

“ FIVE” Things I've Learned



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- 1 Education should cultivate the agency, voice and efficacy of people. We need to help learners develop the ability to use what they know to solve problems.

The capacity to act based on knowledge does not automatically follow from an education focused just on knowing. We need to replace the contemplative bias of much education with an emphasis on cultivating agency, an action orientation, the disposition to do and to transform the world and our circumstances. To do this, agency, including the agency to choose what to learn, must be an explicit goal of the curriculum. Powerful pedagogies to cultivate learning include project based, expeditionary learning, engineering education, entrepreneurship education, design studios and workshops.

- 2 Education should simultaneously cultivate academic excellence with character development and socio-emotional competence.

Students should develop an ethical foundation that grounds their ability and disposition to reason morally and to act responsibly, and the capacity to work with others with competence.

- 3 The skills and motivation to learn continuously, independently and from peers, and to re-learn, have increasing importance given the increases in life expectancy and the likely changes in the occupational structure that will cause individuals to have to pursue varied occupations over their lifetimes.

To cultivate this motivation, learning must be fun and productive. To foster self-direction in learning students should have ample opportunities to explore and pursue their interests, and to self-design a program of study on their own. Learning how to use online education should be accessible to all students, so they are prepared to use this for lifelong learning. Students should also experience multiple roles in teaching and learning in their schooled environments, learning from teachers, but also from peers, and teaching to peers and to teachers.

4 Globalization creates new cognitive and skill demands on people, and therefore new educational opportunities for schools and teachers.

In order to participate, as citizens or producers, all people need to be able to understand globalization, be curious about the world and global affairs, know where to deepen their knowledge when necessary, and be capable of communicating and working productively and respectfully with people from other countries and cultural backgrounds. The development of global competence is a necessity for all students in the 21st century.

5 In the balancing act that education represents between tradition and innovation, we need to push the innovation agenda in order to help students anticipate and prepare for the future, as well as to invent it.

This means that the cultivation of innovative competencies should be a desired outcome of education, and that, in order to achieve this outcome, we need innovative approaches and innovative cultures and leadership in educational institutions. To support this, we need an ecosystem that recognizes and fosters innovation.

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