Senior Secondary Education Global Approaches Credits/Credentials
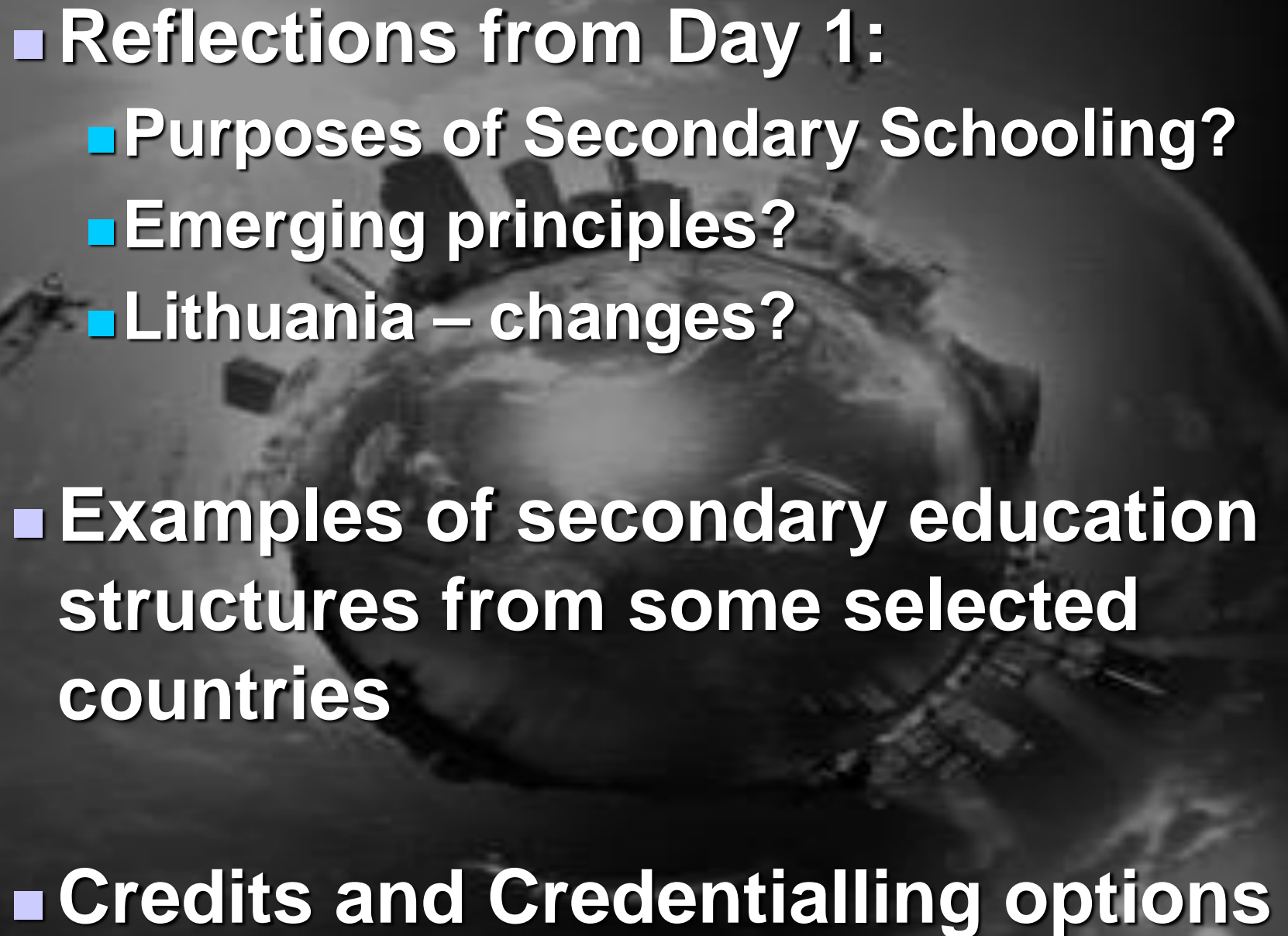
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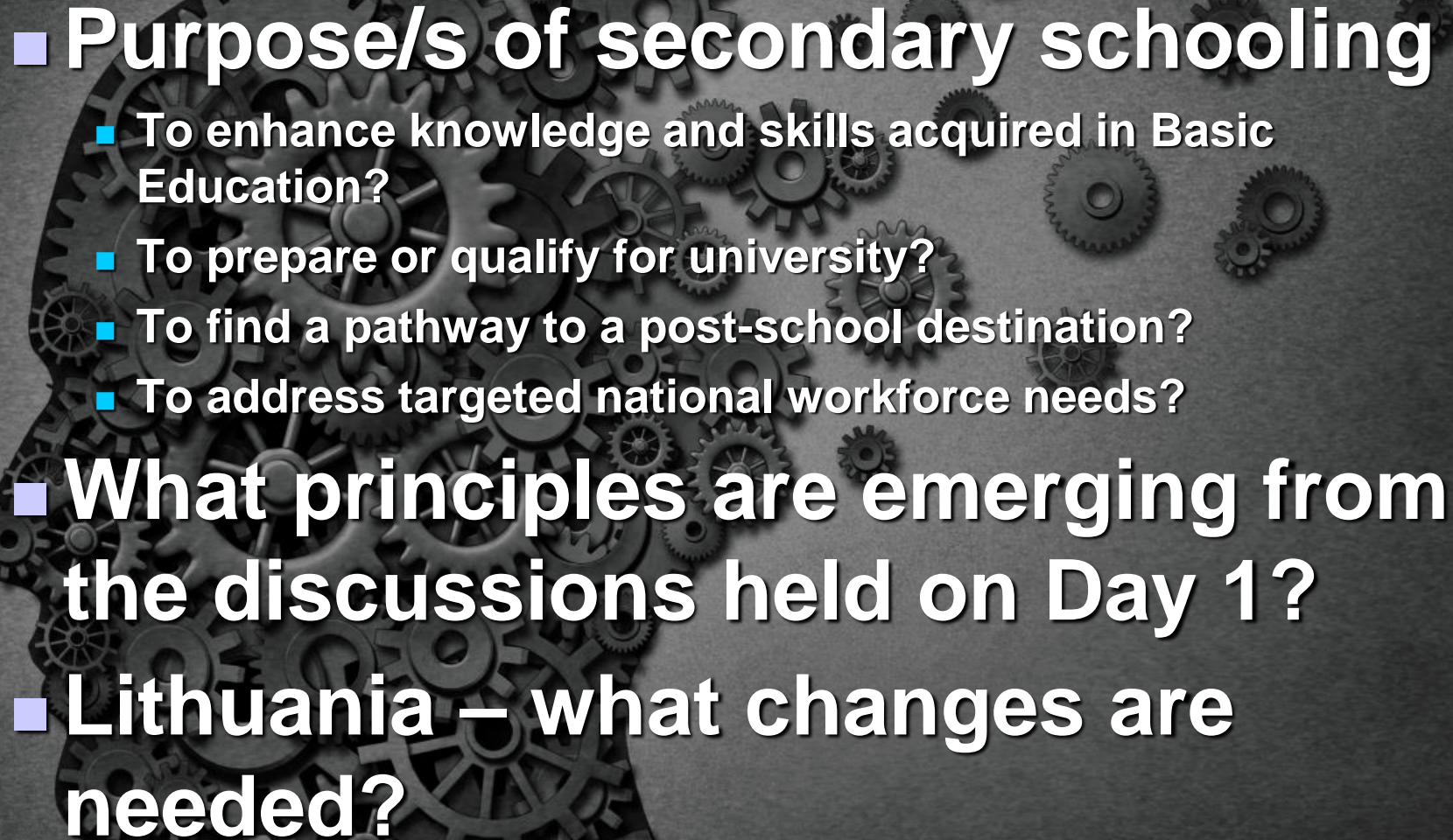*Twitter*: **@DrPhilLambert**
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- **Reflections from Day 1:**
  - **Purposes of Secondary Schooling?**
  - **Emerging principles?**
  - **Lithuania – changes?**

