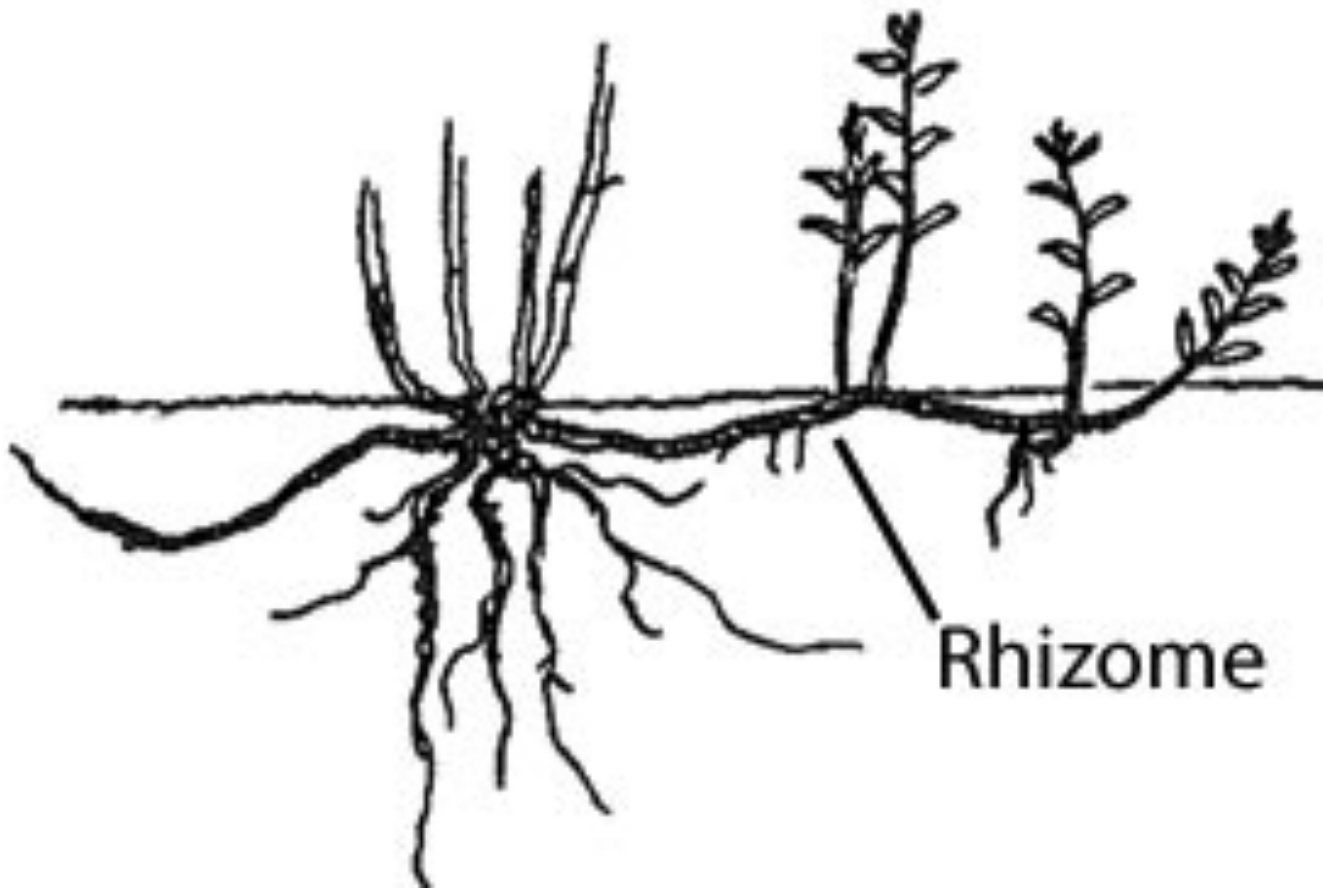CEIPS

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'Rhizome' as a metaphor for implementation practice

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Source: http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/WEEDS/ID/broadspecial.html

What I Plan to Talk About

- Context of Inquiry

- The turn to complexity

- The importance of metaphors

- The Rhizome as a metaphor

- Examples in practice

- The challenge/s ahead

Context of Inquiry

- Surfacing and interrogating health promotion practice and its impacts

    - Healthy Together Victoria
        - Victorian Department of Health
        - 90 + practitioners
        - 14 local government areas partnered with Community Health
    - **Be Active program**
        - VicHealth and Sport and Recreation Victoria
        - 5 Local Government Areas
        - Strengthen the physical activity and volunteering systems

