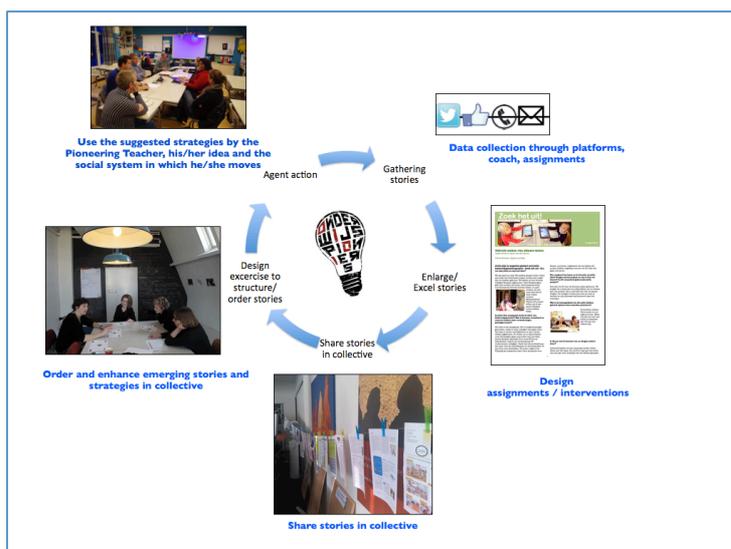
7. How does this work in practice?

Structuring and ordering experiences to show **preferences and qualities** to arrive at **instructions** within the narratives for the agents to **enhance and use in practice**



In practice you start a feedback loop that aims to **gather stories** from agent actions in their own practices. By performing data analysis we came to know what was going on in the teachers practice, and we **designed innovative interventions** (eg make a movie, write a newsletter, draw a cartoon, interview each other) that would **visualize stories** around a specific theme that they were more or less all struggling with in a specific stage of practicing their innovation processes. The interventions itself were aimed at being of **help to identify and stimulate generative relationships**. But we did not only leave it at that. By getting the teacher pioneers together on the Education Pioneer days, we had them to 1) **share their stories in a collective**, 2) **to structure and order their experiences by getting feedback from other teachers**. Ultimately arriving at 3) **identifying instructions in the emergent narratives** to take home and try out in their own practice.

8. In practice



The use of narratives has shown a great importance in our case study in enhancing **the generative potential of relationships**: preliminary results prove that the extraction of stories about how to overcome issues and how one can act to solve

issues someone really cares about is actually fundamental for innovation in a narrative community.

One of the guiding narratives that emerged that made it easier to understand what was going on and is feasible to use to stimulate experiences that help to innovate in new situations is the '**Dare to Share**' Narrative in Education Pioneers.

9. Outcomes

 **3. Outcomes**

1. Dynamic evaluation process design
2. Methods to order, share and enhance strategies within community
3. Creation of social innovation network in education practice



Now what has this way of working generated? Among others it:

1. has delivered a **prototype for a Dynamic Evaluation Process Design**
2. has delivered **several designs for storytelling** which assist to order, share and enhance innovative strategies within a narrative community
3. has created a **sustainable innovation network** in education practice

Overall it can be said that our results indicate that social innovation can be studied and explored in terms of designing and improving a support system.

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 **4. Challenges**

1. Past strategies sharing with future EP project
2. Development of methodology to support any innovation
3. Design criteria for succesful cascading innovations
4. Translation to supportive ICT tools



And what is it aiming to still generate?

1. The Education Pioneers case study continues this coming school year with 40 new projects at secondary schools and apprenticeship schools. **We aim to use the generated insights on preconditions for innovations and the extracted guiding narratives in this new phase to test and enhance them.**

2. In coordination with the other DIPOs in Italy and Poland we aim to develop a **methodology** to perform Dynamic Evaluation that is **able to support any innovation in any context**

3. In general we aim to get to **design criteria or principles for successful cascading innovations**

4. The big challenge is to **keep making sense of all the massive**, and still growing data flows by automating parts of this process.

In this regard we are looking forward to start using a prototype of the Dynamic Evaluation tool, especially the front-ends where the project team and the participants can interact with one another on the **Storyboard**, and deliberate freely online in the **E-deliberation** functionality.

Thank you!

Note: being effective refers to 'stimulate the largest possible variety of activities that may be combined to achieve 'something' collective, as defined by those performing the activities