Ali H. Raddaoui Traditional Asian Education and Education 2.0: How Close is the Fit?//
Сетевой журнал «Научный результат». Серия «Вопросы теоретической и прикладной
лингвистики». – Т.2, №2, 2016.

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TRADITIONAL ASIAN EDUCATION AND EDUCATION 2.0: HOW CLOSE IS THE FIT?

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Abstract:

This paper is situated in the global context where Asia is seeking to redefine itself as an entity with values of its own that weld it together as a block sufficiently distinct from other blocks. Conceptually, the paper aims to gauge the closeness of fit between traditional Asian education and the set of information and communications technologies employed by the so-called Education 2.0, and inspired by the Web 2.0 movement. In the literature, Asian value systems are portrayed as community-based, with pride of place for elders and teachers, and an understanding of knowledge as transmitted by teachers and reproduced by learners. Education 2.0 has disrupted the traditional tenets of education and created an environment in which four elements of learning undergo significant change, namely the goals of education, the actors involved in it, the contents of education, and the time-space dimensions of learning. The paper reviews these four elements as they pertain to both systems of education, and attempts to capture their intersections and divergences. It concludes with the suggestion that traditional Asian education and Education 2.0 should bridge the gap between them, inform each other, and attenuate each other's excesses.

Key words: Asian education; Education 2.0; Web 2.0; inter-education dialog; globalization; technologism.

INTRODUCTION

As a research problem, determining the degree of fit between the practices and underpinnings of traditional Asian education and the so-called 'Education 2.0' is occasioned by the need to describe, discuss, and frame the implementation of an innovative, sweeping and globalizing system of education in the making in a continent on the rise, namely Asia. Without adequate understanding of globalizing educational trends by pedagogues, curriculum developers, technology innovators, and education policy makers, Education 2.0, this proverbial rising star at school, at work, at home, and in cyberspace, may be able to overtake and eclipse prevalent, and for some, time-cherished systems of education in Asia and elsewhere in the world. The emergence of a new international education order, based on market needs and emerging technologies, is likely to put enormous pressure on all parties, to give in to, to adapt to, or to manage this change; a seasoned and reasoned discussion needs to take place so the encounter between Asian education traditions and modern, technology-based education is at least understood, and preferably planned, rather than forced or left to play itself out without oversight or guidance.

In undertaking this project, we need to bear in mind the factors that come into play as we explain the dimensions of the learning and teaching underlying one model or the other. These factors are technological, pedagogic, cultural, and religious, etc. For this paper, the goal is to outline and tabulate the descriptors and assumptions of Asian education values and to pit them against those of Education 2.0. The hope is that this program will contribute an understanding of where these two value systems intersect and the points at which they diverge.

More specifically, we aim to formulate answers for the following questions: (a) Which lowest common denominators unite and apply to the wide spectrum of teaching, learning and educational traditions across Asia? (b) What are more or less agreed upon trends of Education 2.0 as it stands at this time? (c) How do the observations, generalizations and conclusions about these two spheres square with each other? Where do the respective values equate, supplement, or contradict each other? Finally, and more tentatively, how should the two models communicate, inform and borrow from each other so they build on each other's strengths and minimize each other's excesses?

Context, scope, and contribution of paper

Globalization serves as the backdrop against which the paper discusses the relationship between Education 2.0 and traditional Asian education. Veltmeyer (2008) defines globalization as "the process of integrating societies across the world, and their economies and cultures, into one system" (p. 1). Global education, and by some stretch, Education 2.0 are manifestations, instruments or consequences of globalization. As such, they are likely to impact, shape and transform Asian education systems. With the new freedoms and possibilities afforded by social media, interactions in cyberspace are said to carry the potential of changing

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young people's social identities, how they acquire content, and how they share products (Schuck et al. in Yu et al., 2012). Education 2.0 brings with it a set of practices and assumptions holding individual and social empowerment potential to thresholds not previously witnessed by traditional education systems. Yamamoto and Karaman (2011) explain the problematic in terms of a contradiction between traditional, conservative systems of education whose business is to control and perpetuate the status quo, and Education 2.0, with its transformative, destabilizing potential. In contrast to traditional education, where content is often described as given, transmitted, and reproduced, Web 2.0, allows almost everyone with an internet connection to author and to publish online. (Lin, 2007). Between restating and regurgitating the wisdom of the ancients and the use of technology by the millions to produce and reshape content is a gap that needs to be understood first and subsequently bridged.

On this basis, the contribution of this paper lies in its interdisciplinary focus, pulling together, juxtaposing, and distilling descriptors, understandings and arguments from two hitherto unreconciled trends: traditional Asian education values on the one hand, and the agreed upon features of ICT/Web 2.0-mediated education on the other. It would not have been possible, some twenty years ago, to project and describe the encounter between the two models, simply because the web, with its current arsenal of wikis, blogs, instant communication, crowdsourcing, and exponentially growing knowledge base, did not exist then or was only making its first steps. With the proverbial new 'elephant in the room', established education systems need to interrogate, adapt to, and communicate explicitly with the technological sea change.

