

Education needs a third dimension, which can be summarized as 'the human factor', find Stephan de Vries and Jan Anthonie Bruijn. Strange, according to Leo Prick, that they do not first bring the economic necessity.

Our education is due to a update

Try to imagine the student of the future - let's call her Suzanne - and imagine Suzanne to be educated in a world, which is compared to now, changed significantly. Technological developments and the result of globalization retain their influence and that translates into a range of possibilities for Suzanne.

At the same time these changes are facing Suzanne with a number of major challenges, because they are accompanied by great uncertainty. Suzanne and her peers will be involved in a cutthroat competition in the global labor market. Relationships they enter into, both with her peers as with physical things, places or organizations transient and fleeting. Suzanne will experience how social functions and spaces radically transform or even disappear completely.

The same applies to social relations. An offline status will no longer exist. The first smart robots will have emerged. Besides the many advantages, it can offer the danger of unwanted effects. Thus it is difficult to deny that all those developments, in addition to losing all kinds of practical skills, will lead to loose social skills as well.

Education plays a not to underestimated role in adequately preparing students like Suzanne and their function in the above outlined future world. A lack of vision threatens the current education is an anachronism to: "It is in urgent need of an update."

That update is equivalent to adding a third dimension: the 'human factor'. This is an addition to the two already existing and forever relevant dimensions - the transfer of fundamental knowledge and teaching skills - and built from three elements. First, an current form of Bildung: the development of character, a critical spirit, self-reliance and perspective. This should be complemented and combined with 21 st century skills, including collaboration, problem solving power, ICT literacy, creativity and social skills. The third element consists of empathic aspects.

Especially that last element will win in importance in the technologized and robotized world. The brain of man is in primarily a social brain. Although empathy between people so far it is qualified as little tangible or 'soft', turns - also in education - increasing a tough determiner of outcomes. It is therefore high time for this third dimension to be explicitly and systematically added to our education, including the schooling of our teachers.

This third dimension will not only be on the highest quality, but at all levels and within all sectors of education it should be offered from the initial learning phase. Crucial is to distinguish education levels.

The new dimension should not exclusively be focussed on professional aspects. The very process of personal development or 'learning to live' should be central. Major system changes or even more pressure on the overcrowded curriculum are therefore unnecessary: it can largely be woven into the current structure and existing in subjects. All this will undoubtedly ask much of teachers and students, but only in that way we will be able adequately prepare Suzanne and her peers for their future.

Stephan de Vries scribe of this week presented Teldersgeschrift about the future of education and scientific employee of the Prof Dr Teldersstichting Jan Anthonie Bruijn is chairman of the working group Education of the Teldersstichting and under chair of the Advisory Council for Science and Technology Policy (AWT) and Senator for deVVD.