A Report on the Panel Presentations on Inclusive and Adaptive Education

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This report summarizes the plenary panels and outlines the main points raised by each speaker. It also synthesizes the pertinent ideas, perspectives and questions emerging from the discussions. The purpose is to inspire prospective activities/projects and other outputs moving forward.

A. Inclusive Education: A Critical Dialogue and Marginalized Communities

Panel Abstract

In recent months, both the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement have been lenses through which to wider and global underlying issues of societal inequality and iniquity. While acknowledging the situation specific aspects to movements, BLM has caught the global imagination, underlining and reflecting the differences in privilege, power, resources, and access to education of poor and marginalised communities throughout the world, which have only been highlighted by the global pandemic, and the stark differences in access to education. This plenary panel will bring together a diverse group of educators to discuss inclusive education, and people's experiences of access to, and participation in education, and the structures and cultures that encourage and nurture, or conversely discourage and inhibit.

Speakers: Selected from diverse backgrounds, experiences and expertise.
- Kwame Akyeampong, University of Sussex, UK
- Christine Callender, University College London, Institute of Education, UK
- Tam Cane, University of Sussex, UK
- Tamsin Hinton-Smith, University of Sussex, UK
- Farish A. Noor, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
- Krisna Uk, Association of Asian Studies, USA (Moderator)

Context: Opening up a critical space for open-minded discussion
- Krisna Uk, the moderator opened the discussion stating that COVID-19 presents a critical moment to take a few steps back and think about critical issues that affect teachers and students in higher and secondary education.
- The conversation might open up a series of conversations about the topic

Summary of each speaker's points
- Kwame Akyeampong
    1. Issues with inclusive teaching

       a. Prioritization of curriculum content over student engagement

          i. Teacher training does not make teachers, especially those coming from outside the community, aware of their prejudices of students from certain backgrounds (e.g. ethnicity, race, socio-economic class).

          ii. Teacher training does not allow them to appreciate diversity; they are trained to provide knowledge for students to replicate

          iii. Belief that not all children could learn on the same level.

       b. What should be done?

          i. Change of perspective where teachers believe that <u>children can learn and achieve at their pace.</u>

          ii. Reconfiguring teaching and learning based on enhancing <u>teacher-student relationship on mutual respect </u>and levelled engagement with the learner.

- Christine Callender
  1. Deep, systemic flaws with "BAME"-based (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) pedagogy based on interviews with students, teachers and department heads
     a. Airtight syllabus modules showing histories of injustice but <u>the question of the pedagogical implications</u> of using minority experience to convey societal inequity is still unaddressed
     b. <u>Disparaging responses from the Administration</u> regarding issues of inequalities (e.g. a student who suggested using BLM momentum to change the system was relegated to the Student Union) have detrimental effects on students' morale.
  2. Need to foster a <u>humanizing education</u> that would acknowledge that issues of race are deeply embedded in the students' personal experiences and understanding of the issue.
     a. Lack of expertise in dealing with issues such as institutional racism.
     b. Teachers need to engage in self-reflection and unlearning to get the house in order.
     c. Need for a pedagogy in shaping the students' understanding of race, and not merely attribute it to their socialization at home.
     d. Need to address the implications of the tools of whiteness, especially their unwillingness of some

teachers to engage in the conversation about the "elephant in the room"

- Tam Cane
    1. Context: Foundational inequality in admission to and living in social care system.
    2. Issues of BAME students who are living in care home and how they are perceived in society.
        a. <u>Young people are seen as homogenous</u>, overlooking intersectionality.
        b. Cultural misunderstanding and misinterpretation of young people's cultural experience which <u>hinder the development of positive experiences</u> towards transitioning to school.
        c. They receive higher discrimination because they are labelled as "problematic".
    3. Inadequate psychological and logistical support
        a. <u>Lack of contextual safeguarding</u> for young people receiving social care e.g. Black children in the COVID-19 context are less likely to get a laptop.
        b. No realistic consideration for the trauma experience hinders how to teach young people.
        c. Lack of cultural understanding of the how unpleasant adoption experience affect identity formation.
    4. What can be done?
        a. Enhance cultural competence in moving away from the systemic flaws to acknowledging what young people could bring in education.
        b. Need for role models
- Tamsin Hinton-Smith
    1. Main point: need to decolonize the curriculum
    2. Teachers and researchers unconscious bias
        a. False security about the self
        b. Need for maintaining humility that educators do not know all the answers
        c. <u>Reluctance of some educators to decolonize the curricula</u> e.g. in addressing gender and racial bias, thinking that they are not important (esp. in natural science and medicine)
    3. Opportunities: Learning from Others
        a. COVID-19 made us understand that these social issues are part of our lives, regardless of disciplines.
        b. Maintain humility in admitting that educators do not have all the answers, even going against being a typical "academic".
        c. In practice: integration of these principles in the Leading Professional Development (EDI)

- Farish Noor
  1. Context: Colonial-based education in Southeast Asia
     a. Problems inherited from colonial era
        i. Strong Westphalian bias leading to a singular national narratives
        ii. <u>Does not consider the diverse ethnic groups in the region</u>; they are not represented in national narratives.
        iii. Question of where students from the margins find themselves sin the national story
        iv. <u>No attempt to seriously question the nation-state narrative.</u>
     b. Historical structural problems leading to existential ones
        i. Capital, neoliberal models that are metric-centered and rank-conscious as throwback to the Cold War
        ii. Entire communities such as the Rohingya do not have access to schools or homes
        iii. COVID-19 crisis surfaced that SEA is an economically vulnerable region because it is plugged in the global trade network; experience on massive cutbacks will deeply affect the education system.

