Imagining Universities of the Future

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Futurology

• Re-energise the (stale) normative vocabularies that:

  ✓ conceptualise
  ✓ critique
  ✓ promote

  HE in international policy architecture.
Do These Excite/ Delight You?

- quality assurance
- globalisation
- knowledge economy
- innovation
- teaching and learning
- widening participation
- internationalisation
- civic engagement
- digitisation
Disqualified Discourses

- **UK priorities (2008) for the next 15 years:**
  - innovation, knowledge transfer/exchange (techno-science?) and wealth creation.
  - not inclusion and equalities.

Emphasis on:

- knowledge liquification and optimisation
- not power/knowledge or knowledge as pleasure.
The Morphology of the University of the Future?

- Are universities reduced to delivery agencies for government-decreed outcomes (Young, 2004)?

- Are policy priorities commensurate with aspirations/desires of students/staff or rapidly changing economic landscape?

- Are current discourses limiting creative thinking about the future of HE?
Why Re-Imagine Higher Education?

Major site of:

- cultural practice
- identity formation
- knowledge formation and dissemination
- symbolic control.

Caught between:

- archaism
- hyper-modernisation
Is the Present the Future That We Imagined in the Past?

• Did the left/ counter hegemonic advocates predict the scale of neo-liberal driven change?

• Did the traditionalists predict the industrialisation and massification of HE?
Discourses of melancholia, crisis, loss, damage, contamination, and decay in higher education.

- the university in ruins (Readings, 1996)
- the ‘degradation’ of academia (Nisbet, 1971)
- the university ‘in crisis’ (Sommer, 1995)
- the death of autonomy (Dill, 2001)
- proletarianisation (Dearlove, 1997)
New Times?

- Difference conceptualised as disparagement e.g. ‘non-traditional students’, feminisation.

- Transformation driven by neo-liberal policies rather than academic imaginary.

- Tensions between desire, desiccation and distributive justice.
Tension 1: Texts, Technology and Tectonics
(Coercive) Creativity, Productivity and Performance

The UK:

- 1% of the world population
- 2nd most important producer of scientific and scholarly research in the world
- Accounts for 4.5% of the world’s spend on science
- Produces 8% of the world’s scientific papers
- 13% of the most highly cited.
- Wins 10% of internationally recognised science prizes
- Produced 44 Nobel prize winners in the last 50 years.
- UK academics produce 16 research papers for every $1m invested compared with the 10 produced in the US and the 4 in Japan

(Crewe, 2004).
Knowledge Monopoly?

- Academic life/ quality is measured via production of texts (and enterprise).

- Is this commensurate with changing literacies, new constituencies and new modalities of communication?

- Are we in danger of creating thought lakes and word mountains?

- What is not being measured/ produced/ interrogated e.g. equity, employment conditions, emotional labour?
New Ecology of Knowledge?


- Technological literacy is producing new academic identities:
  - Millennials
  - Digital Natives
  - Generation Y
  - MySpace Generation
  - i-Generation
  - Net Generation
  - You Tube Generation.

• HE is still largely literary in structure.

• If HE is transformational, what and who is being transformed?

• Is there a mismatch between ideal/imagined students and new constituencies in terms of:
  ✓ quality assurance
  ✓ assessment
  ✓ knowledge codes
  ✓ systems of representation
  ✓ narratives
  ✓ modes of identification?
Tension 2: Everywhere and Nowhere: Speed, Space and Striving
Networks and Nomadic Subjects

- Academic hyper mobility (Kenway, 2004);
- Academics in state of ‘continual animation’ (Ball, 2008: 54);
- Diffusion of bodily and textual selves into multiple locations;
- Cosmopolitanism, nomadism and spaces of transition;
- Expectations of performativity involve a mix of individualism and relational/ inter-dependency (Lynch, 2009);
- Generative potential of the global;
- Parochialism = cognitive dispossession.
Borders, Barriers and Boundaries

- Elite western higher education from urban geographies transmitted into rural (post-colonial) low-income countries.

- Democratising of knowledge or de-territorialisation of hegemonies?

- Nationalised knowledge in a globalised world.

