SENIOR HIGH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ARE ON F.I.R.E.?

by:
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One of our topics in Graduate School and made significant impact on me as educator was our topic on FIRE. We discussed that learners entering primary school today will work in jobs that don’t exist yet. And the possibility is, so will them. The question is, are they ready for a career they never even dreamed of? In fact, according to the article that I’ve read, Dell Technologies’ Realize 2030 Report, 85% of jobs in 2030 haven’t been invented yet. That’s just over 10 years away, and will certainly affect our work life.

The question is, can students prepare themselves for an unknown job title?

In their own opinion, throughout history, major technological innovations such as steam powered machines in the 18th century, caused anxiety over job losses. Yes, there were short-term losses, but as machines replaced automated tasks, people were freed up to develop higher-level skills, resulting in major economic advancement and improvements in living standards. Interestingly, during the 1st Industrial Revolution in Europe, the concern was that replacing people with machines would dehumanize work, by untying people from their labour. But machines, and particularly artificial intelligence, give us a coincidental to make work more human. The ability to free ourselves from daily tasks enables us to hone our aptitudes in leadership, innovation, creativity, empathy and strategic thinking. These skills are uniquely human.
A revolution is knocking loudly on the doors of education. The question is, ought to we tend to let it in?

The problem is, our educational system in the Philippines isn’t geared up for the shift. In our country, there are still many schools that aren’t equipped enough for the 21st century technologies. Furthermore, most of the urban or suburban areas in our society doesn’t know the third industrial revolution on education. Alvin Toffler in his book, Future Shock (1970) theorised that “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.”

Since the 19th Century, education has been grounded in teaching conformity and knowledge. It was IQ over EQ. It served the purposes of large corporations where it did not pay to have minds that challenged the status quo. But what’s the point of studying an entire textbook when a computer can process thousands of textbooks in a second. Right?

Or why learn a specific procedure for completing a task when intelligent machines can execute a myriad of tasks instantaneously? Simplicity is a virtue, but complexity is a necessity. The silos of each discipline have already been torn down.

The jobs of the future are the ones machines can’t do. They rely on artistic expression, social interaction, collaboration, empathy and even physical acuity. The leaders of the future are those who can imagine a new society and meet the challenges that it poses. IQ is good but EQ is better. This era emphasizes on soft skills, which humans do better than machines. Among the important ones are communication, teamwork and critical thinking, which deliver effective results.

Notably, successful organizations in the 21st century are led and composed of leaders, colleagues and collaborators with high emotional intelligence. High EQ makes collaboration, networking, synergy and forms of partnerships possible. Alibaba founder, Jack Ma, spoke at The World Economic Forum, said that, if we do not change the way we teach, the world will be in trouble. Our education is knowledge based, and we cannot
teach our kids to compete with machines. We have to teach them something unique so that machines can never catch up with us.

Now is the era of inter-disciplinary, cross-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary performance of disciplines, which are still a terra incognita to many because of the complexity of their operations and the new discoveries they bring. Even Microsoft CEO, Satya Nadella, believes that empathy is ultimately what sets humans apart. “The ability to understand and feel what others experience is critical. If I look at what is Microsoft’s core business, it’s about being able to meet the unmet and unarticulated needs of customers, and there’s just no way we are going to be able to succeed in doing that if we don’t have that deep sense of empathy.”

How can education be rewired?

Most schools are designed around the consumption of knowledge. In other countries in Europe, some countries in Asia their courses are designed to get learners questioning. Students learn to innovate rather than replicate. They are challenged to think and problem solves, and to query information rather than memorize textbooks. We provide the opportunity to develop a sense of collaboration and empathy through working with like-minded peers.

Eventually, administrators of higher learning, especially in the Philippines, will have to entertain the guest that is the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It is inevitable. It will just continue to knock until the door collapses. By now, school leaders should already begin to ask, are we equitably equipping our students for their future?

I believe that together with Administrators/School Heads, the teachers should be able to challenge, not just teach. The Deped must set its faculty which will make up of experts in innovation, creativity and strategy. They have to apply these skills to current businesses, taking global corporations to new heights in the 4th Industrial Revolution. They must master the ability to navigate the unknown, rather than just being experts in
the known. For us, in the Department of Education, to thrive in the Fourth Industrial Revolution in Education (F.I.R.E.), we need a learning revolution. It doesn’t mean going back to elementary school or basic education, but starting with a new kind of executive education today.

References:


