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INTERNATIONALISATION OF EDUCATION: PATHS AND PERSPECTIVES

Raphael Wilkins

Assistant Director (International Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer)
Institute of Education, University of London

I welcome this opportunity to share with you some thoughts on the internationalisation of education, and in particular to explore what paths this may follow, and what perspectives may help with our conceptualisation of what is happening. A starting point regarding the paths is that they take us into places where there are no maps, because the future is unknown territory. The starting point I have chosen regarding perspectives, is to put forward the contention that to make sense of the complexities unfolding, we have to think in fresh ways about the relationships between the dimensions of time and space, insofar as learning takes place within these dimensions.

The big picture of education systems is changing, and these changes affect both the rules, and the players. The old rules within which education leaders operated now only partially apply, but the new rules have not yet become established. In the past, most decisions about education were taken by national governments and educationists working within national systems. In the future, many decisions about education will be taken by international agencies, multi-national companies, and by consumers. Neither the old players nor the new players have an accurate map of the terrain that lies ahead, nor do they have very good maps on which to locate the dynamics of the current education policy context. These limited perspectives will limit choices. The combination of new decision-makers (with new patterns of accountability), and the future being 'uncharted', has profound implications. Too many decisions will be taken from a project-specific perspective, based on knowledge of the present and past (rather than the future), and on knowledge of those aspects of context which are familiar, but without knowledge of all of the options and choices available, and without knowledge of the indirect effects of the choices selected. For example, this pattern of decision-making may prioritise the interests of specific groups and sectors, such as the development of individual

schools (or chains of schools owned by the same organisation), without full regard to the consequences for the education system as a whole.

If current maps are out of date or incomplete, we will need to make new ones. New maps would widen the choice of paths that are available for selection. Making new 'maps' of the future education landscape involves, first, adopting a global perspective, and, secondly, understanding the inter-connections between the spatial and temporal dimensions of education change. It is also necessary to develop conceptual frameworks which enable decision-makers to locate their stances, beliefs and choices in relation to the broad context, and in relation to different viewpoints.

So the next sections of this lecture explore the spatial and temporal dimensions, starting with the spatial. The spatial dimension embraces the three concepts of place, space and mobility. Places are physical locations. They have their own qualities and convey messages about themselves. Spaces are places as perceived and experienced by individuals using them. Spaces can take conceptual as well as physical form.

Places

According to Yi-Fu Tuan (1996), 'place' suggests either a spatial location or a position in society, but Tuan makes the point that often one's spatial location derives from one's position in society. Tuan also considered that places have personality: they evoke awe or affection (I would like to add 'or other emotions', because Tuan appears to write only about the positives). Places may range from public symbols to fields of care. Tuan conceived 'sense of place' as being visual and experiential, and considered that to gain it fully, one must leave the place and think about it from a distance.

Turning now to consider places where learning happens, these include both on and off educational campuses; indoors and outdoors, and in both formal and informal settings. Learning places are hierarchically nested inside each other, spanning individual workstations; classrooms; specialised rooms such as laboratories or art and craft areas; communal spaces such as a hall, or a library/learning resource centre; the whole campus site; and the world beyond the campus.

Spaces

Spaces are experienced subjectively and reflexively, and young people's spaces reflect and influence their identity. Teacher and pupils are in the same room but they are not in the same space. Spaces are nodes in individuals' networks: 'global city' and 'local neighbourhood' are different networks, not different locations.

Spaces exist in places: physical context, climate, landscape, townscape, local economy and human geography always matter, and cannot be set aside from the way in which individuals experience the spaces they occupy.

Cheryl McEwan (2009) points out that among the factors affecting how spaces are experienced are cultural identity and power relations. Spaces may be experienced as spaces of exclusion and disconnection: how and by whom are these created? That is to say, what patterns of inter-cultural relations and power relations engender these perceptions? She also observes that some global perspectives erase the specificity of places and spaces, and questions how priorities for change are shaped by cultural identities, and whose identities have the prevailing influence.

