
From the further education margins to the higher education centre? Innovation in continuing education

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Abstract

Comments that both the higher education and further education sectors have experienced massive change and turbulence within the last decade. Explains that the growth of a mass higher education system in the UK and the need for increased diversity of educational opportunity have meant that institutions have had to reshape radically their conventional provision. Stresses that the main drive for qualifications and for vocational relevance has taken place in the context of major changes in the labour market and shifts in the UK's economy. Charts the growth of an agenda for change as personal and professional learning converge. Highlights innovations in teaching and learning methods as continuing education develops, and notes that the boundaries between providers are dissolving.

Introduction

This article seeks to identify and explore some key aspects of change and innovation within the worlds of further and higher education. The focus is on describing the elements of a "discourse of change" (Gleeson, 1993) which, it is argued, embraces teaching, learning, organizational structures and some of the broader themes of change such as the emergence of mass higher education and its justifications (Robertson, 1994) as well as the growth of "globalization" as a factor of change (Davies, 1995) bearing on the higher education system.

The structure of the piece revolves around the idea of convergence. The previously different and discrete (antithetical) worlds of higher education (HE) and further education (FE) are introduced as the beneficiaries (whether willing or not) of processes of change experienced as common. HE has been forcefully expanded from an élite to a mass system in little more than a decade; FE has "repositioned" itself as a major player in post-16 provision (see Smithers and Robinson, 1991, 1993). The relevant themes impacting on both systems have been concerned with the individualization of choice, the marketization of provision, increasing specialization and the growth of vocationalism.

A shared agenda of responses to these threats and opportunities has emerged which embraces both FE and HE and which often finds an outlet under the rubric of continuing education (CE). The characteristics of this emerging provision can be viewed, it is argued, as a map of innovation, the contours of which are clear to see. However, the journey(s) to be made using such a map, to continue the metaphor, are still in the planning, although the most developed itineraries are to be found in the world of continuing education. It is suggested that the flight plan will need to focus on processes of innovation which we can track within six broad categories involving student-centred learning, flexible curricula, assessment methodologies, learning processes, resource allocations and accessibility and openness. A diagrammatic representation of the elements comprising the categories is given in Table I. Such an index might serve as a basis for future work towards the periodic reinvention of the post-school education system which the inexorable impact of change demands of us.

Higher education – a shared agenda

An increasing number of voices have been raised in support of what higher education is required to do in order to meet the emerging needs of a new century (Duke, 1992; Robertson, 1993, 1994; Sargant, 1991; SEEC, 1996a,b). A summary of such issues would include:

- an improved social result through an increase in the range and quality of students successfully entering institutions from all sections of the community, but in particular from targeted groups: mature students, women, ethnic minorities and employees needing retraining;
- educational variety through an increased diversity of academic programmes, by subject, award, mode and location, including the recognition of the workplace and professional life as “sites of learning”;
- a broader initial learning programme, based on the acquisition of general skills as well as subject knowledge, leading to future specialization as required;
- a variety of interim and staged awards and a means of achieving awards determined by the demonstration of effective performance rather than by the length of the period of study;
- a diverse programme of continuing education opportunities, preferably accredited, flexibly accessible and available to meet a wide range of capabilities and commitments;
- systems of educational mobility and transfer between levels of achievement, learning experiences, sectors, institutions and between different countries wherever possible.

In order to attempt the delivery of such a “programme”, institutions have had radically to reshape their conventional courses, replacing them progressively with modular and credit-based academic programmes, the advantages of which are evident to students and academic staff.

These demands are set in a context in which higher education in the UK is still capable of expanding. If current ambitions are realized, the number of students will rise by almost two-thirds in this decade, and by the year 2000 higher education institutions will cater for over 1.5 million undergraduate students; the proportion of 18 year olds entering higher education will rise to above one in

three, yet the overall majority of higher education students (including part-timers) will be over 25 years of age. The important question is how the current system, founded on rationed supply and selective entry, can be adapted to meet the growing demands of students and society alike, while preserving what is good about existing provision. Unless there are significant reforms – embracing among other issues those of courses and qualifications, student funding, research and staffing and the provision of continuing education – there will be no successful transition to a mass system.

