

Kazakhstan workshop on quality of teaching in higher education
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Beyond World-Class

Building student capability
for an ever-changing future

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Beyond World-Class: Building student capability for an ever-changing future

OUTLINE

- The value and limits of 'World-Class' standards
- Quality in teaching is both universal and contextual
- The central purpose is student self-formation
- Building the agency of faculty
- Building trust

Should higher education in Kazakhstan aspire to be 'World-Class' in standard?

- YES, and NO
- *Yes in universities that have a major role in research:* Research in science and parts of social science has become a global system, and we can measure performance and improvement according to common global standards
- *No in relation to the most important role of higher education, which is teaching and learning:* In student learning there is no single world standard. There can never be. Learning is contextual and differs from society to society. There are world-wide principles in relation to quality in teaching and learning, but standards that reflect those principles must be 'fit for purpose'. Kazakhstan and its institutions make their own standards in teaching and learning

Universal and contextual principles in teaching and learning

- UNIVERSAL

- The key issues are people motivation and trust – without them, no progress
- Holistic approach grounded in (1) purpose and (2) context
- Quality as fitness for purpose PLUS continuous improvement
- Teaching that forms self-powered and reflexive learners
- Teaching sustained by autonomous and reflexive faculty
- Administration and management directed to student learning

- CONTEXTUAL

- Developing purposes and learning goals appropriate to the place-time
- Motivating people and building trust on a social-cultural basis
- Teaching within the resource envelope using available resources
- Teaching on the basis of agreed social values
- Teaching on the basis of specific kinds of knowledge

Higher education as self-formation

- *Empirical*: 'Higher education as self-formation rests on the irreducible fact that while learning is conditioned by external factors, by the learner's background and resources, the institution, the curriculum, teaching and other circumstances, only the learner does the learning...
- *Normative*: Higher education can be understood as 'self-formation and the expansion of freedom', and valued for its contribution to the growth of self-determining persons in relational settings, via immersion in knowledge. Higher education takes this form *some* of the time – it would be stronger if it always took this form
- *Four key ideas*: Vygotsky, Kant, Confucianism, Amartya Sen

Lev Vygotsky on social learning and the formation of the individual self

- “ The true development of thinking is not from the individual to the social, it is from the social to the individual.”
- For Vygotsky self-formation and social-formation are simultaneous – the child’s early relational speech installs reflexivity, a double-coded self, socially separated *and* socially embedded

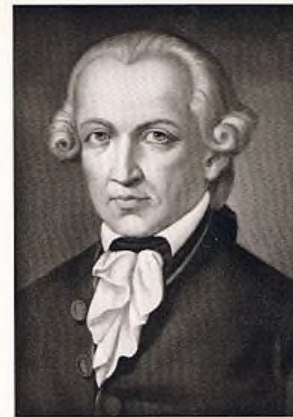
Lev Vygotsky (1986). *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press



Immanuel Kant on *Bildung*

- Kant saw the continuous lifelong self-development of people, *Bildung*, as the way to make them free through the exercise of their “own understanding”.
- He emphasised that *Bildung* would not occur by itself, it required education. His idea of *Bildung* was not far from the Confucian idea of self-cultivation through learning.
- The aim of education was to generate “the active autonomous person within the framework of social life”, a rational subject who uses reason in a public way and “lives in the public sphere among other individual beings.”

Kivela, A. (2012). From Immanuel Kant to Johann Gottlieb Fichte – Concept of education and German idealism. In Siljander, P., Kivela, A. and Sutinen, A. (eds.) (2012). *Theories of Bildung and Growth: Connections and controversies between Continental educational thinking and American pragmatism*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, p. 59



Confucian educational self-cultivation

- ‘A defining characteristic of East Asian thought is the widely accepted proposition that human beings are perfectible through self-effort in ordinary daily existence.’
- Tu Wei-Ming
- ‘One of China’s most deep-rooted normative values is the belief in higher education and learning as a major instrument for achieving the highest good for both individuals and society.’
- Jun Li

Wei-Ming, T. (ed.). (1996). *Confucian traditions in East Asian modernity: Moral education and economic culture in Japan and the four mini-dragons*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Li, J. (2003). U.S. and Chinese cultural beliefs about learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95 (2), pp. 258-267

Top ten school systems OECD PISA 2018

(mean student scores, East Asian education systems in red)

