

# Education Fast Forward 2018

The OECD, the Education World Forum, Imagine Education and Polycom Education Fast Forward hosted the 18th global EFF debate on Monday – January 23<sup>rd</sup> entitled, “Preparing students to succeed in the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution.”

Gavin Dykes made an excellent job of chairing the debate because EFF18 took place in front of a global audience of Ministers and Ministries of Education at the Education World Forum. There was no barrier to participation, no registration and the debate just automatically opened up live from the [EFF website](#) and is still available from that site. The 350 people in the audience in London were in the minority because apart from the debate being streamed live to the whole world, the panel were joined by experts from a range of countries including Singapore, South Korea, India, Brazil, Australia, the USA and our very own panel in South Africa, from Cape Town, comprising Louise van Rhyn, Tracey Butchart and Nic Spaul.



The London panel discussed the recent PISA results from the point of view of the fourth industrial revolution. Panellists included Jim Wynn of Imagine Education, Andreas Schleicher from the OECD and Karen Cator of Digital Promise. Andreas’s knowledge of global education and most particularly of the OECD’s PISA research, resulted in him being the go-to guy when questions were posed from the audience and from around the world. Lars Person made a great job of facilitating questions from the Twitter feed. Summing up the debate was Dr Mmantsetsa Marope, Director of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE).

Contextualisation of the debate: “In the first industrial revolution, new skills were required to operate machinery. In the second industrial revolution jobs became more specialized and repetitive, while skills in managing work gained in value. In the digital revolution, repetitive cognitive jobs became increasingly redundant and non-routine cognitive, interactive roles increased in value. The “fourth industrial revolution” points to the remarkable advances in information technologies, artificial biological sciences, reproductive technologies, neuroscience and synthetic biology.”<sup>1</sup>

The debate covered issues around assessment and collaboration, girls being better at ‘thinking like a scientist’ and boys being better at content knowledge, empowering teachers to take responsibility for innovative changes and to not wait for government and global communities of practice.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.effdebate.org/eff18/>



Egypt's 'Teachers First' initiative was in the spotlight with Dr Tarek Shawki on the panel and Imagine Education's Lengo being the vehicle for the current innovation in Egypt. Dr Shawki outlined the revolutionary processes involved in Egypt's use of Lengo.

Jenny Lewis from Australia warned that some of the discussions might be excluding participants from developing countries. Then each of our South African panellists spoke about their specific areas of expertise. Louise presented compelling argument for strengthening school leadership and for the important role that business has to play in that process. She outlined the elements required for 'children to fall in love with learning' quoting from an earlier statement in the debate. Nic started with the tweet, "The future is already here, it's just not evenly distributed" and cautioned that technology can be an equalising force particularly in developed countries, but that it could be a "disequalising" force and in fact increase inequality. Nic also talked about 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills in the reality of South Africa when half of the learners in Foundation Phase have not mastered the basic skill of reading.



Tracey was then pounced upon to add her opinion and focused on what had been said about assessment. She felt strongly that teachers should activate metacognition in learners far more explicitly, so that learners could be flexible, to adapt to change and would be able to grow their skills and knowledge within that changed society. There were many great ideas exchanged about assessment with Andreas stating that the division between formative and summative assessment was false and that they should be integrated; that the division no longer applies to a digital world because it was a paper-based division. He advocated that teachers should facilitate more collaboration. Michael Trucano supplied an article on this from his World Bank Blog called [Collaborative Learning or Cheating?](#) Other interesting tweets, "Why are we still talking about assessment being a review of learning instead of a map to guide future learning?" and further articles and links are contained in our published Storify <https://storify.com/JanetThomson/education-fast-forward-2018>