In point of fact, much of the existing literature is concerned with either Asian education or Education 2.0, but not so much with the intersection and meeting of both. For example, much of the criticism levelled at the study of e-learning evolution is that it is heavily artefactual, technology-driven and rather weak on theorizing its pedagogic and epistemological foundations (Remtulla (2008, 2010), Enonbun (2010), Halse and Mallinson (2009), and Haythornthwaite and Andrews (2011). Likewise, research on Asian teaching, learning and knowing traditions has taken on a comparatist and evolutionary route, considering for instance how Islamic practices in China have adapted elements of Confucianism (Basharat et al. 2001), how Buddhist education manifests itself in the Chinese Province of Sichuan (Long 2002), and how storytelling is used as a learning vehicle by Eastern religions (Narayan, 1989). Along with the comparatist trend, there are 'Religion 2.0' discussions on how to mobilize the web and social media to reach out to communities using Second Life, a Facebook page called 'Faithbook", podcasts, blogs and wikis (Jude, 2008; Winslow 2010, Yamane 2009). These 'religion 2.0' discussions focus on technology as a tool, and do not explicitly address the pedagogies and ramifications of technology in a field that is traditionally considered at the heart of education, namely religion.

This paper expands these conversations and pull together several strands both from traditional Asian learning and teaching discourses and from Education 2.0. In this sense, it constitutes an initial onslaught on this unavoidable and ongoing encounter between learning schools and practices hailing from the East and the West. It is hoped that the present analysis sparks further debate on how to design and optimize a model combining Asian education values with those of Education 2.0. Because of this, description and analysis of this encounter constitutes necessary groundwork for designing this model.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this section is to develop the analytical framework through which correspondences between traditional Asian education and Education 2.0 are to be examined. To this end, we first propose working definitions for the terms used in the title of this paper, namely, Asia, Asian values, and Education 2.0. Secondly, and more importantly, we attempt to dissect education values into their primary constituents so the comparative task is undertaken using an agreed upon naming system which captures the totality of elements and renders the comparison meaningful and acceptable.

Definitions

Because of a number of factors, geographic, linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and political, producing a definition of Asia as a homogeneous unit is difficult. In the interest of space, we will follow Moody Jr.'s definition (1996) which, while not delimiting accurately the boundaries of the Asian landmass, is at least more specific about the cultures that inhabit it:

[Asia] refers generally to that part of the Eurasian continent east of the Urals, a range of mountains which does not in itself demarcate a cultural division. It is unclear whether the Old Greek and Roman Asia – the Middle East or what in recent times was called Asia Minor – is part of Asia. The cultures which do exist in Asia –Islamic, Confucian, Hindu and many others – differ from each other as much as any one of them differs from that of Western Europe (p. 169).

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In addition, existence of government systems with diverse ideological, economic and social orientations makes the concept of 'Asian education values' somewhat difficult to defend. Finally, that Asia does not exist as a federation, a confederation, a commonwealth, or even as a loose association more inclusive than ASEAN for example makes the term problematic as a unifying construct.

Despite this characteristic heterogeneity, 'Asian values' is now accepted by many Asian governments "as a general reference to the traditional cultural values of the region, to values inherent in the local cultures *prior the western intrusion*" (Emphasis added) Moody Jr. (1996, p. 169). Likewise, Asia's attempts to assert itself as a regional block may justify the construct of Asian values. After all, two of its countries, India and China, have already carved themselves a place among the BRICS countries. Japan already has a prominence of its own. Four of its countries are part of the so-called 'Tigers of Asia', and a few others, the Tiger Club Economies are on their footsteps. Business, political and education circles too have popularized the terms 'Asian Century' and 'Asian theories', as evidenced by the work of ELLTA (Exploring Leadership and Learning Theories in Asia).

Thus, while 'Asian values' or 'Asianness' may refer to a pan-Asian cultural ethos before colonization, the terms are also taking on the meaning of a project whose construction is in progress. Moody sees the discourse on Asian values as being in part "a reaction against post-Cold War western triumphalism", which conceives of the Modern West as the "epitome of modernity bound to sweep all before it" (ibid. p. 189). In the current situation, Asian values need to be asserted in different fields of endeavor, including in education, leading eventually to the formation of an Asian system of education with a name, a mechanism, and a goal of its own.

Like the terms "Asia and 'Asian values', Education 2.0 suffers from a degree of indeterminacy stemming from being a relatively recent phenomenon still in the process of acquiring a configuration solid enough to gain an agreed dictionary definition. Yamomoto and Karaman (2011) list the following descriptors for Education 2.0: geographical independence, including people from a wider demographic background, presenting life-long learning opportunities, experiencing flexible education periods, and integrating school life with working life.

