INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES AND THE FUTURE OF SCHOOLING

SPECIAL FEATURE EDITOR’S INTRODUCTION

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This note introduces a special feature on the impact of information technologies on the future of learning within and outside of schools.

Keywords: Information technologies; educational reform; formal and informal education.

When we reviewed the submission by Halverson and Collins, it was apparent that the article addresses important issues for our community, yet should be handled differently from an empirical research article. Halverson and Collins provide one perspective, centered in the United States, on the potential impact of the ubiquitous adoption of information and communication technologies on learning and education, concluding that a shift of education away from formal schooling is to be expected. Although the adoption of such technologies is similarly widespread in many nations of the Asia-Pacific region and elsewhere, one might question whether the different cultural and political contexts of formal schooling in other nations might lead to different outcomes. Therefore we decided to use Halverson and Collins’ paper as the starting point for an international dialogue on the impact of new information technologies on formal and informal education. We selected four individuals (Shirley Alexander, Nancy Law, Naomi Miyake and Shelley Young) who implement and study the use of educational technologies in a cross-section of Asia-Pacific countries representing a diversity of cultural and political contexts, and we asked these researchers to comment on the Halverson and Collins paper. Subsequently, Halverson and Collins were given the opportunity to respond to the commentaries. Therefore, this special feature consists of six articles: the target paper, four commentaries (in alphabetic order by author), and the reply. The feature editor would like to solicit readers’ opinions on the effectiveness of this format,
which, if well received, could be repeated occasionally on other topics that would benefit from international dialogue.

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