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Self-improving school systems: A review of evidence and reflections on progress in England
By Toby Greany
Toby Greany is Professor of Leadership and Innovation at the Institute of Education, London. He explores evidence and thinking on self-improving school systems, as well as related concepts such as school improvement, autonomy, markets, choice and collaboration. He also sets out his analysis of the policy framework in England, which he sees as driven by four parallel and competing narratives – narratives that create tensions for school leaders on the ground as they attempt to shape and respond to the ‘self-improving system’. He outlines some of the evidence of progress to date and discusses two broad scenarios for the future of the self-improving system, with elements of each discernible in many localities in England today.

Open Learning Systems: Unlocking innovation
By David Price
David Price is the author of OPEN: How We’ll Work, Live and Learn In The Future (Crux Publishing, 2013). He argues that the political, organisational and philosophical discourse surrounding formal learning is becoming ever further detached from the lessons we see when learning happens outside formal boundaries. This detachment, he believes, is reaching a crisis point, with the consumers and stakeholders involved in formal learning actively looking to informal solutions. He contends that if we want to re-engage learners, re-professionalise teachers and re-think how we prepare students for a globally competitive working life, we need to follow the learners, and develop more open learning systems.

Big data in education: A guide for educators
By Mike Timms
Mike Timms is Director, Assessment and Psychometric Research, Australian Council for Educational Research. He explores how the data environment for schools and school systems is changing and what the trends are for the future. He discusses typical use of data analysis in schools, explains how Big Data is different, comments on the value of Learning Analytics to build predictive models, and provides examples of leading edge work being undertaken in higher education and schools. He concludes that there are significant benefits to gain from analysis of Big Data for educational purposes, but systems and schools must develop skills, procedures and safeguards to ensure the appropriate collection, protection and use of data.

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