The label 'Education 2.0' is obviously a development and an application in progress of the more voguish catchphrase Web 2.0, which took all fields by storm such that we now have research 2.0, school 2.0, government 2.0, and, as mentioned earlier, religion 2.0, etc. Richard Noss, University of London's London Knowledge Lab Director, comments that while Web 2.0 is a reality, Education 2.0 is an aspiration (Selwyn et al., 2008). Crook suggests that the 2.0 tag 'implies that the technology heralds a step change in what we can now do with the web." (In Selwyn et al, 2008, n.p.). Wang (2012) stresses the features of empowerment, liberation, and democratization in Web 2.0 and defines it in these terms: "Web 2.0 refers to the second generation of the Web, which enables people with no specialized technical knowledge to create their own websites to self-publish, create and upload audio and video files, share photos and information and complete a variety of other tasks (p. 421). Ability to (co)-author, disseminate or criticize content is no longer a monopoly of a few privileged authors, but has become a mundane reality for connected everyday people.

Two conclusions follow from the definitions above. First, in the process of seeking to identify Asian values, the generalizations reached must be taken with a grain of salt and should not be understood as a negation of inherent variation across the continent. Secondly, and going forward, the juxtaposition of traditional education against Education 2.0 yields a significant contrast in a number of descriptors which need to be singled out, if we are at all to compare Asian education apples to Education 2.0 apples.

Paper's analytical framework

Moving from definitions and the generalizations that accompany them, we need to develop a model that distinguishes specific components and descriptors for education in general. Following this, we need to examine how these components play out on either side so we may determine the level of proximity or distance between them. These components should include teachers, learners, the syllabus, the textbook, teaching pedagogy, and maybe assessment. Though detailed, such a solution is not sufficiently economical. Instead, we propose a slightly modified version of Mitchell's (1970) model, which he developed for purpose of critically examining the methods and goals of education in Britain.

Mitchell's model captures the teaching operation in three elements: goals of teaching, content of teaching, and method of teaching. In our view, this model needs some slight modifications. First, instead

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of speaking about the goals of *teaching* as a transmission activity, we are better advised to refer to goals of *education* in the wider sense of socialization. This sits well with the view that education is not only the business of the school and the role of the teacher; learning can be constructed and enacted on one's own, with one's peers, with the family, other caregivers and more capable peers, and in the wider sociocultural milieu (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Cobb and Yackel, 1996; Bandura, 1971). Secondly, 'contents of education' seems more appropriate than 'contents of teaching' as the former encompasses the syllabus, the textbook, and the body of knowledge from which the syllabus and the textbook draw. Finally, 'method of teaching' refers to the procedures, pedagogies, strategies, lesson plans and moves teachers follow. Despite its value, this category too needs some tweaking as it stresses one actor in the learning process, namely the teacher, and does not explicitly recognize that the process of education requires the presence and participation of the learners and the teacher. We suggest to rename this category as 'learning actors', shorthand for the role played by both learners and teachers.

In addition to the above, we need to consider the emergence of e-learning and social media as factors that free learners and teachers from the obligation of being present in a brick-and-mortar institution in accordance with a school calendar. Accordingly, we suggest another layer of comparison, and this is at the level of spaces and times of learning, now being anywhere, anytime, anyhow.

To sum up, the analytical prism we propose for the remainder of this paper consists in comparing Asian education values and the values embedded in Education 2.0 from four angles: (a) goals of education; (b) learning actors, (c) contents of education, and (d) learning times and spaces. Let us consider these categories one by one, and attempt to formulate tentative answers for the questions asked in the introduction of this paper.

GOALS OF EDUCATION
Goals of traditional Asian education

Mainstream Asian education is comparable in its attributes to modern, present-day kinds of education in other parts of the world, at least in the dimension of teaching, learning and certificating. Along with this, it has elements that draw, to varying degrees, upon the sociocultural systems that produce it. In the relevant literature, Asia's main religions, namely Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam, in their many colors and hues, play a big part in education (Bodhi, 1997; Thaker, 2007; Kamis and Muhammad, 2007). The attributes we will cite below

will mostly refer to Asia's four historical learning traditions. We may not systematically bring to bear evidence from each learning tradition as evidence for each attribute, but we will try, where we can, to distill some sort of umbrella-like properties. We consider these properties under two headings: (a) desirable person/community attributes, and (b) the person in relation to the community.

Desirable person/community attributes

By and large, the literature on Asia's learning traditions yields the following descriptors: learning is conducted for communitarian, spiritual, moral, and altruistic purposes. As well, learning gives pride of place to peace, wisdom, balance, harmony, responsibility, order and discipline at the personal and the communal levels (Merriam, 2007; Basharat et al., 2011; Yamamoto and Karaman, 2001). Theoretically, this is the configuration of learners whose attitudes, inclinations and education would prepare them for being members of a community that subscribes to these same ideals. Clearly, such a profile, if attained and honored by the members and the community, would produce a conformist society, with little room for individual innovation and experimentation outside community-sanctioned codes of conduct.

