Student experience 2038: Grand challenges ahead

Professor Kerri-Lee Krause PhD
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), La Trobe University

Context: In 2038, we will enrol first year students born in 2020. Those at uni now will be looking back on 15 years of post-university activity. It’s time to take stock of lessons from the past and the grand challenges ahead.

3 big ideas in the form of questions

1. Where have we been? Student experience research and key themes
   - Historical research on student experience in Australian HE (Krause, 2017)

2. Where are we going?
   - What does the future hold? 10 Disruptors (Wilen, 2018)
   - The 100-year life: designing a multi-stage life

FROM: A three-stage life with education first, employment second and then retirement - lockstep actions, certainty and predictability
TO: a multi-stage life with new milestones and turning point, numerous sequencing opportunities, shaped by individual preferences and circumstances

Consequences of this: profound
   “to support those destined to live long lives, institutions must:
   I. incorporate new learning technologies and experiential learning
   II. break down boundaries between age groups
   III. think more deeply about ways to teach creativity, innovation, humanity and empathy
   IV. rapidly expand practical specialisms to ensure that education wins the race against technology”
   (Grattan & Scott, 2017).

   Future of education and work: what’s changing?
   “Instead of going to university to get a job, students will increasingly be going to a job to get a university degree”
   The new path: ‘Going pro early’ (Busteed, 2019)

   A postsecondary education ecosystem is needed to support lifelong learning in the 100 year life.

3. What next?
   - Beyond Gen Z ... Gen Alpha/Beta - 2020-2038 (see McCrindle infographic (“Gen Z and Gen Alpha Infographic Update”, 2019)
   - Gen Alpha/Beta: Characteristics might include:
     - Adaptive
     - Agile
     - Ambidextrous mindset
     - Anxious, alienated
     - Antifragile

Women as disruptive leaders Disrupted selves
Disrupted society Disrupted careers
Disrupted work Disrupted skills
Disrupted industry Disrupted education
Disruptive leadership Disrupted selves
Three anchor points in times of change: What remains important to students after all this time?

1. Social connectedness, wellbeing
2. Self-regulated, personalised learning experiences
3. Social justice, equity and diversity

7 policy and practical implications

For student experience practitioners
1. Create holistic student experiences, services and environments
   - build student resilience and antifragility
   - social connectedness is key
   - provide integrated service models
2. Co-design communications with students as partners

For curriculum designers and academic staff
3. Design for synergistic learning
   - Move beyond the ‘nexus’ to ‘synergies’ for learning – infuse learning-teaching-research-workplace synergies in the curriculum
   - Consider wellbeing and antifragility as graduate attributes

For institutions
4. Cultivate a 100-year life perspective
5. Engage staff to engage students
6. Prepare for faster institutional planning cycles

For government
7. Innovate with ecosystemic approach to policy and funding

References:
Busteed, B. (2019, April 4). This will be the biggest disruption in higher education. Forbes. Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com