Who else is reimagining learning in digital worlds besides big tech?

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Why imagine /reimagine?

Context- recalibration of the social, moral, political and economic purposes of education

- Lifelong learning & informal learning - pedagogicization of everyday life
- Standards-based education & growing inequality of provision and outcomes
- Crises in the funding of public education systems - privatization & marketization
- Changes in Education as a national project of the State

leading to a discursive struggle to define Learning as:

- commodity
- performance
- anxiety/responsibilization
- instrumental
- stages in a life trajectory
- domesticated
- embodied as a digital tool/as access

The *Big Tech* Imaginary of/for learning and education

- from Edtech to Big Tech in Education

• from students to school/university systems (and beyond)
• from specialised lessons/learning events to curriculum to assessment & credentials
• from educational institutions into the home and back again (24/7)
• from specialist add-ons to total vertical integration (devices, institutions, sectors and platforms)
• from services to infrastructure reconfiguring the political economy of Education (marketization/privatization of Education systems) and the opening up of homes and schools to the data economy by non-national (US) commercial interests

Implications for: Teachers and their profession
                        Pedagogy
                        Theories of learning and the values of Education

Re-Imagining Education
Young People's Learning in Digital Worlds

Blog   About us   🏳 Nederlands

About us

Re-Imagining Education is the official blog of the project *Young People's Learning in Digital Worlds: the Alienation and Re-Imaging of Education* ↗ , a collaboration between Utrecht University in the Netherlands and Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia. The aim of this project is to explore how learning is shaped through digital media, both in and beyond the classroom. Previous research has explored the potential of digital media for learning, but how digital media have changed the way we understand learning is rarely discussed. Examples of questions we like to explore are: "How do young people learn in digital communities?", "How does the structure of digital platforms shape learning processes?" and "How does the use of video games in the classroom changes perceptions of both learning and playing?"

The aim of this blog is to discuss research and experiences around learning with digital media that might help us to re-imagine traditional perceptions of education. Apart from our goal to rethink education, we also wish to emancipate those (young) people who might feel alienated from traditional educational institutions, because they have found ways of learning online that are more meaningful to them.

By writing the blog, we want to share our thoughts with you: academics, professionals, engaged parents and young adults. We welcome participation by anyone who is interested in digital media, learning and education. We are looking forward to hearing your opinions, your stories and your ideas about how education can be re-imagined with digital media, both within and beyond the school.

- exploring the new ways that learning is being shaped through digital media both in and beyond the classroom post the *Connected Learning* initiatives

- conceived prior to Covid and platformization as a key conceptual heuristic

In a context of fast-changing engagement in, with and through digital technologies, we asked: *how are young people re-conceptualizing contemporary cultural narratives of learning?*

- exploring the forms and modes of learning that take place while young people engage in digital life to search for ways to pursue their 'vorming' (the Dutch for becoming) as a new norm of what being educated is.

-As societies struggle to adapt to the long-term impact of automation and computerization, what it means to be educated or even simply how learning happens in a digital society can be troubling and confusing.

Norms of education are bound up with national imaginaries.

In general schools and societies have responded to these shifts in young people's digital engagement conservatively with scattered progressive innovations. In some cases, schools have simply incorporated digital technology in their centuries-old habits and practices, but in other cases forms of education have changed in their reach and in their nature.

Young people are at the forefront of this new imagining of what being educated can or might mean for now and in the future.

Reimagining Education - Ph.D. Projects

Zowi Vermeire
Youth's desire to learn: The pedagogies of platformised learning communities
University of Utrecht, 2023

Chris Adriaan Zomer
Laugh, Focus, and Perform! A Critical Inquiry of Gamified Engagement
Deakin University, 2023

Resistant spaces and counter values (authenticity)
- repositioning of teachers, authorities, credentials and warrants
- centrality of the experiential/ affect
-performance cultures
- Individualization and desire

Discursive gamification of engagement
- metricization, boundaries
- commodifying the experiential
- recontextualizations
- performance cultures
- individualization and competition

The shadow of platformization (the platform gaze)

Dominant phenomenon:
- shaping both studies' research objects
- defining materials for analysis and activity
- locating key experiences