The person in relation to the community

While not losing sight of the individual per se, traditional Asian education does not overemphasize his/her place within society. In his article titled "Asian values", Moody Jr. (1996) explains that characterizing the goals of education in terms of the individual and society is largely inaccurate, as this would imply that society is "a contract among previously unconnected individuals" (p. 179). On the contrary, the goal of Asian education is to frame, not the individual, but the person, the human person, the whole person, so this person, in turn, acts, lives and contributes as an interdependent member to the community; the notion of community thus signals a strong sense of cohesion and interconnectedness.

Commenting on the binary terms of group versus individual preferences, Merriam (2007) concludes that "Easterners value belonging, harmony, family, security and guidance" (p. 9). Personal fulfillment is contingent upon being in touch with the other members of the community. The followers of Buddhism learn so as to benefit the community, and to embody the understanding that a Buddhist is interconnected with all human beings. This sense of the interconnection goes so far as to make Buddhist learning directed towards decreasing human suffering. During interviews with adult learners in Malaysia, participants spoke of learning as a "means

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of giving back to their communities" (Kamis and Muhammad, 2007, p. 9). Kamis and Muhammad find an illustration of this principle in Islam and point out that if a community does not have a medical doctor, it is under obligation to send out one or more of its members to seek medical knowledge so as to help the community after graduation. Failure to act on this need is considered a sin.

Generalizing from what precedes, Asian values do not deny the individual person the right to selfness; they rather see personal fulfillment as a path to the common good. Confucian philosophy frames learning as a "personal initiative" and "self-cultivation" leading to "common commitment to the cultural heritage" (Basharat et al., 2011). Likewise, Hindu wisdom is attained through "understanding of oneself through a holistic manner" (Thaker, 2007, p. 72). A certain balance is thus achieved where communal identity does not result in the loss of the value of the person. For Moody Jr. (1996), collectivism in Confucian thinking "does not lead to political collectivism, but neither does it give any place to an atomized individual" (p. 179). In her report on a study on self-directed learning in the Korean context, Merriam (2007) notes that "a person becoming independent of his or her parents, teachers or other people, tends to be considered threatening [to] the stability of the community he or she belongs to… Becoming independent without being interdependent passes for immaturity and self-centeredness" (p. 18).

In summary, traditional Asian education values learning conducted by the person seeking to attain wisdom through which to serve the community. There is room for the individual learner to seek elevation so long as this elevation has positive communal benefits and is woven into a holistic understanding of the group.

Goals for Education 2.0

Relatively speaking, Education 2.0 is a new comer on the scene. In order to grasp its goals, we need to cull from the various reports a sense of how it conceives its mission. This requires that we evaluate the applications and implications of Web 2.0 technologies for learning. In tandem with other forces operating in today's global environment, Education 2.0 is seen as seeking to achieve the following goals: (a) preparing learners to be successful workers in the knowledge economy, and (b) equipping them with technological skills of Web 2.0.

Success in the knowledge economy

One of the declared goals of Education 2.0 is the use of technology in order to prepare students to "compete in an increasingly competitive global economy" (Horan and Mullen, 2012, n.p.). Ability to compete in the global economy entails that the measure of success in education is viewed not from the perspective of gaining knowledge for its own sake, but from the angle of improving student chances for "career readiness" (Guhlin, 2008). Education 2.0 is cognizant of the requirements of business and industry to form learners who are equipped with new skills so they meet the needs of the information-driven knowledge economy of the future (More and Philips, 2012).

As a result, Education 2.0 draws for its objectives on the notions of skilling (Watson, 2009) and success. The technology industry, exemplified by Dell and Intel, is now in position to transform the K-20 curriculums, and seeks to "improve educational outcomes" deemed essential for the success of knowledge workers and the marketplace. In a report published by the National Center on Education and Economy, Rosenfeld (2007) writes: "today's students must develop a high level of competence not only in traditional academic areas but also in 21st-century skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity, innovation, information literacy, critical thinking, problem solving and, global awareness" (p. 6).

Acquisition of Web 2.0 skills

The meaning of the term 'success' in this kind of technology and market-driven environment is that learners acquire the tools necessary to help their company compete against other companies on a global scale. In other words, the workforce of the future must be equipped with cyber literacy skills. Moore and Philips (2012) argue that digital literacy allows for learning that is "personal, collaborative, and focused on building critical skills", all of which are key terms job seekers need to put prominently on their resumes so recruiters take note of them. In the global economy, the value of a worker is measured by accumulation of market-desired skills and competencies as represented on a CV.

LEARNING ACTORS

A review of the literature on education actors indicates that the unifying theme under which this descriptor should be examined is the changing nature of the power relations between the participants in the learning act, mainly the learners and the teacher.

