

# Education's futures - who benefits?

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# Overview

- disclaimer & aim
- risks
- sources
- assumptions
- key questions for education
- future-building schools?
- key leverage points

# DISCLAIMER

- This isn't going to be about learning – about what teaching methods might be adopted, how to improve learning or ensure learning happens more efficiently...
- This talk is concerned with the strong possibility that socio-technical change over the next few decades may radically exacerbate social and economic inequalities, and asking the question –  
*what role should education play in the light of this possibility?*

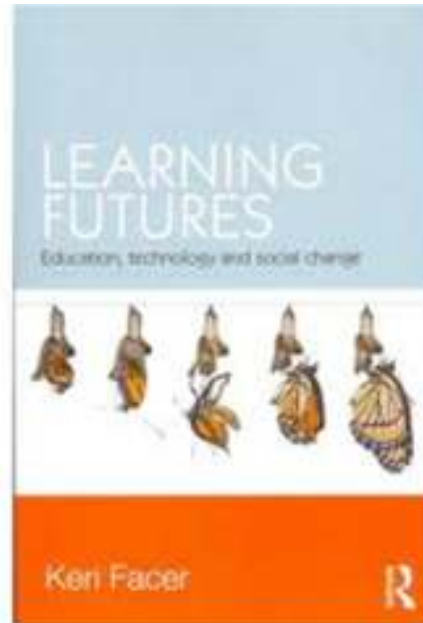
# RISKS

- In talking about ‘the future’ and ‘education’ together, we risk
  - too narrowly defining ‘the future’ because we have defined the purpose of education too narrowly
  - assuming that childhood’s purpose is preparation for the future, rather than the right to exist in the present
  - assuming that we should seek to future-proof education against futures imagined by others, rather than working to create the futures that we (or our students) might want

# SOURCES



technology, children, schools and families





# ASSUMPTIONS

- massive increases in computing power (and data)
- merging of digital & physical computing
- increasing collaboration and work at a distance
- working alongside sophisticated machines
- networks as a core feature of personal and institutional arrangements
- the unexpected and mythic impact of biosciences
- global population ageing
- energy and mineral resource scarcity and environmental degradation increase
- trends towards increasing inequality within country and persistence of gender, ethnic and religious struggles

# KEY QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATION

- What (is) the future for the school?
- How do we shape a new intergenerational contract?
- What is the nature of the individual at the heart of education?
- What knowledge matters?
- What does economic resilience actually look like?
- What politics will help us to achieve our goals?
- What, then, is the future for the school?

# the school is dead, long live the school

- Massive growth in resources to support informal learning
  - access not just information, but peer groups, teaching, assessment and learning communities outside the school
  - Problems of informal learning haven't gone away – educational/cultural/social capital play out; 'powerful' knowledge difficult to access
- Fragmentation of formal education into disaggregated services (care, assessment, teaching)
- **The disappearing school...**
  - replaced with the more totalitarian learning society with the risks of failure devolved to the atomised individual?
- **No – the school still matters – but 'schooling' may not...**

# inter-generational relationships

- What are schools for?
  - since 19<sup>th</sup> C. Quarantining young people from the risks of adult society, teaching them the benefits of our wisdom...investment in y.p. for future economic and social benefit
- Disruptions
  - Children's rights
  - Children's competencies (digital...)
  - Demographic shifts - Adults as learners (incomplete/unfinished)
  - Competition for public resources between adults-children
- New models
  - Adult salesman/child consumer
  - Adult dictator
  - Competition
- The loss of the standard model of adult-child relations brings real risks to children without family support and protection.
- What is the school for?
  - The development of resilient inter-generational relationships that respect the capacities and resources of all ages as learners and teachers

# the new 'individual' in education

- Personal cloud/networks
- Prosthetic enhancement
- Pharmacological enhancement
- Highly diverse forms of 'individual' in schools
  - How is that diversity handled? Will different forms of enhancement be compatible?
  - Assessment and learning for unique constellations of interdependence?
  - Education that teaches reflection upon networks and dependencies?
- What are schools for?
  - Reflection upon, development of and mobilisation of unique constellations of networks

# what do we need to know?

## Distinctive knowledges

- Collaborative Knowledge
- Embodied knowledge
- Dangerous knowledge

As we recognise the futility of defining a single body of valuable knowledge, will only some young people get access to 'powerful knowledge'?

- What are schools for?
  - Discernment (who am I, where might I contribute/shine, what does that require?)
  - Multi-literacy (what tools can I mobilise?)
  - Responsibility (what choices should I make?)



# what does economic resilience look like?

- Knowledge economy – growth of the networked institution (disaggregated corporations), growth of amateur-producers, deprofessionalisation of traditional roles...
- Radical polarisation of the workplace
- The fragility of globalisation and economic infrastructure in the face of resource constraints (rise of transition and other movements)
- Increasing middle class positional competition, increasing exclusion of the most vulnerable, a shrinking elite – collapse of the whole shooting match
- Development of alternative economic and social structures
- What are schools for?
  - To offer a viable new narrative about educational and economic wellbeing
  - To support young people to understand their interdependencies and resource maps
  - To support young people and communities to build their own economic wellbeing (through new models)

# Economy/technology is not destiny...

- Economic, social and technological change remain influenced by politics...
- Digital meets democracy
  - Citizen journalism; accountability; aggregated action; open data; community prototyping; wiki government; public engagement
- New models of democratic engagement developing
  - ‘dutiful’ citizenship (voting/parties etc); ‘active’ citizenship (actions, engagement, non-aligned)
- The digital risks enhancing access for those who are already active...
- The different forms of citizenship risk increasing democratic deficit and declining political accountability
- What is the school for?
  - A key entry point to critical and reflective participation in all forms of political and democratic debate.

# The future-building school

- Not a ‘future-proof’ school (defensive/adaptive)
- Future-building
  - A public space for discussing desirable futures for young people, parents and communities
  - A development space for identifying personal and collective strategies to create those futures
    - Knowledge, networks, politics, economic resources, tools

# The components of the FB school

- **Intergenerational** (cross-age groups; adults as co-learners, and co-teachers)
- **Embedded** (connected to meaningful activity in the world, and to democratic local debate)
- **Networked learners** (able to make visible the different resources they are drawing upon, and access the wider resources of fellow-students and community as a whole)
- **Futures-literate** (playful, agentive, creative about possible futures, historically aware)

**WHERE NOW?**

# Curriculum development through educational design – 2 projects

## Data democracy

- Data in education – the ‘Moneyball’ moment
- Young people’s resource maps
- Wearable/shareable/delightful/ubiquitous
- Capture bio, environmental, social network, intentional, institutional and ambient life data
- Represent in different ways for different audiences
- Compare with others and use to build projects and interrogate the world

## Governance

- Co-operative schools models -
- Collective community future visioning
- Asset Based and PD based approaches to communities
- Harnessing school resources
- Building school, student and community strategies in light of these visions, examples and resources

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**THANK YOU**

