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Evolution of education: From weak signals to rich imaginaries of educational futures

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Abstract

This paper proposes that all aspects of *educational futures* are affected by the new thinking patterns and ways of knowing that have been emerging over the last hundred years as part of the parallel processes of evolution of human consciousness and major global societal change.

Throughout the 20th century, significant developments can be mapped in most, if not all, of the major academic disciplines. Secondly, the move to transcend disciplinary specialisation, via inter-, multi-, and trans-disciplinary approaches is strengthening. Thirdly, at a higher order theoretical level, these developments are explicitly theorized in the discourses associated with *postformal reasoning*, *integral theory* and *planetary consciousness*. In spite of all these developments in other disciplines and knowledge fields, the institution of mass public education, with its underpinning industrial worldview,

has been pretty static since its inception two hundred years ago. Finally, the paper identifies three minor, but significant, waves of evolutionary emergence in education over the last hundred years that if articulated and nurtured could strengthen the development of evolutionary pedagogies for the 21st century.

Highlights

° New thinking patterns and ways of knowing have emerged in the last century. ° All the major academic disciplines have been evolving new forms and processes. ° Mainstream education has remained trapped in a 19th century industrial mindset. ° Developmental psychologists have identified higher stages of postformal reasoning. ° Education must evolve to incorporate postformal reasoning and postmodern culture.



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Keywords

Evolution of consciousness; Integral; Postformal; Planetary; Foresight; Futures studies; Postformal pedagogies; Evolutionary pedagogies

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