University CE – contexts of change

In order to respond to these challenges, our society has adopted what is, in spite of the disappearance of the binary line, a progressive rather than revolutionary approach. We have sought to preserve, to reform and to build on best practice rather than go for huge institutional reform such as making Oxford and Cambridge into graduate schools or creating an élite super-league of universities. This almost inevitably means that response starts from within but not necessarily in the mainstream of an institution’s activity. The case has been argued cogently in *The Learning University* (Duke, 1992) that one of the most effective means available to traditional universities in bringing about institution-wide change can be their traditionally marginal department of continuing education.

One may attempt, as Duke does in search of a new paradigm, an audit to locate the position within a university of developmental work in the following areas:

- a university’s role in its regional community;
- the availability of recurrency of teaching;
- the incidence of pacing – including variable pacing of study;
- the level of flexibility in provision;
- the widening of participation via access schemes;
- the development of credit accumulation and transfer;
- modularization and student choice;
- the recognition of work-based, off-campus credit;
- the establishment of inter-institutional consortia;
- arrangements for franchising;
- the handling of the (increasingly significant) FE/HE interface.

We must add to this list the increasing significance of computers and communications technology, including satellite, Internet, video, telematics and new configurations of technology which will continue to transform learning and teaching in ways which have not yet been thought of!

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Arguably the highest concentration of such activities will often be found, not in the heartland of central teaching departments, but in the university's continuing education work from where they may, in benign circumstances, begin to permeate the total institution.

Further education: contexts of change

A transformation in prospect?

The further education (FE) sector emerged in the wake of the 1988 and 1992 education acts as a significant supplier of entrants to HE and as a provider of HE awards and degrees (Kedney and Parkes, 1988). At its most optimistic, the sector has been viewed as the harbinger of a new system (Baker, 1989; Ball, 1990, 1991; Gleeson, 1993). Government used the FE sector to grapple with the historic low levels of post-school participation (CBI, 1989) and with the issue of international competitiveness (Porter, 1985). Underlying the development of the FE sector towards a new definition of itself was a significant shift in the nature and organization of paid work itself. In many places traditional employment, along with many of the features of working-class life, was simply disappearing (Blackwell and Seabrook, 1985, 1993; Hoggart, 1957). Mass unemployment and de-industrialization were constant realities throughout the 1980s, ameliorated only at the cost of massive government-sponsored schemes of intervention (Dole *et al.*, 1990; Gleeson, 1990; Raffe, 1988).

In this environment the meaning of work for many people and communities had to be re-examined. One consequence was the re-examination of the role of FE (and adult

education also). For many people, education itself became a form of "work" – a means of transforming lives and futures blighted by unemployment or lack of opportunity (Wittman, 1989). FE, it can be maintained, recognized that a new approach to skills and education was needed (Finegold and Soskice, 1988) and thus the sector set about repositioning itself in both the labour market and in the world of further and higher learning (Smithers and Robinson, 1993).

At a political and ideological level, change in FE was shaped by the themes of deregulation at the local level and centralization at the national level of funding and income streams. College managers now were successful in accumulating more authority and power and in general a radical repositioning and widening of the reach of FE was achieved by the mid-1990s (Gleeson, 1993). Links with an expanded HE sector followed as practitioners and planners struggled to find a consensus on how to reverse the downward trend of recession and loss of competitive advantage economically, by taking action across the education and training sectors as a whole (Ball, 1990, 1991; CBI, 1989; Robertson, 1994; TUC, 1989).

The change agenda

How has this repositioning of FE and its emergence into the policy limelight yielded an agenda for educational change? The evidence seems to show that FE is creating a more comprehensive service involving increased access, expanded qualifications, accreditation and progression between the worlds of school, college, work and higher education. The FE colleges are linked to the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ), the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), Industry Lead Bodies (ILBs) and industry. Courses are increasingly being modularized and accredited and the colleges have become leaders nationally on access, guidance and innovative teaching methods and support for student-centred learning.

Lasting and deeply embedded change, however, must rest on more than the operation of a market mechanism. The wider structural inequalities of British society and the local and regional differences continue to militate against the principles of equity and access. The inequalities of class, gender, race and age, for example, have simply not been

overcome by the issuing of “credits” or vouchers; the problems appear to lie at a deeper and more intractable level. This is not the place to propose a totalizing theory of change. However, it may be helpful to try to identify elements in what Gleeson (1993) has called a “discourse of change” which is needed to take us forward. These elements are to be found in teaching and learning in colleges and in actual practice in the way parts of the workforce acquire skills, knowledge and training. They include challenges to the divisive academic/vocational distinctions that beset our educational provision along with insulated subject categories and the continued separation of training from education. A curriculum bounded by market disciplines alone is unlikely to yield a framework for such innovative education.