Refocusing our view of the problems
- <u>Teachers: Aside from students, we also need to talk about teachers.</u>
  1. Teacher training should involve helping and supporting them in coping with the changing environment.
  2. Materials are important, but teachers should also be encouraged to learn about themselves in relation to others.
  3. Discuss the emotional impact of these issues on teachers.
- Students: Humanizing pedagogy
  1. See students as sources of learning
  2. <u>Acknowledgement that students differ on how they learn, and not their ability to learn</u>
- Creating spaces of conversations
  1. Clarify and inspect what white privilege means
  2. Create spaces where people could talk about these issues comfortably and openly.
  3.

Structural Challenges: disempowering to empowering
- Structural impediments to teachers
  1. Difficulty in self-introspection: Acknowledge that in some contexts, particularly in SEA, teachers are civil servants who are structurally impeded even with the best intentions.

2. Neoliberal education increases burden on teachers who are now seen as service-providers not as educators
   ● Students
        1. Teachers should encourage students to <u>think outside the box</u>.

B. Embracing Difference? Adaptive Lifelong Learning

Panel Abstract

This panel will address the theme of sustainable growth of the 21st century knowledge economy, and how dependent it is upon the inclusion and adaptive personal and professional growth of a very high number of diverse knowers. Inclusion through adaptive lifelong learning is the subject of a report to be co-published in August 2020 by Virginia Tech, IAFOR and the Future Talent Council. The report will lead to the launch of international working groups (spanning industry and academia) that will begin to translate the recommendations of the report into action.

Speakers
   ● Thanassis Rikakis, Virginia Tech, United States
   ● Joseph Haldane, IAFOR, Japan
   ● Anne Boddington, Kingston University, United Kingdom (Moderator)

Context: Democratization of Knowledge
   ● How to make education accessible, plural and inclusive?
   ● How to re-think about the meanings of learning and knowledge dissemination/exchange

Speaker Points
   ● Joseph Haldane
        1. Engagement with knowledge and addressing the imbalances to access to knowledge, values and education.
        2. The meaning of public education has been more and more limited and constricted: How can we globalize and put the important principles of public education in a wider context?
        3. Need to address the discrepancy between theory and practice; and the perpetuation of dominant perspectives on education
        4. Need to give other voices access and platforms to engage if not challenge dominant paradigms and contribute to knowledge.
   ● Thanassis Rikakis
        1. Unpacking terminologies
             a. Inclusivity and adaptation go hand-in hand
             b. Need to consider that all knowledge exists to understand the true complexity of the world.
             c. Need to embrace differences to make us understand that they are all parts of who we are.

2. Sources of Learning
    a. Embodied, experiential and symbolic: Learning also involves the knowledge we acquire through everyday experience.
    b. Learning occurs when the learner acquires the knowledge he/she needs.
    c. Importance of adaption to understand the process of learning amidst diversity and differences and opening ourselves to the idea that we are all part of the society.

Discussion Points
- Challenges
    1. The question of the <u>academic institution's identity</u>: Some universities claim that they are international, regional or local and most are state-controlled.
    2. The need for <u>a concrete governance platform</u> that will ensure material and normative factors
    3. Many issues need to be addressed <u>in practical terms rather than on the basis of guilt structure</u>
    4. The role of the universities: <u>Disrupting universities' strange privileged position</u> based on impact-rankings not on the impact of education to students; how to engage the various stakeholders across different contexts.
    5. How to design a structure/program that would hone critical thinking, theoretical and practical skills that <u>enhances an individual's adaptiveness and resilience</u> to face societal conditions and changes.
- Opportunities/Possible "Solutions"
    1. Taking advantage of innovations
        a. Cross-sectional learning through various learning platforms
        b. <u>Democratic outlook where all citizens could be part of the knowledge production and learning process</u>
            i. Create incentives and motivations for people to be part of the knowledge production/sharing process.
            ii. Need to change the definition of university where people from various backgrounds could feel that they have an impact and stake in the society.
    2. New models of education
        a. Easier to build new structures than change from within
        b. <u>Taking advantage of resource-rich institutions</u> who are capable and willing to create cooperative structures.
        c. Cooperatives and other new learning spaces could support and encourage people to "jump in".

        d. Cooperatives could still be exclusivist (only those who can afford can join) but if we invest in people to have resources, then it could encourage others to join.

        e. Spaces should accommodate pluralistic relations to make pluralistic individuals.

- How and where could COVID-19 intersect with the project?
    1. Changes with COVID-19
        a. Raised the question of the purpose of education
        b. Identified distinctiveness and acknowledges that we are all key players
        c. Served as a massive stress-test of the issues raised (in the report)
    2. The traditional university institution is huge but hardly adaptable to pressing issues such as COVID-19 (e.g. tution fee structure is no longer tenable)
        a. A comparative perspective (between university and cooperative) could surface innovative and cooperative aspects to save the university from itself.