UNESCO High Level Group of Visionaries on Knowledge Acquisition and Sharing

Kronberg, Germany, 22-23 June 2007

Questions, aims and outcomes:
Working document for the meeting

Preamble

On the path to building knowledge societies, we need to understand both the legacy and potential of knowledge as applied to UNESCO's objectives. The presumption that knowledge is a key driver of social and economic development (which includes notions of cultural identity, empowerment, inclusion and human security and dignity) is a core foundation of UNESCO's mandate. In this context, this event addresses the concept of "knowledge" and the inter-relationships between learning, knowledge transfer, technology use and new knowledge models.

Today, ICTs afford many opportunities to question some of the basic assumptions and choices that were predicated on them and to re-open discussions around the nature of learning, the content of learning, the role of facilitators and places for learning. We must seek to use learning systems to encourage reflection, creativity, expression, cooperation, social responsibility, democratic values, and tolerance. Learning modes will become a diversified mixture of self-instruction, group work and tutoring. This process will be complicated and difficult, particularly as there are many different audiences of learners to be targeted - students, skilled workers, general public, young children, out-of-school, primary age, secondary, tertiary, etc.

Solutions lie essentially in organizational, pedagogical and cultural realms, but ICTs can have a key enhancing role if applied correctly. The new concepts of on-line connectivity, virtual environments (choice of delivery media) and group-ware methodologies can contribute to building a new tradition of life-long learning.

Aims

The aims of the meeting are to:

- Consider, through discussion and dialogue, strategic issues related to the future of knowledge acquisition and sharing and

- Identify, through a creative effort, the changes that such strategies might necessitate.

Expected Outcomes

The meeting is intended to produce four outcomes:

- An <u>expert statement</u> made by the participants in response to the aims of the meeting;

- A <u>report</u> made by the organizers evaluating the event and its outcomes;

- The establishment of a <u>modality for future continuity</u> of the meeting, either locally or globally;

- A <u>selection of podcasts</u> from participants and also some gathered prior to the event representing the voice of young people.

Eight question areas to be tackled

(1) The impact of emerging technology on models of learning

Keywords: *Connectivity, mobility, size, visual realism, power, capacity, speed, tools, multimedia, rich and extensive recording.*

- How will advances in biotechnology transform human learning? Will we be using physical electronic implants in the brain to help us communicate and acquire learning?

- How can the practices of 2030 learning incorporate the outputs of the new science of learning? (This is about agility in applying the huge volumes of output from research into learning sciences/brains sciences, etc)

- How can we ensure that the emerging technologies support more of the outward expression and evaluation through rich and powerful creative tools which offer low threshold and high ceiling? How can such activity reach diverse audiences through well-structured online publication?

(2) Teachers' future roles

Keywords: *Society, community, instructional, revelatory, conjectural, emancipatory.*

- How will the roles of 'teachers' change over the next 25 years?

- How should future teacher education recognize the complexity of professional learning, both current and future, and the value of building learning communities? What will teacher education look like and how will teachers stay ahead of the game?

(3) Future models of assessment

Keywords: *Multimodal, patchwork, collaboration, marking, validity, qualification, connate.*

- Who will judge achievement and decide what should be judged? Will it be the state, the individual, their peers, their employer or their parents?

- How will portability of accreditation across frontiers and cultures be ensured?

- How can we change the political inertia that prevents the reform of assessment systems so that we can test the skills that really matter? Do PISA and other education indices hinder assessment and education reform?

(4) Future of classical educational structures

Keywords: *Lecture, exam, class/cohort, college/university, alumni, community, workplace, government.*

• How can the learning institution break the bonds of national and cultural boundaries whilst respecting diversity and tradition?

• In 25 years: Will ICT have turned schools into outdated institutions?

• What will early childhood education, what higher education look like?

(5) The concept of universal "knowledge norms"

Keywords: *Diversity, postmodernism, consensus, dissent, pragmatism, standards.*

• How do we give proper recognition to tacit knowledge held by practitioners?

• How can we develop and respect knowledge and its importance both for cultural and economic advance?

• Learning in English – are learners advantaged to become a global citizen or disadvantaged by missing the cultural diversity and historical richness represented through their mother tongue?

(6) Role of IT private sector in learning

Keywords: *Investment, research, practitioners.*

• Who controls the media, content and user-generated spaces, another Murdoch?

• What protection is there? Open source?

• How far will 'education' across the world have become privatised in the future? Will we look back and say that the notion of free primary education was an idealistic but impractical vision?

(7) Future of e-education

Keywords: *Costs, organisation, teacher skills, working conditions, online community.*

• How do we invent the flexible mental map to inspire learning throughout life?

• What models of continuity (ensuring that learners build on prior knowledge) and progression (ensuring that learners make progress to higher levels) are appropriate for life-long learning and how are these linked to concepts of career?

(8) Impact of technology on the evolution of knowledge societies

Keywords: *Access/connectivity, authority, user-generated content, quality, democracy*.

- How can we recognise the symbiotic relationship between technology and human development in our approach to technology in society?

- How will pupils/teachers/learners access learning materials in 25 years time?