(Cheryl McEwan, 2009)

Mobilities

The writer Urry explains that mobilities are best understood in relation to the concept of moorings, which represent the fixed points between which movements take place (Urry, 2007). So, for example, a person's first moorings may be their family home, their village, their primary school. Movement may then take place to a new situation which develops into a new mooring, which perhaps might be a secondary school in a town. Urry makes the important point that mobility to a new mooring makes the person look back at their previous mooring in a new way: they see new things about it and understand it differently from their new perspective. They may undertake further mobility, perhaps to a university in a city, or perhaps to a new country, and again they look back at their previous moorings in a new way. This process continues through working life. (Urry, 2007)

Mobility is more than movement. As Cresswell (2006) observed, meaningful mobility has symbolic significance to the actor, and contexts are part of that significance. This is different from an abstract notion of 'movement'. A range of different power relationships may be associated with particular mobilities: for example, compare the different power connotations between student and teacher; pilgrim and missionary; migrant worker and entrepreneur.

Turning next to the concept of educational mobility, clearly this has both spatial and developmental dimensions. Spatial mobility includes movements of people, ideas and information, while developmental mobility includes the educational 'journey' from one point of development to the next. This exploration embraces a broad understanding of education and its relationship with culture, agreeing with Colin Brock (2011) that 'Education embraces formal and informal domains'; and more specifically adopting the proposition of Jane Roland Martin (2011) that 'Education is the process of "encounter" between individual capacities and culture, in which both

are changed'. This understanding of education leads to the proposition that learning spaces are in a continually dynamic state in relation to the three factors of place, culture and mobilities of people, ideas and information. Having introduced the spatial dimension, it is now necessary to consider the temporal dimension.

The temporal dimension

While chronological time is important, many developments in education ignore chronological time. For example, students learn at different speeds, but also schools and education systems develop at different speeds and from different starting points: 'stone age' and 'space age' may exist side by side. In a typical city, some schools will be 10 years ahead of the average in their way of thinking, and some will be 10 years behind. A complicating factor is the way in which modern technology, especially ICT, enables schools to jump over (ie miss out) conventional stages of development. Mobility has its effect on the temporal dimension: the aspect of educational mobility that includes the movement of people, ideas and information across national systems has tended to intensify and complicate the temporal dimension. Individuals move to and fro not only between cultures but between different time periods, and do so at different speeds.

The final piece of this particular jigsaw is to see the effect of the temporal dimension on learning spaces. Learning spaces, as they are becoming through the mobility (movement) of people, ideas and information, are developing at different speeds, and in different directions, reflecting differences in the intensity and nature of those mobilities. In this way, mobilities (part of the spatial dimension) can speed up the pace of development (part of the time dimension). I put forward the proposition that this way of understanding the time-space relationship offers the key to making sense of the complex dynamic of current educational change.

Internationalism

The concept of internationalism in education usually embraces such factors as the 'footprint' of Nation 1 in Nation 2 (for example, a British school in China); bi-national and multi-national projects; encouraging understanding of other nations; and preparing young people to visit, live and work in other nations. The profile of internationalism within an educational institution often manifests itself in school or university culture, ethos, and educational philosophy; the degree of diversity of nationalities and ethnicities among the student and staff populations; the choice of curriculum and assessment systems; the extent to which the pattern of external

relations and communications includes an international element; and whether the forms of professional development provided include international experience.

Globalisation

Whereas internationalism concerns interactions between nations, the concept of globalisation represents an additional layer of affiliation, communication and engagement taking place at a supra-national level. Usually its core components are seen to include economic, technological and cultural globalisation. The literature explores the relationship between globalisation and neo-colonialism, while educational practitioners highlight global issues and global citizenship; and through their own interactions demonstrate the globalisation of knowledge and professional communities. Globalisation may be seen as either an independent variable, or as a dependent variable. As an independent variable, it is a global trend that is moving under its own momentum - the 'march of history' – over which people have no control because it is too big and powerful. In this viewpoint, the only choice for people and institutions is to try to anticipate developments, and adapt and respond so as to be able to survive. If, alternatively, globalisation is seen as a dependent variable, then it becomes a global effect that is the cumulative consequence of many decisions and choices made by individuals and institutions around the world. In this viewpoint, individuals and societies have a degree of choice in engaging selectively with the 'opportunities' of globalisation. For example, globalised technologies have enabled greater assertion of local identities. The extent to which individuals and societies perceive themselves as having control over their future reflects their ability to see the big picture and to make strategic choices.