Reading	Mathematics	Science
Four Chinese provinces* 555	Four Chinese provinces 591	Four Chinese provinces 590
Singapore 549	Singapore 569	Singapore 551
Macao SAR 525	Macao SAR 558	Macao SAR 544
Hong Kong SAR 524	Hong Kong SAR 551	Estonia 530
Estonia 523	Taiwan 531	Japan 529
Canada 520	Japan 527	Finland 522
Finland 520	South Korea 526	South Korea 519
Ireland 518	Estonia 523	Canada 518
South Korea 514	Netherlands 519	Hong Kong SAR 517
Poland 512	Poland 516	Taiwan 516
OECD average 487	OECD average 489	OECD average 489
<i>UK 504</i>	<i>UK 502</i>	<i>UK 505</i>
<i>USA 505</i>	<i>USA 478</i>	<i>USA 502</i>

Data source: <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/pisa-2018-results-volume-i-5f07c754-en.htm>

*Four Chinese provinces are Beijing-Shanghai-Jiangsu-Zhejiang

Amartya Sen's idea of agency freedom

- *Control freedom* (negative freedom): freedom of the individual from external threat, coercion or constraint

Main understanding of freedom in liberal tradition – but if you are poor, you may be free in the sense of control freedom, but be unable to do much with it

- *Effective freedom* (positive freedom): freedom as the capacity of the individual to act

The exercise of effective freedom depends on the person's abilities or capacities, and resources, and on the social arrangements in which they live (individuals are nested in society)

- *Agency freedom* (will-power): freedom as the active human will, the capacity for self-directed conscious action

The key aspect of individual freedom, it is where self-will is centred. It is conditioned by the other aspects of freedom, and also shapes their potential.

Sen, A. (1985). Well-being, agency and freedom: The Dewey Lectures 1984. *The Journal of Philosophy* 82 (4), 169-221

Sen, A. (1992). *Inequality Re-examined*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press



Building individual capability (agency) in education is key to social development

- Building free people's agency on a democratic basis accelerates the process of national development
- Agency is built on the basis of groups and communities and not just separated individuals
- Education is key to development and should be universal
- The widespread education of women is especially transformative of society



Agency freedom is both the medium and outcome of higher education

Research shows that higher education graduates -

- Have a larger range of employment options
- Are more likely to be in good health, as are their families
- Have more advanced skill in the use of information and communications technology (electronic agency)
- Are more geographically mobile, regardless of income
- Report higher levels of inter-personal trust
- Are more likely to state that they have a say in government (political agency)
- Are more positive about migration and cultural diversity

Students form themselves in many ways in higher education (if it succeeds). They—

- invest in themselves to gain economic benefits such as rates of return, *employability* (economic capital / human capital)
- enter professions and occupations and make a career
- secure a broader set of opportunities and possibilities
- achieve greater social status/ prestige/ social respect
- learn via in specific disciplines. The various fields of knowledge and professional training shape different kinds of people—compare engineering students and music students
- achieve continuing self-cultivation through learning