- Early observations of 'systems' practice challenged convention
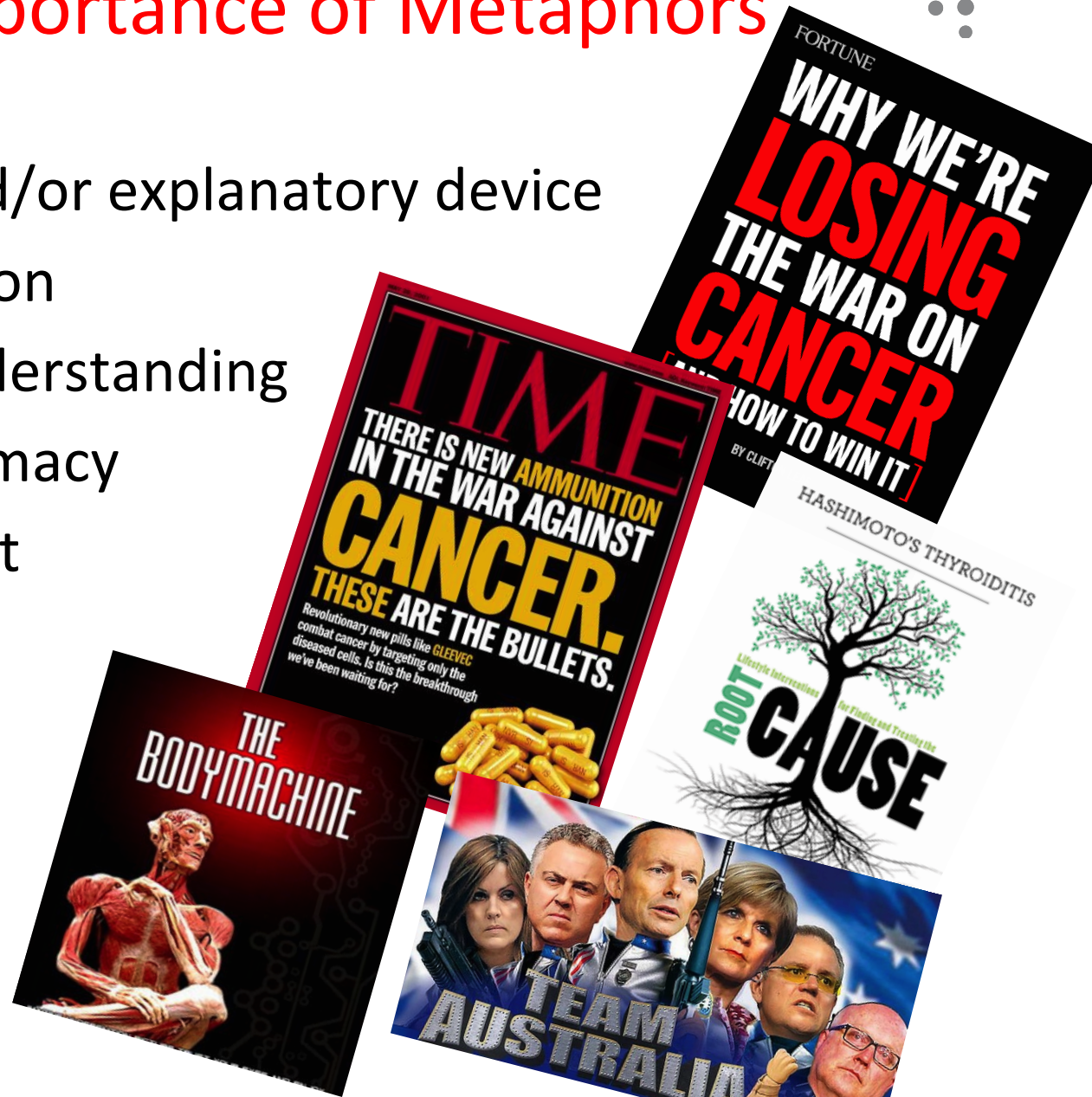
The turn to complexity

- Need to understand and describe:

  - The 'dynamic' nature of program implementation
  - Programs as 'events in systems'
  - A system that is highly interconnected
  - By practitioners that are systems thinkers
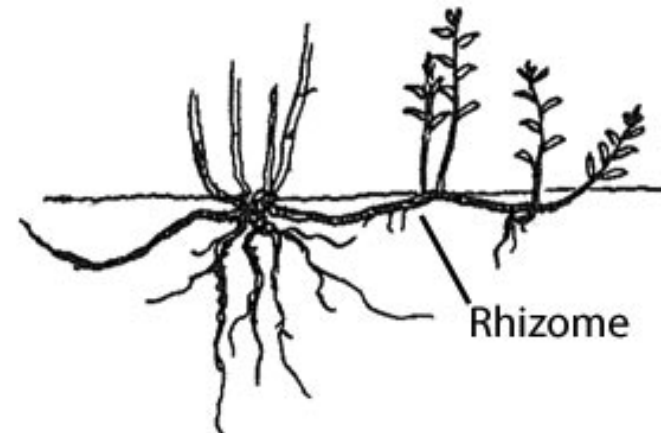
The Importance of Metaphors

- A rhetorical and/or explanatory device
    - Evoke emotion
    - Promote understanding
    - Create legitimacy
    - Rallying point

Rhizome: what is it?

- A root system that contains
  - Buds
  - roots
  - Leaves
  - Nodes
- Creates new root systems
- Examples: ginger, iris, lily

Rhizome

Rhizome: metaphorical application

- Applied to illuminate

  – How the WWW has created a 'dynamic reorganisation of culture' not just a set of techniques or technical platforms (Tredinnick 2013)

  – The importance of the connections between in school and out of school learning (Schuh and Cunningham 2004)

Rhizome: metaphorical properties

- Dynamic

- Connectability

- Multiple entry points

The Wild Terrain of Systems Practice

- Rhizome invites us to follow practice rather than program through contexts

- Example
  - Adaptation
    - Encouraging / supporting adaptive behavior
  - Prtnerships
    - Expanding networks, connecting others and exerting influence

The Wild Terrain of Systems Practice

- Rhizome metaphor opens our eyes to otherwise invisible aspects of practice

  – Neither innocent or haphazard

- But can it be
  – Propagated to spread
  – Guidedd in specific directions
  – Tamed of unintended consequences

Implications and Challenges Ahead

- Continued development of a Rhizomatic metaphor for systems practice

- Invite others to test the metaphor for applicability, relevance and explanation

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Acknowledgements

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