An aspect of globalisation in education is the emergence of the concept of 'world class' schools. Their features include highly achieving students, standards of attainment that are amenable to international comparisons, an international outlook, and students who can choose to progress to universities in other countries. Many 'world class' schools are also international schools. The cultural impact of the concept of world class schools can be considerable, including impact on the students and families directly involved, and impact on the wider school system and culture of the host country. The pattern of these impacts depends significantly on whether the national government concerned allows its own nationals to attend international schools, and the extent to which there is an internal market in secondary school provision.

School leadership and the purposes of schooling

At this time of dynamic development and future uncertainties, school leaders can be seen as holding education 'in the balance' in three different senses. The first sense concerns the position of education approaching 'tipping points' in directions for school development, where seemingly small decisions may nudge development in one or other markedly different directions. The second balance that school leaders need to maintain concerns reconciling apparently competing demands, such as between inclusion and excellence, between uniform approaches and response to diverse needs, or between valuing what can be measured and finding ways to measure that which is valued. The third balance concerns achieving the right mix of knowledge, skills and attributes that make up an 'educated person' in the modern age. Education seems set to have two global roles in the unfolding future. One sees it as a means to extend the neo-liberal marketisation of the global economy, placing the commercial commodification of education firmly within agendas of economic development. The other sees education as a humanitarian response to the needs of communities and groups. Here, education is part of the answer to the world's problems: a way to deal with poverty, disadvantage, the effects of natural disasters, conflicts and displacements. As with many of these apparent dichotomies, the education leaders of the future will need to move beyond the mindset of 'either – or' to create solutions that enable both pairs of objectives to be pursued in ways which are compatible and mutually supportive.

This will involve revisiting collective understandings of the purposes of education. Traditionally, these have been taken to include passing on culture from one generation to the next; making society more open to new ideas and knowledge; personal and social improvement; economic development; and social justice. Views will vary between contexts regarding which of these purposes should have greater priority over the next five or ten years, and how those prioritised purposes are to be translated into performance indicators.

While schooling is often seen as part of the 'answer', it may also be part of the 'problem'. Deborah Youdell has observed that 'Schooling is implicated in the making of particular sorts of people, as well as in the making of educational and social exclusions' (Youdell 2011).

From time immemorial there have been two 'agendas' for education, deriving from the two different meanings of the word 'education' in its classical roots. In the modern context, one of these 'agendas' may be summarised as socialisation and training: transmitting customs and culture and producing a workforce suited to the current known economy. The other agenda concerns the 'blossoming' of the individual, and may be summarised as educative empowerment: enabling each child to develop to the full extent of their aptitudes. Both agendas are necessary but they represent contrasting mindsets and convey contrasting messages to the next

generation. A proponent of the first agenda is saying to the next generation: 'We know the future, the future belongs to us, we know the place that you will hold in that future, we know the skills you will need, and our job is to give you those skills (and if you object, you have the problem called "disaffection" .' A proponent of the second agenda is saying: 'We do not know the future, the future belongs to you not to us, we do not know the position you will occupy in that future – the possibilities are endless. We do not know the skills you will need. Our job is to give you the attitudes and confidence to make the very best of your own potential in that unknown future, and perhaps to create a better future than we can currently envision'. These are contrasting messages, and on this matter education leaders simply have to make a personal choice about where they will stand. In the seminal words of Karl Popper:

'Neither nature nor history can tell us what we ought to do. Facts cannot determine the ends we are going to choose. It is up to us to decide what shall be our purpose in life.' (Popper 1966)

Perhaps many educationists would agree that the core agenda for education might be summarised in the words: 'To enable each individual to achieve their full potential'. This definition has worked well enough for centuries, but the context of the modern world invites challenging questions that must be addressed. How and where is this 'enabling' to take place? Using what technologies, pedagogies, subject content, and what range of learning places? Who defines - who has the right to define - what a person's 'full potential' is, and what evidence supports that judgement? What contextual limitations are being assumed in arriving at that judgement?

These questions point towards a re-appraisal of how educational innovation is conceived. In popular usage, the dimensions of educational innovation might commonly include changes to school design, changes to curriculum, and changes to the 'technologies' of teaching and learning, including the use of ICT which of course is having profound implications for how learning takes place. There is a case for looking beyond these dimensions, to understand 'innovation' as also applying to the aims and purposes of education, and the nature of the interpersonal relationships through which it happens. In 19th Century England, education for the masses was introduced not for the purpose of educative empowerment, but to the contrary to keep the children of the labouring classes in their place. Schooling was to teach them to accept their station in life, to respect their betters, and to learn the skills they would need in the menial occupations to which they were destined. The method used for this depended on fear and intimidation, and the use of physical violence. Modern schools in England aim to support children to blossom to the full extent of their aptitudes, and to do so using methods that foster the child's well-being and positive engagement in their learning, and that respect the child's rights and dignity as a human being. The schoolhouse benefits from modern design, curriculum and technologies, but the change that has made the most profound difference to

children's lives has been this 'innovation' in aspirations for children and in the way they are treated. In many parts of the world, this innovation which costs nothing but changes to hearts and minds, is still to be addressed.