- **Examples of secondary education structures from some selected countries**

- **Credits and Credentialling options**

Reflections from Day 1

- **Purpose/s of secondary schooling**
  - To enhance knowledge and skills acquired in Basic Education?
  - To prepare or qualify for university?
  - To find a pathway to a post-school destination?
  - To address targeted national workforce needs?
- **What principles are emerging from the discussions held on Day 1?**
- **Lithuania – what changes are needed?**

Day 2: Global Approaches

Country/Jurisdiction	Length
Finland	3-4 years
South Australia (Australia)	2 years
Ireland	2-3 years
British Columbia (Canada)	3 years
Singapore	2-3 years
New Zealand	3 years

Global Approaches:
Finland (3-4 Years)

- **Structure**
  - **After Basic Education students choose either academic or vocational track**
  - **A minimum of 75 "courses" overall with between 47-51 compulsory (depending on mathematics track)**
  - **Specialisation course electives are advanced compulsory courses (of at least 10 to be taken)**
- **Key Elements**
  - **Academic and vocational tracks are interchangeable**
  - **Maths and National Language at different levels**
  - **Students can opt for lower level exams from the course they have undertaken**
  - **Compulsory, specialisation (built on compulsory subject content) and applied (integrated studies)**
  - **Also optional diplomas in theatre, dance etc**

Global Approaches:
South Australia (2 years)

- **Structure**
  - **South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE)**
  - **Students need 200 credit points**
    - **50 from Personal Learning Plan, Literacy requirement, Numeracy requirement and Research project**
    - **90 credits from Grade 11 & Grade 12 subjects over the 2 years**
    - **60 credits from Grade 12 subjects (externally assessed)**
- **Key Elements**
  - **70% of final assessment is school-based; 30% is through external examination at end of Grade 12**
  - **Students must have completed an assessed Personal Learning Plan in either Grade 10 or Grade 11**
  - **Students must complete a Research project that is assessed as part of their overall work in either Grade 11 or 12**

Global Approaches:
Ireland (2-3 years)

- ## Structure
  - The Senior Cycle in Ireland commences either with a student taking a Transition Year or moving straight to the 2 year cycle (which includes examinations at the end of the 2nd year)
  - Students take 5 or more subjects (most elect to take 7) for examination
  - The Transition year, if taken, is exam free and enables students to explore a range of courses and includes work experience
- ## Key Elements
  - The two year cycle involved students taking one of 3 programs: the Leaving Certificate, Leaving Vocational Certificate or Leaving Applied Certificate option
  - The Leaving Certificate is the main program for an academic pathway – 36 subject areas; Irish the only mandatory subject; all subjects have two levels (Ordinary and Higher) except Irish and mathematics which both have an additional level below Ordinary called Foundation

Global Approaches:
British Columbia (3 years)

- **Structure**
  - **BC Certificate of Education (Dogwood Diploma)**
  - **Mandatory passes in 3 assessments: Grade 10 Numeracy; Grade 10 Literacy; Grade 12 Literacy**
  - **At least 80 credits to be acquired over 3 years**
- **Key Elements**
  - **Can take the mandatory assessments up to 3 times to get best result**
  - **52 credits come from mandatory subjects:**
    - **PE Health (Grade 10)**
    - **Science (10 and 11 or 12)**
    - **Mathematics (10 and 11 or 12)**
    - **Language Arts (10 and 11 or 12)**
    - **Arts (10 and 11 or 12)**
    - **Applied Design/Technology (10 and 11 or 12)**
    - **Career Life Education and Career Life Connection (Grade 12)**

Global Approaches:
Singapore (2 to 3 years)

- **Structure**
  - **Senior Secondary Schooling is called Pre-University**
  - **"Pre-University" courses are provided at Junior Colleges, Polytechnics and Institutes of Technical Education though later two are vocational based**
- **Key Elements**
  - **Pathway determined by academic success at the end of secondary education (ie Grade 9)**
  - **Junior College pathway with a focus on Humanities, Arts and Languages, Mathematics and Science and pre-university preparation with GCE A levels taken at the end of final year**
  - **Polytechnics offer practical studies and diplomas eg tourism, business studies**
  - **Institutes are for vocational courses**

Global Approaches:
New Zealand (3 years)

- **Structure**
  - **Called Grades 11-13 but is equivalent to Grades 10-12**
  - **Mandatory Grade 11: English, Mathematics and Science**
  - **No mandatory subject areas in Grades 12-13**
- **Key Elements**
  - **Students are assessed on the subjects taken against specified standards using a range of internal and external assessment tools (no final examination)**
  - **For each standard demonstrated the student receives a credit/s**
  - **Students are judged at being at either level 1, 2 or 3 depending on the degree of difficulty of the standards they have demonstrated**
  - **Internal assessments are externally moderated**

Global Approaches:
Workshop Task 1

Which strengths and limitations do you see in each structure?
What elements impress or interest you?

Country/Jurisdiction	Strengths?	Limitations?
Finland		
South Australia (Australia)		
Ireland		
British Columbia (Canada)		
Singapore		
New Zealand		
Lithuania?		

Global Approaches

Plenary

Which strengths and limitations do you see in each structure?

What elements impress or interest you?

Comments about Lithuania (What needs to change)?

