Education for Creativity and Innovation

Dr. Dirk Van Damme
CERI – OECD/EDU
Comparative perspective

• Are European education systems unimaginative?
  – European education systems are doing a lot better than competitors
  – Labels such as ‘traditional’, ‘conservative’, etc. often used for rhetorical purposes without much reference to empirical reality
  – In modern education systems there is a need for a balance between stability and innovation
Historical perspective

- Foundations of modern European education are a mixture of:
  - Socialising, moralising, adjusting people
  - But also: stimulating critical thinking, questioning authority, promoting inquiring mind
  - Intellectual, rational, cognitive, knowledge-oriented
  - But also: physical, emotional, artistic, moral
Historical perspective

• Are education systems ‘out of balance’?
  – ‘Knowledge explosion’ has driven curriculum development more than any other trend
  – But, contemporary knowledge development is more than accumulation of knowledge
    • Trans-disciplinary: the end of compartmentalized subjects, faculties, professions
    • Trans-paradigmatic
    • Breaking boundaries with other ways of ‘understanding’
Pedagogical perspective

• The harmonious development of a person still is the prevalent pedagogical ideal
  – But we mostly tend to favour only the ideal of the cognitive well-developed person
  – Various aspects of harmonious development are interrelated

• From the ‘pedagogy of failure’ to the ‘pedagogy of success’
Social perspective

- Social functions of education don’t value diversified talents
  - Social selection, upward social mobility, meritocratic functions all value mostly cognitive talents
  - European systems mostly are not very equitable, mainly oriented to middle-class value systems
  - Creative, imaginative, innovative elements of education systems often preserved for elitist parts of system
  - Parents’ expectations often value the more traditional functions and approaches of schooling
Economic perspective

- How to tune schooling to needs of post-industrial knowledge societies?
  - ‘Educational revolution’, massification
  - Emphasis on ‘learning to learn’, ‘lifelong learning’, etc.
  - Yes, but the knowledge base needed for that is also quite substantive
  - Quality remains crucial: nobody is asking for more superficiality, mediocrity
Cultural perspective

- Social and even economic progress also depends on cultural renewal in education
  - Innovation can only flourish in a rich cultural climate
Futures perspective

• Linking academic learning to diversified development of all talents
  – The scientifically enquiring mind is not very different from the creative or imaginative mind
  • Curiosity and creativity as forms of divergent thinking
Futures perspective

• Innovation of teaching-learning interactions in classrooms
  – Technology has an important role (‘new millennium learners’), but much more is needed