Learning actors in traditional Asian education

In Asian teaching and learning traditions, teachers, gurus, masters or '?ulema' are venerated and exalted by the students and the community. It is after all through observation and modeling of their conduct that learners register the progress that elevates them to the status of teachers and brings

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them closer to the goals of wisdom, morality and balance. Moody Jr. (1996) explains that in Confucianism, teachers are placed at the top of the social order. Kee notes that under the terms of this hierarchical system, teachers hand down knowledge and students accept it and commit it to memory without being critical of it (in Merriam, 2007). In the Islamic teaching tradition, scholars enjoy an elevated status, and their superiority is taken for granted: the following is quoted in the Muslims' Holy Book where the answer to the rhetorical question is evident: *"Say, 'Are those who know equal to those who do not know?' "*

Based on the above, teachers in traditional Asian systems have a special position. If learners criticize teacher's positions or declare having different opinions from theirs, they are likely to be seen as disturbing the harmonious social order (Merriam, 2007). The goal of preserving harmony and respecting hierarchy leaves little room for questioning tradition; the carriers of tradition hold a sort of immunity against having their authority questioned. In so doing, they tend to perpetuate the system and discourage thinking from outside of it.

This, however, is only side of the story on the teacher-learner rapport. It is true that what is asked of the learner is to be in receptive mode, but this learner too is a full member of the community, which comprises fellow learners as well as one or more teachers. Merriam (2007) explains that the learner actively participates in the community's daily experiences and rituals as paths and means to learning. Long (2002) lists the exercises of introspection, meditation and intuition and observes that traditional Asian education is not principally opposed to dialogical pedagogies: Confucian scholars encourage discussions between themselves and their students. Historically, as the debates grew and flourished, they became full-fledged interpretations within one single denomination, such as Buddhism and Hinduism. Sinha, (2010) deflects the myth of presumed homogeneity within one single, geographically, small, nation state such as Singapore and notes the existence of multiple strands of Singaporean Hinduism. Moody Jr., (1996) writes about how the older brand of Confucianism has evolved into more modern and significantly different forms. Islamic traditions are no exception and have historically diverged from each other in ways illustrated by what Thomas (2006) calls the legalistic and speculative traditions, as opposed to the more orthodox readings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Learning Actors in Education 2.0

Traditionally, the participants in the learning act are called the teacher and the student. With Education 2.0 and the more progressive pedagogies currently in vogue, teachers still retain the teacher tag, but they are often referred to as mentors, veterans, and narrators (Yamamato and Karaman, 2011). Other terms such as facilitator, guide and coach are no less fashionable (Boreen et al. 2009). These labels indicate that the teacher has been demoted from their proverbial promontory as an omniscient and main planner of learning experience to become one among many members of the networked community that learners tap into.

As a result of this emerging 'redistribution' of power, teachers are starting to lose the high ground they once enjoyed. Raddaoui (2012) contrasts traditional learning modes including theological, metaphysical and positivistic knowledge-making paradigms with Web 2.0 and concludes that the relationship between teachers and learners in Education 2.0 is no longer exactly top-down, and that relationship is moving in the direction of levelling. In e-learning contexts, the teacher's status is weakened as learners no longer have at their side a towering teacher with a strong say and what to learn, how learn, when to learn or who to learn with.

Ding (2012) reflects on the shift in this balance of power brought about by the participatory media of Web 2.0. The so-called Web 1.0 era and the eras that precede it can be described in terms of a broadcast or delivery model. Education 2.0 involves a much larger degree of user participation and user-generated content. Davies and Merchant (2009) write that Web 2.0 spaces, by their nature, constitute an invitation for the learner to participate. The e-learner's handshake with the materials is no more one of acquiescent reception. In this new space, "rating, ranking and commenting are all ways of giving and receiving feedback and developing content" (Ibid. p. 5). It is likely that this level of learner empowerment coming partly from the weakened position of the teacher has a disruptive, destabilizing effect. As word from authority loses its status and power, interaction gives rise to "social practices that are based upon people's contribution to, and joint construction of, web-based texts" (Davies and Merchant, 2009, p. 11). The rapport between participants in the webosphere is a rapport between near-equals and the feeling of superiority of the teacher over the learner is diminished to a noticeable degree.

CONTENTS OF EDUCATION

A review of the literature on the contents of education indicates that it is best approached under

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two subheadings: (a) methods of learning, and (b) nature of knowledge.

Contents of tradition Asian education

Methods of learning

Methods of learning refer to how learning is attained, transmitted or registered. In general, Asian processes privilege learning that is "experiential, embodied, physical, emotional and spiritual" (Merriam & Kim, 2008). Long (2002) emphasises meditation, instant enlightenment as well as the transmission of teaching from mind to mind without the mediation of writing. Importantly, the conduits of learning are not limited to mental processes but go so far as to include ways of knowing over and beyond senses or cognitive processes. Opening up the spectrum of knowledge conduits to include emotional or spiritual learning, or deploying meditation or introspection as validated feeds of knowledge may raise some eyebrows, at least from behaviorists, cognitive psychologists, and generally the firm believers in positivism and empiricism in their weak and strong versions as the right conduits to knowledge.