and

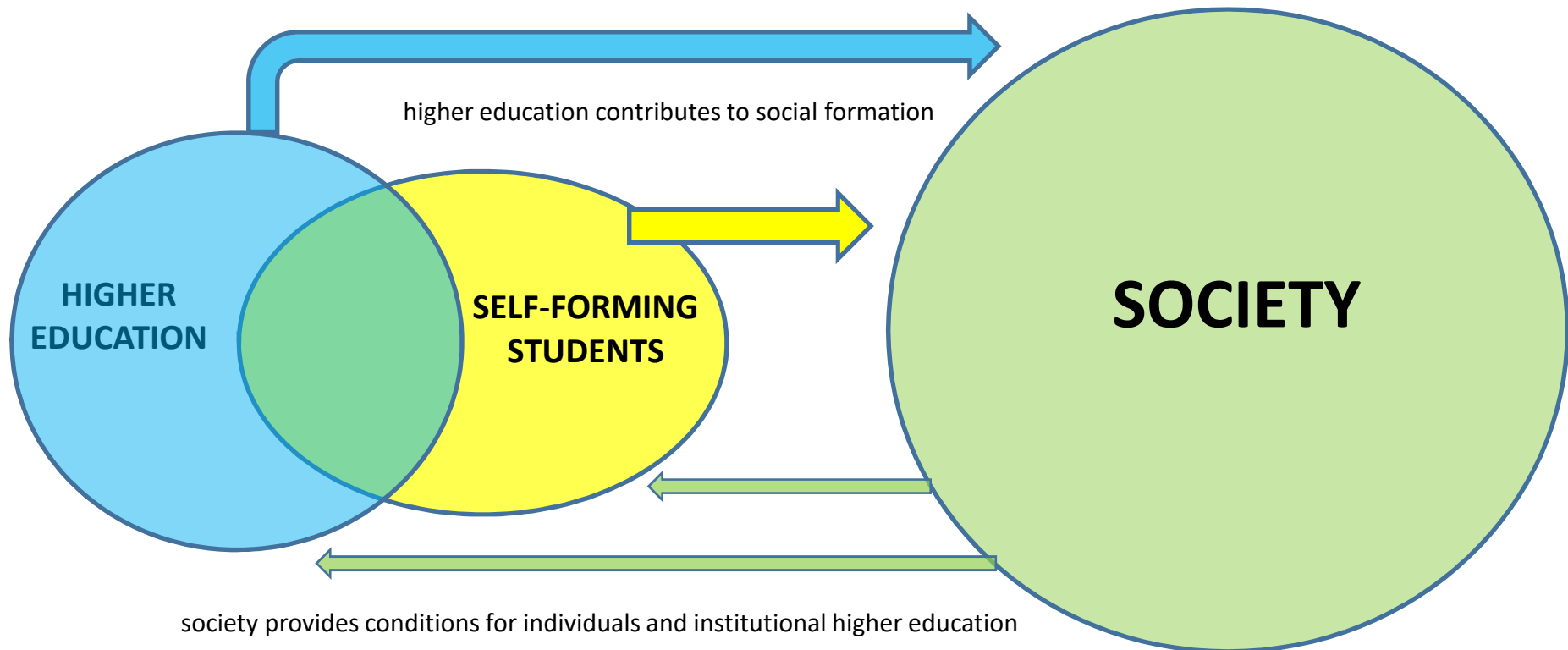
..... also

- build in themselves skills and personal attributes (cultural capital)
- make useful contacts and networks (social capital)
- make friends, negotiate marriage partners
- express themselves artistically in beautiful, truthful, useful things
- express themselves politically, work with others to achieve social change and transformation, and work for the global good
- develop themselves through educational and geographic mobility
- ‘find themselves’, grow up, shape their futures, take charge of their own lives, becoming different persons in many ways

The more that all of this happens, the better we have succeeded

Self-formation and social formation

- The formation of persons contributes to social formation. Societies are comprised of persons that live in relation to each other.
- Therefore the *values and ethics* of conduct in which students are formed in higher education shape future society



Higher education as student self-formation

Practical implications

- It is hard work because it means building confident and active agency *and* social awareness in each individual learner, and motivating each learner by making self-learning exciting
- It is crucially shaped by the knowledge contents of courses (which shape student personality and values) and by growing student awareness of related and other fields of knowledge
- It includes building employability, increasingly crucial in our sector
- It cannot be regulated by student satisfaction surveys – they provide useful data but are not a measure of progress
- It means faculty continue to be crucial, even as students move towards the status of autonomous self-determining learners
- *It requires confident autonomous faculty who can be trusted*

Agency and capability of quality teachers

Collective commitment to faculty self-improvement

- Self-forming lifelong learning graduates can only be developed by faculty with free agency, capable of learning and changing
- Faculty must be able to respond to widely diverse learners
- Faculty must have professional autonomy and trust, and must be worthy of that trust when exercising responsibility
- Professional development programs are not just about building careers, they are about building autonomy and capability
- It is hard to change people but there is no way forward without expanding autonomy. Transparency and external motivations can help but motivation must also be intrinsic, from within
- *It is crucial that faculty commit to authentic self-improvement*

Building trust in people – the greatest asset

Quality leadership and administration

- Leadership and administration are profoundly important – *they make a difference* – but are also just means to the real end
- The development of students as self-forming learners, confident, employable and steeped in professional and academic knowledge and skills, must always be front and centre
- Key tasks of leaders are fostering a reflexive culture, negotiating shared purpose across the institution, and lifting motivation
- Providing a stable environment in which professionals do their best work – rather than passing pressure down – is also crucial
- Attracting the right kind of talented and motivated young faculty and giving them responsibility can make a large difference