A “discourse of change” must naturally encompass the organizational structures of FE, the curriculum and the resource base of the sector. It seems unlikely that a single motivating factor of the market could ensure the full extent of change involving the creation of new ideas, professional inputs from leading teachers and researchers and the quality that emanates from commitment to values of equity, entitlement and democratic accountability. Change, it has been implied, must be long lasting and go to the core of the issue. The issue could be said to be the long-term needs of the economy and society for a different and more successful system of education and training. Although we are embarked nationally on a flight path to a mass higher education system, the parts of the vehicle which are to transport us are not all in place. For example, a less differentiated and segmented education and training system may be a long-term requirement of the industrial and commercial system, as might a strategic commitment to the public funding of lifelong learning opportunities; but neither exists at present.

The FE sector therefore embodies many contradictions. There are many exciting innovations taking place, often owing to the very absence of policy directives, and it is innovative in organizational, managerial and curricular terms. Yet FE is still unable to define its place in any other sense than its recently acquired corporate status. Its relationships to the wider needs of the economy and society are ambivalent. With respect to HE it is marginal but, since change frequently

occurs at the margins of conventional life, perhaps FE can count high on the scale of innovation. What is certain is our need to understand what lies behind the rise of FE on the agenda for change and the implications of this as we move towards a pattern of mass higher education where the distinctions between colleges and universities diminish.

Shared agendas for FE and HE

Can there be any doubt that the awareness of the need for greater social and economic equality in education opportunity has been a major factor in educational change? Following the American experience in the 1960s, higher education in the UK in the 1990s has come to be regarded as a fundamental entitlement for a mass client group rather than as a select privilege for a few. As in the American case (House, 1991) however, we cannot be certain that the promises of achievement and success can be met and the hopes of minorities and disadvantaged groups fully realized. Whether an expanded HE sector involving FE can be realistically viewed as a significant part of the solution to the seemingly intractable problems of the economy and the UK's competitive viability is debatable, and the jury is still out!

Within the overall picture of change, we can pick out some of the metaphorical contour lines on the map of provision which join the further and higher education providers at the same level, as it were. The changes we are now experiencing in access to higher education, for example, exemplify the assertion that general and liberal education is no longer at the centre of our higher education system. Rather, academic specialization and technical training hold the centre stage. This is, of course, no new development and the correspondences with an earlier epoch are noted by House (1991) when he observes that: “The full development of nineteenth century industrialization is symbolised as much by the appearance of the modern departmentalised research university as it is by the smoke-belching industrial plant with its ever greater division of labour and specialization” (pp. 8–9). The agenda for change has been set in relation to the increasing value placed on science, technology and the growth of specialist expertise in education and in work. These concerns have been at the centre of curriculum-led change since the 1980s (see Evans and Bennett, 1983) and can be understood as

indirectly related to the same socio-economic forces which produced specialization and vocationalization in higher and further education. The process is, of course, part of a larger and longer-term shift of profound character in our social life documented by Perkin (1990), in his work on the rise of “professional society”.

In relation to the question of how we understand educational change, the growth of a mass-entry higher education sector, stretching across FE and HE, is an expansion based on increasing vocationalism and specialization. As such, it is one that challenges previous conceptions of the university’s role. It does this by incorporating a broad range of learners at several levels of previous education and thereby brings into question the idea of binary divisions between providers; one that has already been seriously eroded by government policy.

This new provision is for people well beyond the traditional age and qualifications categories. This is a response which corresponds to the changing nature of employment, leisure and social patterns which are themselves contingent on the evolving division of labour and our understanding of the nature of work and its availability.

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The arena of work and education is, of course, a contentious one. We most frequently mean paid work when referring to work but, if we were to use the term to encompass the more general notion of productive life, it would be possible, arguably, to view work as “a potentially progressive principle for curricula...” (Spours and Young, 1988).