Nature of knowledge

Perhaps this is the one dimension where the difference is starkest between the two types of education. Despite being open to different sources of knowledge, traditional Asian education tends to conceive of research as an activity leading to the confirmation of already established and agreed upon truths. In other words, let your methods and reason wander where they will, in the end, as a scholar or learner, you are bound to honor what tradition has determined beforehand. True knowledge is already known, handed down, generally fixed and has an aura of sanctity around it; in some ways, knowledge is a primeval, universal, a priori truth; it has to be transmitted from generation to generation as absolute truth. Thomas (2006) writes the Qur'an is founded on the oneness of God as absolute principle and only source of knowledge. What humans should do is to seek and uncover that knowledge so they can establish a successful relationship with him.

Even while there is agreement in Asian education that truth is generally immutable and known, scholars have used diverse, if not contradictory, paths to search for it. As suggested earlier, this may well be the reason behind the existence of separate strands in Confucianism, Buddhism and Islam. Merriam (2007) points out that Islamic scholars, for example, are encouraged to seek both "sacred and secular knowledge throughout their lives" (p. 75). Though emphasis has often been placed on the learning of sacred text and the acquisition of religious truth to achieve community welfare (Bouchard, 2009), there is also acknowledgement of "the possibility of an upward ascent to wisdom by creatures endowed with God-given faculties" (Thomas, 2006, p. 446).

Contents of Education 2.0

Methods of learning

The methods of learning employed by Education 2.0 represent an amalgam of what Web 2.0 has afforded, and are supplemented with the present-day trends in pedagogic thinking. First and foremost, technology is the principal standard of communication. Learners are immersed into a non-emotional world of gadgetry and experimenting softwares and are focused on editing, programming, adding, upgrading, critiquing, designing, producing, and remixing. This is the equivalent of a permanent technology acquisition workshop where learners spend much time using, reworking and treating text, images, audio, and video. Learners are assisted in this by their immediate, unhampered access to their synchronous and asynchronous communities. In addition to this overly technologized world, the stress is on the collaborative and networking skills needed by students need in the Web 2.0 world of social interaction (Rosenfeld, 2007). Even though learners may be physically isolated, they are seldom disconnected from their network of human and digital resources.

Nature of knowledge

On account of the infinite possibilities for digital communication, innovation, and sharing, and owing to the weakening stature of the teacher, learning under Education 2.0 can be largely described as technology driven, with as much technology talk as subject-matter talk. The subject matter itself is less and less disciplinary in the sense of a compartmentalized course, more and more integrated and multidisciplinary (Rolf, 1993). Because of the versatility of communication, the abundance in tools of production, the sheer number of participants, and a weaker central control, learners produce a world where truth is perspective-based, sometimes their own truth, sometimes a group truth. Truth becomes truths, and truth is unstable. All that is produced seems to be provisional, beta truths, the work of emerging and continuously forming communities or individuals bent upon generating content which is neither vetted from above nor imposed on the masses. As Papson (2014) writes, knowledge in this context often comes from outside academia, and the only truth claims many sources have is that they appear on top of search engine results and have received multiple hits. There is little that is stable in this

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world, except the fact that its products are ephemeral; all communities and individuals, in the center and in the margin, can make their voices heard. This is a world where truth, in the absence of an adjudicating authority, is relative, and where truth may well be untruth.

TIME-SPACE DIMENSION OF LEARNING

The subsection answers the question about where learning is located in time and space. We submit that for both types of education, the act and object of learning are defined by when and where they take place. On this level too, we expect to find a high degree of differentiation.

Time-space dimension of learning in traditional Asian education

To characterise the spaces and times of learning specific to traditional Asian education, we draw on Davies and Merchant's (2009) description of traditional learning as being "bounded by the walls of the classroom, limited by interaction with those in the same location and regulated by opening and closing hours" (p. 2), except of course when the learner privately engages in introspection and contemplation. The outputs and sources of knowledge are, in Jegede's (1999) words, oral and mostly undocumented (in Merriam, 2007, p. 9). According to Merriam and Kim (2008), the object of learning mostly takes the form of rituals, symbols, music, art, theater, and even dreams and visions (p. 77). For instance, in the oral Hindu tradition, dance, drama, and music are all utilized to convey the lessons contained in the ancient [written] texts (Thaker, 2007, p. 71). Thus, learning does not come only from the printed word, but also the daily practice of people, teaching, telling stories, meditating, and otherwise honoring tradition in speech as well as in silence.

Stories in particular permeate the learning lives of Asians. Describing the value of the story as carrier of truth in traditional Eastern education, Narayan (1989) writes: "Christ told parables, Buddha recounted episodes from his past lives, Jewish rabbis use stories, Sufi masters frequently instruct disciples through tales, and even the paradoxical statements of Zen masters often have a narrative form… [while] Burmese Buddhist monks improvised teaching tales based on their folk traditions" (p. 5). Because their lives are permeated with stories, Asians and their traditions place great emphasis on lifelong learning in settings that put together the teachers and the learners. According to Basharat et al. (2011), Islamic precepts and sayings (hadiths) too place a high premium on lifelong learning for males and females from the cradle to the grave, though of course the application of this principle varies from one tradition to the other across the Asian landscape.