22 July, 2009
New Competitions

- Secure knowledge niches have been destabilised (Appadurai, 2006).
- Innovative ideas and practices coming from both outside the North and outside of the academy (Santos, 1999).
- Knowledge transfer/exchange as disruption of centres and margins (Biesta, 2007).
- Barriers dissolved between public and private (Ball, 2008).
The Underbelly of the Global Beast

- Hyper-modernisation of global, entrepreneurial, corporate, commercialised universities and speeded up public intellectuals on the move.

- Underpinned by domestic/private archaism of under funding, poor quality employment environments and conditions, and casual research labour.
Tension 3: Enterprise, Excellence and Equity
What Signs of Quality are Valued and Performed?

• ‘Student voice’/ democracy/ empowerment = consumption practices and service-level agreements?

• Criteria for best practices = the intellectual field, or client satisfaction?

• Are quality discourses culturally specific?
Quality and Equality

• Does quality incorporate an understanding of equality?

• Are there separate policy trajectories for quality and equality?

• Is quality a disembodied/ socially decontextualised discourse?

• Is quality associated with elitism and exclusionary practices?

• Are different structures of inequality intersected?
More Means Less: Massification as...

• Meritocratic equalisation
• Redistributing an unquestioned ‘good’
• Challenge to elitism
• Alignment of macro (neoliberal) and micro level aspirations

(Naidoo, 2006; Walkerdine, 2003).

• Contamination
• Dilution
• Pollution
• Social Engineering
• Reinforcement of social stratification processes
• Threat to quality and standards
Unequal Geographies of Knowledge

Student enrolment worldwide:

- 13 million in 1960
- 82 million in 1995
- 137.8 million in 2005
- 24% globally
- 5% in Sub-Saharan Africa
- 1% in Tanzania

Who Are All These New (Turbo-charged) Students/ Consumers?

- Global Gender Parity Index of 1.05 (UNESCO, 2007).

- Unevenly distributed across regions and disciplines.

In 2007 there were more women than men in:

- Northern America
- Western Europe
- Central and Eastern Europe
- Latin America
- Caribbean
- Central Asia

There were more men than women in:

- East Asia
- Pacific
- South and West Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa
Widening Participation in Higher Education in Ghana and Tanzania

Measuring:

- Sociological variables of gender, age, socio-economic status (SES)

In Relation to:

- Educational Outcomes: access, retention and achievement.

In Relation to:

- 4 Programmes of Study in each HEI.
- 2 Public and 2 private HEIs.

(Morley, Leach and Lugg, 2008)

www.sussex.ac.uk/education/wideningparticipation
Equity Scorecard 1: Access to Level 200 on 4 Programmes at a Public University in Ghana According to Age, Gender and Socio Economic Status (SES)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>% of Students on the Programme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Commerce</td>
<td>29.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Management Studies</td>
<td>47.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Education (Primary)</td>
<td>36.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Sc. Optometry</td>
<td>30.77</td>
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Equity Scorecard 2: Access to Level 200 on 4 Programmes at a Public University in Tanzania According to Age, Gender and Socio Economic Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>% of Students on the Programme</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Low SES</th>
<th>Age 30 or over</th>
<th>Mature and Low SES</th>
<th>Women and low SES</th>
<th>Women 30 or over</th>
<th>Poor Mature Women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Commerce</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.41</td>
<td>8.59</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.32</td>
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<td>LLB. Law</td>
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<td>13.48</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.Sc. Engineering</td>
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<td>25.05</td>
<td>11.65</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Science with Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.20</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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</table>
‘Now’ Universities Built on Yesterday’s Foundations

- Hyper-modernisation of liquified globalisation, measurement of quality and standards and students as consumers.
- Archaism of current constructions of the ‘ideal’ student/experience, unequal participation practices.
The University of the Future Needs to...

• Reclaim higher education as a think tank, producer of critical knowledge, social criticism and policy driver.

• Develop a sociology of absences.

• Find new conceptual grammars for theorising quality, pedagogy, and participation that incorporate understanding of identities, affective, aesthetic and non-textual domains.

• Not just focus on knowledge transfer, but de-parochialise research - geographically and theoretically.

• Be aware of new generational power geometries.

• Acknowledge, as well as a booming knowledge economy, the possibility of a dystopic knowledge recession.
ESRC Seminar Series:
Imagining the University of the Future