The argument here is that the tendency to “vocationalize” the curriculum and favour traditional subject specialisms in schools and colleges has led to a narrowing of the academic curriculum and a stress on vocational training. This is an education and training emphasizing standards, discipline, attitudes and dispositions compatible with employers’ views of the proper characteristics workers and

employees should possess. This vocationalization of learning opportunity has become part of new divisions of certification and at the higher levels of attainment has undermined the liberal approach to higher education which favoured general and humanistic approaches. Our understanding of the post-binary world may therefore be enhanced if we can incorporate into our discourse a real sense of the changes occurring in the relationship of work and education.

The intention here is only to signal some key aspects of this process rather than follow them in analytical detail. There is little doubt that fundamental changes in Western societies’ labour markets are taking place and that these have great significance for education. We are now in a “post-Fordist” society where the mass production techniques of the Ford Motor Company used to manufacture cars in the 1920s and 1930s are declining owing to technological developments. Manufacturing industry is playing a declining role, service sector industries are growing, old skills barriers in the workforce are breaking down and new divisions between “core” and “peripheral” workers are being created. New forms of work and integration of productive processes are being created by the growth of the global economy (see Harvey, 1994, Part II).

These changes demand new responses from educators; a flexible relationship between work and education is called for which is more creative and less divisive than the vocationalist perspective prevalent in the 1980s. The imperatives of modernization imply the coming together of education for personal growth and education for work, since it is work which connects us with so many aspects of market-oriented, consumer-driven society with its emphasis on personal satisfactions and life chances.

Academic and specialist subjects as we know them cannot therefore be the basis for future routes to higher education, since they no longer correspond to the needs of the wider reality, including the economic ones. People must therefore prepare themselves for a life of change and less for specific occupations and jobs. Vocation must come to denote the acquisition of more than technical skill and knowledge; individuals must also acquire critical thinking skills and knowledge to enable them to survive the inevitable changes in technical production which can obliterate stand-alone occupational skills.

Work has already been mentioned as part of a “progressive” curriculum and it must be stressed in relation to the theme of change and innovation that work is no longer viewed by many just as paid employment. Work is about future employment in the labour market but it is also about work as leisure, work in the home, gift work, voluntary work and self-employment. Work in these senses implies a new way of looking at the curriculum which includes all these aspects as the basis for the development of knowledge, skills and qualifications. This theme has been a vital underpinning, of course, for curricular development for both further and higher education in the phase of expansion and change in the 1980s and 1990s.

The nature and organization of work is a structural feature of our social system which distributes educational access unevenly and unequally. However, in seeking to understand change at the levels we have touched on, we need to admit the partial significance of many phenomena. Anything approaching a complete understanding is beyond our present intentions and ability; however, there are some elements to be identified. There are, for example, financial and policy questions determined by government. These have been issued with increasing frequency and have contributed to the changes sketched out earlier in the argument. The growth of a culture of “leisure” has also been of some importance, especially for those able to retire early enough and with sufficient income to buy into the leisure markets. There have also been financial gains available for expansion and these have been central to the organizational and management issues around productivity and output. Above and beyond all of this, however, is the need for greater expertise and professionalism in an era of partial economic deconstruction/reconstruction and its attendant mass unemployment.

This is the overall context in which the skill-based function of continuing education and post-school provision has been expanding. The response to the demands of new technology and the need for masses of individuals to adapt to the changing nature of work and the division of labour help us account for the uptake of opportunities in both the liberal extra-mural tradition and the further education sector. This is the agenda for change shared by the further and higher education providers.

Our understanding of what is happening may lead us to be critical of the professionalization and specialization of academic life and to wish to reassert the values of the older academy and of the validity of separate and unequal provision. Or, alternatively, it may force us to define new and emergent values which allow us a culture of inclusion for the world of higher education on a basis other than specialization and expanded vocationalism. The populations and individuals who now participate in this culture have emerged into the stream of higher and further provision in the UK in recent years, and there is now mass participation – but participation in what and to what eventual end? These are perhaps imponderables which signal a new and emergent discourse on change and innovation. It is the view of this paper that, in seeking to innovate, diverse providers can contribute to a common experience which is greater than the sum of the parts.

An index of innovation?

The purpose of asking this question is not to suggest a spurious unity where none exists. Rather it is to seek common experience in the light of the need to innovate and initiate change, especially for non-traditional adult learners in the HE and FE sectors. It is this shared focus of activity, and not the divergent institutional structures, which may yield the innovative ways forward.