Time-space dimension of learning for Education 2.0

In terms of the spaces where Education 2.0 materials are located, Hodges (2012) notes the now all too familiar feature of the migration from printed to digital content. Moore and Philips (2012) explain that digital content comes in various shapes and forms, including "video and audio, instructional games, publisher digital assets such as textbooks, workbooks and reference books, simulations, and collaborative and research tools… quiz tools, [and] open educational resources such as student and teacher created content" (pp. 5-8).

Migration of content into cyberspace takes place through online-collaboration spaces such as Dropbox, the Microsoft SkyDrive, and Google Drive, and Google Docs. The e-learning event, too, has migrated out of the walled classroom into cyberspace and is now open, ubiquitous, mobile, unbounded, all-around, 24/7. Ding (2012) lists a number of notable experiments such as Stanford's free online experiment, with a clientele of 160,000 students in 2011, the Harvard-MIT online learning platform called edX, as well as openculture.com, all of which offer online, free, learning materials to everyone with an internet connection. At the time of writing of this article, Coursera, a free, massive open online course (MOOC) platform, has a record number of more than 11 million registered course takers. Its learners come from 190 countries and its digital contents circulate via easy and low-cost communication networks (Coursera, 2015).

The growing irrelevance of the concept of distance as a hurdle to universal learning and schooling further consolidates one of Education 2.0's main promises, which is the provision of lifelong learning. Clarke provides a definition for e-learning that holds out the promise of lifelong learning:

"It can deliver learning at a place and time of the learners' choosing, thus allowing them to fit learning into their lives. It can offer learners considerable opportunities to study at a speed that meets their preferences, although this depends on the approach taken. It is possible to study while caring for children or relatives, undertaking shift work and the many other complex arrangements that people's lives follow" (in Ahlqvist, 2012, pp. 1-2).

In many ways, the traditional saying 'we live and learn' indicates that every now and then in our lives, circumstances present us with teachable moments. The context of e-learning makes lifelong learning a daily phenomenon and allows connected learners and everyday women and men to literally live-and-learn on an almost permanent basis.

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SUMMARY OF STUDY

This paper is situated in the context of globalization where two models of education are coming into contact: Asian education and Education 2.0. Asian education can be thought of a force of tradition that is having to live with, accommodate, and perhaps adapt to Education 2.0, a dominant and powerful force generated by the post-industrial, technological, era of the knowledge economy. The main task for this paper consisted in comparing and contrasting the values underlying each, to determine where and how much they overlap or differ. To this end, we developed an instrument comprising four categories we felt could capture the total picture: (a) goals of education, (b) learning actors, (c) contents of education and (d) learning spaces and times.

Analysis of these categories yields the following tentative conclusions. Traditional Asian education is at the service of tradition. It is, at least in theory, steeped into communitarian, spiritual, and religious ideals, and it places emphasis on social peace, harmony and stability. Learning consists in the transmission of sacred truths in seminaries, walled classrooms and in sundry oral forms and practices. The relationship between learners and teachers is mostly vertical, and the perimeters of thought and inquiry are generally limited, as truth is known, reproduced and perpetuated in the context of a life devoted to learning of what is passed on as knowledge.

In sharp contrast, Education 2.0 is unfolding in a technologically-driven, service-oriented knowledge economy where acquiring the latest market and technology skills is a lifelong occupation. Seemingly, Education 2.0 heralds an era of democratized access to and (co-) production of content where the relationship between teachers and learners is more and more horizontal. Due to the loss of centralized control, the mechanisms for vetting knowledge are seriously weakened and the truths produced are relative, fluid, and multiple. The following table captures where the most pertinent descriptors for each model intersect and where they diverge.

Table

Traditional Asian education and Education 2.0 a summary of descriptive features

Descriptors	Asian education values	Education 2.0 values
Type of society	Traditional, conformist, cohesive, holistic	Post-industrial, knowledge-driven, service-oriented, networked
Place of individual	Strikes balance between independence and interdependence	Competitor in the global economy, you are your CV
Value of education	Personal growth and wisdom geared toward the common good, perpetuator of status quo	Skill acquisition (e.g. communication, collaboration, creativity, cyber literacy, critical thinking); career readiness, at the service of market economy
Teacher-learner rapport	Hierarchical, transmission-style	Democratizing, near-equal participants
Model learner	Imitator, emulator, consumer, acquiescent, critical within limits, lifelong learner	Networker, (co-)producer, critical and inventive problem solver, lifelong learner
Pedagogies	experiential, embodied, physical, emotional and spiritual	Networked, collaborative, social-media enabled
Nature of knowledge	Mostly specialized, spiritual and worldly, generally given, community-specific truth, vetted by authority	Massive, interdisciplinary, technology-centered, meta-technological, liquid, mutli-perspectivist truths, user-vetted content
Locus of knowledge	Orality, ritual practices, storytelling, seminars, libraries; in the minds of teachers	Mostly free, readily accessible, cloud-based, network-distributed

IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY

Beyond the value of tabulating the descriptors relative to each model, it is hoped that stakeholders in the education community, specifically teachers, pedagogues, curriculum writers, educational planners and technologists reflect on their practice, explore the implications of their methods, and understand the challenges brought about by the coming together of Education 2.0 and traditional Asian Education. A useful way to approach the imminent changes is to look at how each model can impact the other and enrich it. The end result of this exercise would be to establish a sort of 'inter-education dialog' so the two systems learn to communicate with each other; traditional education stands to gain by being better informed of the strengths, promises, and affordances of Education 2.0. Education 2.0, in turn, should learn to draw into and borrow from the versatile repertory of traditional Asian Education.

