The Right Blend: At the Interface of Innovation and Transformation in Higher Education

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Across the world, higher education is facing enormous challenges as the gap between traditional university models and current student needs widen. The challenge facing higher education providers involves among other things mapping a vision of education that makes higher education both viable and relevant to our times. Since the Bradley Review, the Australian Government has taken several initiatives in transforming Higher Education in Australia, emphasizing the need for equity and social inclusion. In this regard, innovation and transformation can be vital indicators of progress and necessary radicalization of the education sector.

My interest lies in the role of education as an agent of innovation and transformation in the light of the needs of an increasingly diverse and complex teaching and learning community. Both teachers and learners engage today as plural and intersubjective beings, collapsing old and established hierarchies of the self. Their encounters in the education setting, blur the boundaries of both teaching and learning as well as interrogate purist notions of the role of higher education itself. Financial constraints, changing markets, social and corporate responsibility and more importantly an increasingly interdependent society call for a re-evaluation of the purpose and role of higher education. How can higher education serve the learner? How can higher education serve the nation? What are the risks we must negotiate through our engagement with innovation? How do we strike the 'right blend' in managing innovation and transformation? What principles enable us to walk the tight-rope between innovation and transformation so that we manage boundaries and limits without sacrificing vision, relevance and output?