Day 1: Credits/Assessment/Credentialling

Credits
- **Credit Points (accumulated)**
- **Standards demonstrated**
- **Components (eg project; community work; course work)**

Assessment
- **School Based + External assessment**
- **School Based (no external exams)**
- **High stakes examinations**

Credential
- **Issued by senior secondary authority**
- **Ranking score based on results (scaled)**
- **Portfolio**

Credits
Credits Points (accumulated)

Benefits

- **Clarity regarding course planning throughout secondary years**
- **Clarity regarding the level of each subject/course (more rigorous have higher points than less rigorous)**

Limitations

- **Focus appears to be more on participation than achievement**
- **Subject "grading" is a proxy for status/value**
- **Students may be tempted to select courses to maximise points rather make choices based on interest and ability**

Credits
Standards Demonstrated

Benefits

- Provides students with clarity regarding what is expected of them
- Makes clear what they can do (strengths) rather than ability being based on a credit point number or score

Limitations

- Can lead to formulaic responses to assessment tasks (ie what you have to do or produce to achieve result)
- Record management system needs to be in place to keep record of each individual's standards achieved
- Each standard has to be given a value rather than one for the whole course (as in credit points)

Credits
Components

Benefits

- **Senior grades are seen as being distinct from Basic Education**
- **Balanced to indicate the application of knowledge, skills and understanding in authentic situations (better connected to post-school experiences)**

Limitations

- **Students will differ in the level of support needed from subject area learning to other contexts (eg projects)**
- **Negotiation needed at school level and system level to ensure projects and research topics are authentic**
- **Additional challenges in assessing the relative value of non-subject based projects/experiences and achievement**

Assessment
(School based + External assessment)

Benefits

- **Rewards students for ongoing work and commitment**
- **Enables assessment of non-examinable competencies**
- **Maintains students' effort and provides a final culminating point**
- **Provides an assessment if issues occur at exam time**

Limitations

- **Relies in part on the consistency and reliability of teachers' judgements**
- **Requires monitoring to ensure school or teacher-based assessment tasks are appropriately balanced (ie not simply school-based exams)**

Assessment
(School based - moderated)

Benefits

- Rewards students for ongoing work and commitment
- Enables assessment of non-examinable competencies
- Develops teachers' professional skill in assessing student learning
- Provides teachers with comparative student work samples from other schools

Limitations

- Relies solely on consistency of teachers' judgements and reliability
- Requires an external moderation process to ensure judgements are fair

Assessment
(High Stakes assessments/examinations)

Benefits

- Sets the end of Grade 12 as the high point in schooling for students
- Gives students a focus and purpose to work toward

Limitations

- Creates a highly stressful period in a young person's life
- Some highly capable students can do little throughout the senior years knowing they have the exams to perform at their best
- Presents a risk if issues occur in the exam period

Credentialling
(Issued by senior secondary authority)

Benefits

- **Provides an authorised official independent recognition of achievement**
- **Can act as a global "passport" to further study**

Limitations

- **Typically summarises what subjects and levels have been obtained but with little detail**
- **Value is placed on it as a credential by others which may be low compared with credentials offered by other providers or evidence considered to be of equal or greater importance**

Credentialling
(Ranking score based on results – scaled)

Benefits

- Enables comparison of students' performance
- Assists universities and other institutions to set entry scores for highly sought after degrees etc

Limitations

- Reduces what a student can do to a single score
- Tends to encourage some students to maximise their ranking score by taking highly scaled subjects/courses
- Requires a complex (and for many is very difficult to understand) scaling process external to the schooling system

Credentialling
(Portfolio)

Benefits

- **Captures all the competencies that a student has demonstrated, providing a full picture of one's overall ability and strengths**
- **Prepares students for life and work after school by providing a mechanism to document their achievements**

Limitations

- **Needs to be maintained over the period of senior years to fully represent all that a student has achieved**
- **Can lead to students undertaking projects purely to illustrate breadth over depth**
- **Limits need to be set on size and items included**

Credits/Assessment/Credentialling: Workshop Task 1

What credit system interests you? What assessment approach interests you? What approach to credentialling interests you?

Approaches	Strengths?	Limitations?
Credits		
Credit Points		
Standards demonstrated		
Components (eg projects, community work)		
Assessment		
School based + External assessment		
School Based (no external exams)		
High Stakes examinations		
Credentials		
Issued by secondary school authority		
Ranking score based on results (scaled)		
Portfolio		

Credits/Assessment/Credentialling

Plenary

What credit system interest you?

What assessment approach interests you?

What approach to credentialling interests you?

Questions/Comments/Concerns