

# BLOWING BACKWARDS INTO THE FUTURE OF ICT IN EDUCATION?

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## Keywords

Technologies, Educational Institutions. Learning Processes

## 1. SUMMARY

In this paper, we want offer a new radical thinking of education in the digital age. By applying a critical approach and scrutinizing existing concepts of ICT in education, it is time for re-imagining and re-designing teaching ways and learning processes across space and time.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

We have heard a lot of predictions about what ICT technology or ICT-enabled culture will mean for education and higher education in particular, during the last 15-20 years. Computer-based training, e-learning, digital natives, learning objects, blended learning and the possible impact of global MOOC-structures are examples. Things surely change, however often neither as fast as expected nor as total in a short perspective but maybe in a little longer perspective it is more interesting and disruptive development.

Higher education is like an old building repaired, augmented, patched and partly rebuilt many times. The elements don't harmonize so well any longer. It is like a really big unfinished puzzle where the small pieces don't fit to each other. René Descartes looked at medieval philosophy in a similar way and decided to not make another patch but to tear it all down and start from some clear foundations - his attempt is quite known: I think, therefore I am. I am a thinking thing, etc. and he then builds a new philosophy from scratch.

We feel that some higher order discussion about what ICT in the long run means for higher education is urgently needed, instead of just using ICT tools for specific tasks within an old frame of perception about what university teaching is about. The *room* for learning is still a very dominating idea. Even when it is not there, as in asynchronous web-based courses, the methods can be inspired by the absence of it. ICT use becomes digitalizing lectures, recreating classroom structures in a VLE, talking about the classroom 2.0, envisioning a "virtual" university, sometimes very concrete as in Second life and similar environments. etc. We envision a more thorough retake on how to turn from course-based learning into learning expeditions.

## 3. A radical new design thinking on education

"We drive into the future using only our rearview window" is a quote from Marshall McLuhan (year). A similar thought has been expressed many times earlier: Angelus Novus is a classical art piece by Paul Klee that has become symbolic for both the new political during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and illustrative concerning what feelings, ideas, wishes and calls to action we can have concerning the future. The art piece shows an angel in storm with wings spread out blowing backwards into an unknown space. S/he cannot turn around and see forward nor close the wings. Some orientation is given by looking back at the more or less chaotic tracks. "This is what we call progress", the

Neomarxist Walter Benjamin writes in his famous interpretation of the picture. We all know that it isn't easy to predict anything about the future, and the Frankfurt School of Social Research of which Benjamin was a part of together with Horkheimer, Adorno, Fromm and others, would go on and form a critical theory to analyze the inconsequence in ideology for what's happening around us and inside us and what that could mean in relation to the future - a "better" human future preferably. They had abandoned a deterministic view and the idea of Marxism as a positivistic science and slowly became more and more pessimistic and less activist. Their disciples, activist movements from the 1960ies onwards, cared more about change.

When the authors of this paper were swept along to participate in an European call for papers about higher education 2030, we mostly prolonged into the future some trends we had observed. This method of future prediction is of course fallible, in fact, it almost always goes wrong due to unprecedented events, foreseen by almost no-one. We can remind ourselves about such things as the impact of the fall of the Berlin wall, the appearance of HIV and AIDS, personal computing, the impact of the Internet during the 90ies etc. to become quite humble. In this paper, which will be the starting point for our presentation, we see some changes relating to the future of university teaching with ICT more consequently and thoughtfully integrated than today. We chose to discuss the following themes when considering higher education and how it would look in 2030.

- In 2030, the question of how to provide access to information to all everywhere is considered solved.
- In 2030, it is even more evident than today that information and knowledge are different entities.
- In 2013, teachers and students live in off-online spaces - offline and online constitute aspects of a one and only human life and social world.
- The climate in student-teacher collaboration can be enhanced when redesigned examination procedures includes informal learning and is no longer solely a university responsibility.
- Teachers may be of more kinds: from nationally or globally specialized lecturers to accessible learning supporters and supervisors, and to local mentors.
- Learning as a process is made visible. It belongs to the learner who has many tools and strategies to her/his use. Learning is learning without prefixes as "distance", "blended", "mobile", "non-formal". The individual's learning is more important than fitting into educational institutional structures.
- The difference between teaching and learning is clearer, and not blurred in conceptual language as today; they develop as interdependent but distinguishable processes.

We also envision a coherent European thinking about ICT integration into the normality of education.

#### 4. REFERENCES

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