The last decade has seen an explosion of innovative teaching and learning systems which have been at the heart of adult education. In one sense the development of access and accessibility to further, adult and higher education has been coterminous with the increased openness, flexibility and responsiveness to a wide variety of student learning needs; needs which were poorly served and largely invisible in previous eras.

A touchstone for identifying the different levels at which innovation and change occurs is that of the flexibility available to students. It is how innovative systems meet the specific needs of individuals, i.e. their flexibility, which yields information otherwise locked into multilayered institutions. It is inconceivable, for example, that the flexible needs of individuals will be met without innovation in colleges’ management, financial, personnel, quality and curricular systems and practices.

The flexibility available to students can be separated into two fundamental categories (Spencer and Wynne, 1990). The first is that of open access arrangements which have been targeted at students for whom A levels have been thought to be inappropriate. Leaving aside the exponential growth of the biggest single provider of “access”, the Open University, there has been a huge expansion of “access” within the last decade with much provision being made by the FE sector and conventional “old” and “new” university continuing education departments. The second category concerns schemes which allow the students to choose the pace of study and to negotiate significant parts of the curriculum for themselves. This last aspect should not be confused with existing open or correspondence systems which provide courses designed to meet the requirements of an external validating agency or examining body. Neither should it be confused with “modular” or “unit-based” courses, which allow a choice of module but allow the student no choice of content or say over learning objectives.

There is an increasing demand for learning situations which give students flexibility and whose organizational procedures facilitate its growth. Spencer and Wynne (1990) devised a learner flexibility profile which records the nature and extent of student choice. The dimensions they select include the aims and content of learning, methods of assessment, modes of attendance and the pace of learning. A scale of flexibility can be devised to rank an activity within each of these categories. Clearly a flexible and innovative organization will need to judge itself in terms of the curricular levels over which it operates – whether at course, module, degree or other level and at the administrative and organizational levels. The flexibility experienced by an individual student derives from the interaction between learners and teacher within the conditions imposed by, or deriving from, the complex institutional arrangements of a college or providing institution. Both academic and resource controls are involved here in supporting or denying flexibility to individuals. Innovation cannot therefore be limited to a single aspect of institutional life; it has to be beyond the boundaries.

Following Spencer and Wynne, we could construct an index of innovation which attempts to bring into a diagrammatic configuration the major dimensions already

mentioned around the key category of student autonomy. However, prior to this it may be advantageous to focus briefly on some specific characteristics of adult learners, since these have influenced greatly both the type of course and the methods of delivery and support offered within our two types of provider – the archetypal university continuing education department and the ideal, typical and developmentally inclined FE college.

What characterizes the type of learners under review here is not just the fact that they are adults. Almost all educational institutions dealing with post-school provision handle adults, including the church, the armed forces, libraries, voluntary associations and myriad other organizations. Neither can we easily define our client group in terms of what is taught or the level at which it is taught. Like universities in general, providers of access programmes are not identified by what is taught, since almost everything is included, nor by the academic level(s) since several of these are also embraced.

‘...there is an increasing demand for learning situations which give students flexibility and whose organizational procedures facilitate its growth...’

The distinctive and perhaps unique character of the adult learners under discussion here is the credence given to student-centred learning. In this view, adult learning is centred not only around allowing students control over curricula and teaching methods but in what Squires (1987) calls the “profound” sense that the whole activity of education turns on the student, rather than on the organization of the curriculum or on the formal certification of learning. This approach yields some possible components of individual and collective experience which can contribute to the indicators of flexibility and innovation. The components are, according to Squire’s classification: adult learning; adult thinking; adulthood itself; and adult development. The first of these is concerned with how teaching and learning occur with adults and is distinctive. The work of Malcolm Knowles is central to this theme (Knowles, 1978). The second is concerned with the kind of “dialectical” and

transformative thinking of which adults are capable, while the third and fourth categories are focused on adulthood itself, its roles and life experiences.