Dominant heuristic:
- explaining affordances/constraints
- interpreting purposes (especially the teleology of learning)
- mediating institutions, individuals, markets and the state
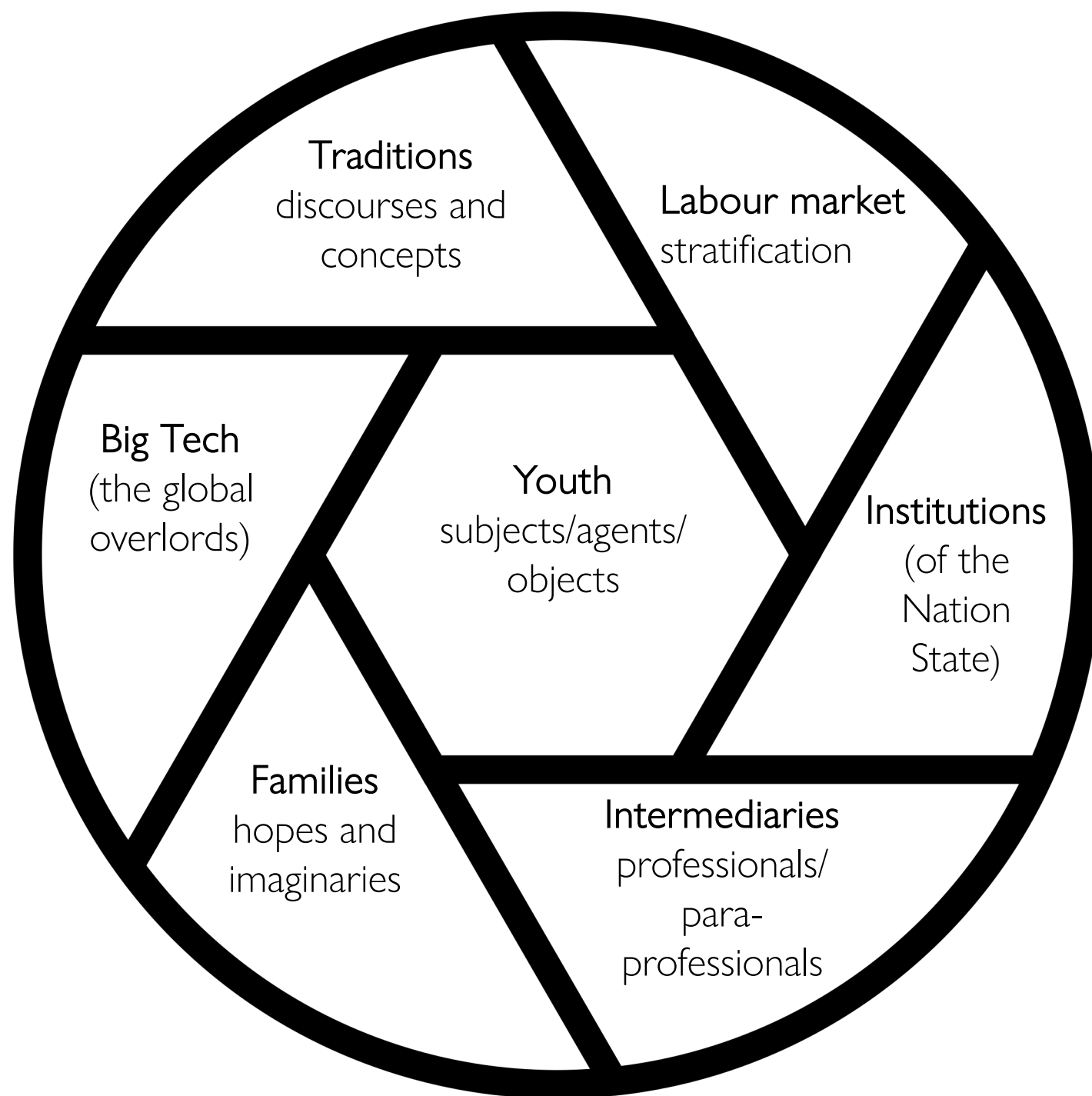- legitimating ideologies (behaviourism, competition)

What does this research paradigm do and for whom?

- emphasises determining effects of structure,
- shapes a changing political economy of public-good benefits
- and constrains the researching of agency even in limited forms.

- leading to an argument that we are 'compromised' (interpellated) in what it might mean to imagine teaching and learning,
- contributes to the 'data resignation' ennui/political impotence
- affects the horizon of our historical belief in the transformative potential of education
- overlooks the human labour in platform processes
- changes (?) inherited understandings of identity

Could we create a post –platform alliance to reimagine learning?

Traditions
discourses and concepts

Labour market
stratification

Big Tech
(the global overlords)

Youth
subjects/agents/objects

Institutions
(of the Nation State)

Families
hopes and imaginaries

Intermediaries
professionals/para-professionals

Where /how can these actors meet and talk, in the evolving forms of deliberative democracy?

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