This matter of changing aspirations is an important clue to understanding the dynamics of educational developments. I have outlined elsewhere (Wilkins 2010) my adaptation of the ideas of Brian Holmes regarding the factors at work in educational change. Environmental factors such as technology, the economy, and population may change quite quickly. Similarly normative factors such as aspirations, expectations, values and beliefs may also change quickly. Institutional factors include all of the elements of the education system that have been created by human design and decision, such as organisations, curriculum, assessment, funding, laws and regulations. These can only change slowly because there is a long lead time required to change laws, systems and institutions. This means that institutions in their current form are, in the main, designed to meet the expectations and environmental conditions that prevailed in a previous period. Many of the problems that education leaders are tackling relate to these different speeds of change, including the constant struggle of educational institutions to 'catch up' with fast-changing expectations and environmental conditions.

OPTIONS

Between governments and markets

Globally, we are seeing a changing balance between the three legs on which school systems rest: education as a function of civil society, ie as an extension of family and community life; education as a universal public service provided by governments on the basis of need; and education as a commodity provided in accordance with market forces. The inter-relationship of state and private sectors in education has become and will continue to become more complex; this advance is not always necessarily accompanied by proportionate extensions of market choice, nor by the procurement 'client side' developing in sophistication.

Between economic development and humanitarian response

As previously noted, the apparent dichotomy between education as a consumer product linked to economic development, and education as a humanitarian response both to acute and chronic human needs is likely to be played out in a number of regions where international aid is linked to pressures to open up markets especially in the provision of secondary education. In the longer term, education leaders will need to explore how the capacity and infrastructure developed through the commercial provision of education can also be used to assist education's humanitarian function.

Between past (retro view of 'good school') and future

Current international developments in education represent a mix of forward and backward-looking stances driving educational change. Radical educational thinking is limited by the conservatism of parents, often including a predominant interest in test scores and exam passes; and by risk-averse governments. Parents, the media and some governments also love retrospective definitions of what is a 'good school', in which 'traditional' equals 'better'.

Between neighbourhood and world

The trend towards internationalisation of education is heightening the tensions that already exist in many systems between national prescription and uniformity on the one hand, often for the purposes of driving improvements in standards, and, on the other hand, the acceptance of diversity to meet the diverse needs of particular local communities. These tensions play out in relation to regional differences within countries, between urban and rural education, and in relation to the distinctive needs of the urban poor.

Between management and professionalism

Internationally, complex multi-agency development projects, short-term funding, donors' love of project management, and the increased involvement of the private sector have all combined to emphasise approaches to education leadership which are essentially managerial rather than professional. The same tendency is seen in many countries where governments are seeking to raise standards through top-down interventions. This managerialism is being balanced in part by interest in some systems in developing teaching as a profession, in the interests of creativity and sustainable long term educational innovation.

Between evidence ('governing by numbers') and beliefs

Countries with developing education systems, especially those supported by international donors, may feel themselves under pressure to adopt and apply performance indicators which are amenable to international comparisons. This makes it possible to see whether and how far the education system concerned is moving up league tables. While improving league table performance may be very desirable, each context will vary with regard to the extent to which this may skew educational development towards the measurable factors, and the extent to which that matters. In some contexts it may be important to continue to try to develop forms of educational assessment which are also able to measure aspects of education that are valued within the local culture but which may not lend themselves to comparative league tables.

Final Thoughts

In making choices and striking balances, one of the questions for education leaders to consider is whether internationalisation of education will widen or narrow the gaps and divisions in the nation's society and in its school system. Another key question is whether internationalism will lead to a belief that the only way 'up' is 'out'. That is to say, whether the only routes to advancement represent mobility away from the cultural identity of early moorings, and if so, whether new routes should be developed which give greater value to cultural identities.

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Contact: r.wilkins@ioe.ac.uk.