Rethinking Education and Global Futures

Rome

01 December 2019
The Future of Work

- **Fourth industrial revolution**
  - A false dichotomy between the past and the present
  - Moral panics at every turn
  - Dystopic theorising
  - Rapid change
  - Wicked problems

- **Platform Capitalism and new forms of work**
  - The old story in new shoes
  - Deregulation, liberalisation and increase in precarious work practices
  - Moving into education as the last unconquered frontier for capital
  - Meanwhile new technologies have the potential to make some jobs obsolete while requiring more specialised skills (OECD 2030)
Dystopic Futures

• What is your worst vision for the future of education?
  • Draw images that represent the worst possible future for education
  • What are the threats that teachers face?
  • What are the threats that students face?
  • What role might technology play?
  • How will this influence the future
  • The development of skills v holistic development
The ILO global commission on the future of work

- **Work for a brighter future**
  - Clear focus on human centred approaches
  - The need to grow productive capabilities in people
  - A universal entitlement to lifelong learning
  - Governments, workers, employers and educational institutions have equal responsibility for making this happen

- **Cradle to the grave education**
  - Not going to happen without guarantees
  - Formal and informal learning
  - Can’t leave out the marginalised and the oppressed
  - The future of education is inextricably linked to the future of work, but they have separate identities
Human capabilities

• **Wheelahan and Moodie**
  • The whole of the person the whole of their life
  • Not just influenced by market forces but driven by the person
  • Not in an atomised, individualised way but in a genuine story of growth
  • Skills or course choice mismatch, the chicken or the egg...

• **Flexible Pathways**
  • Everyone should have access to education at all levels
  • There should be an ability to move from TVET to academic and vice versa
  • The educational door should never be closed, let alone slammed shut...
  • Educational aspirations must be supported, we should all be astronauts
Educational Plasticity: Utopias

- **Utopic vision**
- What is your utopic vision for the future of education and work?
- Draw images of how work and education might interact
- Think symbolically rather than literally
- What is essential and what supports are needed?
- How will this make a difference to cradle to the grave learning opportunities?
ACTRAV, ILO and the importance of partnership

• **Lifelong learning**
  - Can't be achieved by just one agency
  - We can't progress our vision for quality education without partnerships
  - ILO a reliable partner
  - So are OECD, UNESCO
  - Unreliable partners include World Bank, IMF

• **Partnerships count**
  - TUAC the oldest social partnership in the world
  - ACTRAV not far behind
  - The academy also has a part to play
  - Employer (government), Union, agency (ILO, OECD, etc.) tripartite arrangements
The role of the academy

• **Platform university**
  • Students as bitcoins
  • Lecturers as disposable units
  • Partnerships only based on impact
  • Knowledge economy, knowledge control (Cambridge Analytica etc.)

• **Academic freedom and a brave new world**
  • Precarious work practices reversed (UCU strike)
  • Partnerships with unions, schools and governments
  • Within a frame of providing academic critique without fear or favour
  • Giving access to knowledge to all
Growing pressure for curriculum change

- **Soft skills and social and emotional developments**
  - The undiscovered country of the whole child
  - Holistic development, not brains on sticks
  - Taxonymic progression (Tristram Shandy, Tom Jones, Persuasion etc.)
  - Some countries ahead of others
  - Pressing need for all to think of the future (OECD 2030 - Vancouver meeting)

- **Education 2030**
  - Complex process but a real opportunity to make positive change
  - The future we want in a rapidly changing world
  - Broader set of competencies
  - We have argued for capabilities and a process to be undertaken with unions
The run of Capital

- **Privatisation and commercialisation of education**
  - Education one of the last bastions of public financing
  - The growth of EduBusinesses has targeted education spending
  - This in turn has targeted the developing world
  - Pearson and BIA, ARK etc.

- **Structural reform**
  - Liberalisation of school structures in the developed and developing world have led to increased opportunities to mirror the platform university and constitute students as economic units
  - Digitalisation and marketisation shape shift according to the economy and structures in operation
  - They follow the run of capital
  - Works differently in ECE, Primary, Secondary and TVET
Tech, AI, Big Data and information overload: an ethical future?

- **Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning**
  - The two are often confused
  - OECD AI principles sound but no compulsion for companies to follow them (TUAC)
  - A human centred agenda with a focus on ethics

- **Regulation of tech, data and platforms**
  - Time to push government to regulate this new area of activity
  - Nationalise data
  - The public and private two step...
  - AI has the potential to be a positive force in human development if it is not left in the hands of the market
  - The same goes for education
A brighter future: autonomous professional, professional standards and union involvement in teacher policy

- **Quality education**
  - Rests on the quality of teachers
  - Teachers need access to all forms of teacher policy (TUAC survey for OECD)
  - Education Policy Outlook - teachers consulted over pay and conditions, but not much else
  - Must change

- **Professional Leadership**
  - Professional standards joint EI/UNESCO framework
  - Autonomous professionalism driving learning
  - Ako
  - For students, teachers and society...
Marx in platforms
Conclusion

Future pathways

**Renewal:**
Growth, Unity, Principles for action

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