The implications of this for our theme are that the curriculum for adult education is more diverse than anything that precedes it in the formal system of schooling and in further and higher education. This diversity supercedes the limitations of what is taught as the formal curriculum, since everything from archaeology to zoology is included. The form and content of adult education is more diverse than any single sector of education can offer and it tests to the limit some conventional distinctions between life and learning. Experience and experiential learning are central to what are perceived to be the learning outcomes and processes to be fostered. There is no possibility of role closure, where individuals are shut out of learning by virtue of their previous experience, or lack of it. The charting of themes for innovation within an “index” is a simplified and schematic device (see Table I), which cannot do justice to a

complex reality. Nevertheless, it may be possible to derive benefits from its use by:

- bringing a range of potential characteristics of innovation into juxtaposition and thereby creating a repository of ideas and concepts to act as a resource for practice;
- enabling the role of principal actors involved in innovation and change to be underpinned by a classification and rating of the extent and rates of change;
- applying its parameters as an audit mechanism, as a “theoretical” framework for innovation and as a practical tool for development, along with other such devices.

The index is therefore not a completed product, but rather an aid to thinking through common issues facing those who wish to innovate, some of which it is hoped have been addressed here.

Towards a conclusion

The thrust of this paper has been concerned with the examination of growth and change of

Table I Index or dimensions of innovation

From Adult-centred provision	Curriculum content	Assessment methods	Learning	Resources	From Openness to access
Recognition of individual experience	Fixed curriculum and subjects	Traditional end of course examination	Formal class-based – didactic	Teacher/subject	Campus-based
Recognition of group experience	Narrow choice of options	Continuous course assessment	Plus informal classes	Centrally allocated	Home-based
Accreditation of prior learning (APL)	Wide choice of options	<i>Ad hoc</i> testing of individual objectives	Seminars, tutorials	Interactive resources available on demand	Information technologies
Accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL)	Content negotiated by students	Self-assessment	Projects and problem solving	Resource centres – libraries	Multimedia
Recognition of potential	Modularity and interdisciplinarity	Group assessment	Open-ended learning	Student-based	Ongoing student support
Modular system to reflect life experience	Individually negotiated programmes (experience)	Accreditation and credit accumulation and transfer schemes (CATS)	Learning outcomes demonstrated	Community resources	Output-related audit
Social-collective experience	Deconstruction of the formal curriculum	Criteria: contents, skills, personal growth	Academic professional and vocational learning	Partnership	Work-based learning
Social transformations	New curricula and new knowledge	Personal learning statement and professional skills	Action learning/self-managed learning	Learning organizations and the illusory classroom	Virtual learning
Towards					Towards

apparently diverse and different parts of the post-compulsory education service. Indeed, it is this very diversity which the sectors purport to describe that makes the task intriguing. The theme has been that, underlying the diversity between CE provision in higher education and further education provision in colleges, there is a potentially unifying convergence on values and an erosion of boundaries taking place.

The components of this convergence are in a state of flux and may not all be moving in the same direction or at the same pace. However, there is a discernible synergy. Growth of FE/HE is undeniable and, for the more vulnerable in society, education is their best chance of access to wider opportunities and success. There is a common rejection of the culture of failure and low achievement characteristic of parts of our educational culture in times past. This “value alliance” has been overlaid by the Government’s interventions at policy and funding levels in an unparalleled way in modern times and by the ideological penetration of the marketplace philosophy with its emphasis on personal choice and freedom.

Underlying our appreciation of these factors, it is argued, there is a need to understand the impact of change and decline in the economic infrastructure of the UK. Technological change has helped to foster new forms of vocationalism and signals a fundamental shift in the organization, the meaning and the sheer availability of work itself. These are the contexts of change and innovation in the post-compulsory sector.

The key theme of this paper has been that boundaries are becoming more permeable as different providers respond creatively to a shared context and conditions. In order to respond successfully we need, it is argued, a shared understanding of the conditions under which innovation takes place. An innovative educational culture will be a shared one and it is hoped that what is presented here in outline might contribute to generative and productive “unlikely alliances”. As we move towards a mass, or even a universal higher education system, such alliances may bring innovations at the margins to the centre of events.

The suggested index of innovation leads not so much to tidy conclusions as to further questions. An adult-centred approach immediately raises questions of inter-institutional relationships and the need to establish

learning pathways which transcend traditional boundaries. Likewise, the segregated relationship of work and learning is called into question. Furthermore, a student-centred approach may lead to totally non-institutional forms of learning activity, for example self-sustaining and independent self-help groups or the diffusion of the widely dispersed community education movement. In suggesting an index of innovation, we need to be cautiously mindful of the need for credible instruments of measurement; of the need to balance ends and means; and, in an era of a plethora of educational legislation, the need to go on asking the question “innovation for what purpose?”

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