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More clearly and less tactfully put, the expected contribution of this discussion is to make sure Education 2.0 does not marginalize, or render irrelevant, certain aspects of Asian education. Education 2.0 has strong appeal and pizzazz among an eager clientele by the millions. Its innovative tools and gadgets enter into our lives, discussions, and practices often unannounced and without being rigorously analyzed or theorized, spilling into something that smacks of technologism. There is, for both systems, a need to pause and engage negotiations leading to a more humanized technology and a better technologized education.

It is arguable, on certain grounds, that the two systems already have some comparable descriptors, and that, therefore, we need not think of building bridges between them. Similarity, however, seems to hold only on a surface level. First, we can say that the two models are both largely pragmatic and utilitarian in that they mean to equip their members with the tools and knowledge necessary for success in their respective communities. For example, we may be inclined to liken the Muslim Community's desire to send one or more learners for training to become medical doctors (Merriam, 2007) to a decision taken a small French to go on strike because they had no village baker (Bouchard, 2009). Secondly, community membership is important for both: Asian communities seek to acquire wisdom presumably in order to achieve peace and harmony within them. However, this understanding of 'community' can be extremely limited to the group, the sect, and the cult, indicating that other groups, minorities, or faiths are not readily embraced. Members of 'Education 2.0 community', if we were to accept the wording, conceive of each other as resources directed toward achieving practical, economic, technological, or scientific goals. However, they constitute an extremely distributed, scattered, and probably atomized, community whose members are not attached to each other at any deep, emotional, human level. Finally, both communities have their eyes set on learning, truth and knowledge. For Asian systems, truth is more or less fixed and permanent, and is embodied in traditions, rituals, and sacred texts. The member's lifetime task is to seek to attain that truth though lifelong learning. Uplifting as this truth may be, it is limited and limiting. On the other hand, networked individuals are in permanent quest for fine-tuning information and communication technology skills and knowledge geared toward serving the market and not sufficiently attuned to improving communal life or the human condition.

Prospects for a compromise

Assuming, as Selwyn (2008) suggests, that there is value in activating the conversation on how technology can change education and how education can change technology, we will need to think of concrete steps to be taken, if only by way of experimentation. This is territory technologists and educationists need to tread carefully as it involves both a large measure of autocritique and the ability to strike the right compromise. In this spirit, it will be good to invite debate on the following suggestion:

Traditional Asian education, with the richness characteristic of its methods and sources of knowledge, is, for the most part, not using its diverse tools to engage worldly phenomena or science. It circumscribes its research interests to the realm of the sacred and the spiritual and can be interpreted as a mechanism of sociopolitical control (Bodhi, 1997). If it were to enlarge its research scope, and more vigorously employ the tools, resources, communities, and pedagogies of Education 2.0, it will be able to get closer to achieving its goals of a more cohesive, more humane, more balanced and more democratic communities and persons.

Likewise, Education 2.0 needs to capitalize on its appeal, rich resources, and its ability to reach anyone, anywhere, anytime. Its challenge, however, would be to enlarge its knowledge purview, to adopt, integrate and honor new sources of knowledge, and to create more intense and less superficial encounters with people and materials. When the market society, in the words of Moody (1996, p. 188) stands on 'a healthy ethical base', it is not likely to run the risk of being trapped by and into its own medium or to be masterminded by economic forces and technological innovations.

In short, when traditional education and Education 2.0 both cease to operate more or less like islands, refocus their visions, replenish their knowledge tools and draw into each other's rich repositories, they will have built bridges founded on complementarity, diversity, and respect for the unique values each human culture and person contributes to our planet. Technicians and software developers need to take a leaf from the book of Eastern Tradition, while gurus, masters and scholars should also equip themselves with technology, and tackle mundane and research issues outside their immediate zones of comfort, for the common good.

Coming back to the question of globalization and its impacts on local systems, Asia needs to proactively manage the changes as they pertain to education and other fields. When the speed of change is left unchecked, its premises unexamined, and its

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effects not adapted to the local environment, there is a possibility that the localities, regions and the continent transform beyond recognition. Places, peoples, and individuals who undergo rapid and complete transformation despite themselves and without self-awareness, lose all sense of identity, and cannot claim to have values that bind them together as a unit, which is what Asia is attempting to accomplish. Applied universally, such a globalizing and homogenizing path will work against the ideals of diversity and pluralism which the human race needs to uphold if its groupings, blocks and cultures are to co-exist peacefully.

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