THE IFE 2020 TOOL KIT

The staff of 2020 has been developing a set of heuristics or learning devices that provide a common core around which the sessions at our leadership institutes are formulated. These are concepts we have found particularly useful in understanding the complex ways that increasing global interdependence is impacting higher education. Collectively, they constitute an open "tool kit" which we are continuously refining and adding to—one that we hope you will carry home with you and adapt to the specific circumstances in which you are working.

We do *not* imagine this tool kit as providing information about how things actually are educationally. Rather, we envision it as offering some strategically chosen points of departure for developing a conversation about higher education and contributing to a better understanding how educational practices and institutions have come to be as they are—and the kinds of responses the might be most effective in relation to them. None of the "definitions" that you will find should be taken as complete. We see ourselves as developing a of "orientations" that may lead to gaining a fuller appreciation of how these concepts and approaches may be of use to you.

The tool kit is separated into two parts: "areas of tension" and "concepts." "Areas of tension" refer to key sites associated with generating and expressing the interplay of contrasting, competing and, at times, contradictory forces throughout the global system. These are places where educational stresses are often most acute—regions in which the needs for and realities of change are especially evident. We have organized several of our senior seminars and leadership institutes around these areas of tension.

In the "concept" part, we address important ideas and distinctions that we have found useful in entering into each of the areas of tension to develop better understandings of their dynamics, to explore how they interrelate, and to assist in drawing out both analytical and policy-relevant insights related to them.

1) **Areas of tension**

Paradigms
An initial premise of the IFE 2020 senior seminars and leadership institutes was that contemporary educational practices and institutions can usefully be seen as expressing a quite specific, historically developed paradigm—a particular approach to education—that has been evident throughout the world over many decades, but which has come under stress with increased global interdependence.

Minimally defined, paradigms express long-standing alliances of strategies for understanding and action, structured in accord with abiding sets of values. Thus, like all paradigms, the now-globally dominant approaches to education express a distinctive configuration of both theoretical and practical commitments, defining the key problems faced by education, establishing norms and agendas for educational research and assessment, and setting the overall horizons of educational discourse. A sense of the scope and key features of the dominant educational paradigm can be gained by considering what is brought concretely to mind by references to differences between formal and informal learning.

Seeing current educational practices and institutions as concrete aspects of a globally dominant paradigm neither suggests nor legitimizes overlooking important local, national and regional variations that are occurring in higher education. Instead, it enhances our likelihood of identifying significant "family resemblances" that link across local, national and regional boundaries in ways that are critically useful. This encourages seeing possibilities for educational research and leadership that go beyond seeking and gaining incremental reform, but rather aim at tackling more fundamental issues in how educational institutions and practices are shaped by—and, in turn, shape—the dynamics of global interdependence.

Paradigm change contrasts sharply with reform-oriented change and can be described as a function of the phenomenon of emergence. That is, paradigm changes are not engineered, they evolve. Making use of the problem/predicament distinction (see below), it is possible to contrast reform approaches to change as treating educational shortfalls as *problems to be solved*; whereas, paradigmatic approaches to change engage educational shortfalls as *predicaments that must be resolved by taking new creative actions*.

During the 2020 institutes we work through exercises in which we identify various aspects of the dominant paradigm as it is manifest in diverse higher education settings, seeking also to identify the elements of transitional and/or newly emergent paradigms.

Globalization

Globalization is among the most complex contemporary phenomena, and now constitutes a distinctive nexus of academic activity and concern. Tensions exist in scholarly approaches to globalization, but also in the dynamics of the change processes themselves that are associated with it, particularly those aligned with greater homogenization and standardization on one hand and those aligned with greater heterogeneity and individuation on the other.

Globalization processes are facilitating greater fluidity and boundary crossing—of ideas, organizational models, and people—with such effects as nationally based higher education systems being infused with international resources and evaluated in terms of global standards and ideals. Such systems are also often subjected to rapidly fluctuating pressures to adapt to needs and interests outside the education sector as such. The so-called issues of "alignment," for example, are no longer plausibly framed in strictly local or national terms, but must be viewed as powerfully affected by the shifting dynamics of global production, labor and design markets, and the movements of global capital.

Quality

Quality has a strong intuitive appeal to people, and most would claim that although they find it hard to define, they know quality when they see it. But quality has come to enjoy a highly contested status within higher education as a concept/outcome brokered between higher education, the policy sector and the public. That is, a tension exists between conceiving of quality as a unique aspect of the character of education, and conceiving of it in terms that are essentially quantitative and therefore capable of being quantified and compared.

Parallel tensions exist between seeing quality as a function of emergent and opening patterns of opportunity or one of achieving specific, measurable outcomes. Tensions are often identified between viewing quality by identifying complex relationships (among, for example, higher education, industry, government, and public culture) or with respect to individuals (students, departments and institutions) as the appropriate "units of analysis" in quality assessment.

Globally, dominant efforts to define higher education quality are closely tied to those designed to identify and measure it, especially in institutional processes of quality assurance, assessment and accreditation. We link quality issues to the shifting balance between public and private provision of higher education as a distinctive public good, but also between public and private interpretations of how higher education best serves competing notions of "the public good." These tensions are represented with particular force in struggles to align quality with capacity.

Public good/private commodity
'Public goods' are those things and outcomes provided through public sector action and made available to citizens (and others) in ways that are neither rivalrous (that is they do not compete with each other) nor divisible. Providing education as a public good has been argued as crucial for nation-state development and wealth generation for more than three centuries, and the globally dominant educational paradigm has had as one of its foundational cornerstones a commitment to publicly providing universal basic education.

But over the past several decades, higher education in particular has been subjected to an array of powerful commercializing forces at the same time as governments have been trending globally toward privatizing the provision of traditional public goods like transportation infrastructure, drinking water, and education. Considerable controversies now exist about whether higher education is best provided publicly, privately, or through public/private hybrids of various sorts. In particular, tensions have begun emerging between the dynamics of higher education provision (whether public or private) and its public good purposes.

We have found it useful to explicitly distinguish the *provision* of higher education as *a public good* and the *purpose* of serving **the** *public good* that is traditionally attributed to higher education. 'The public good' connotes both a present status and goal, encompassing determinations of both means and ends from within the citizenry, typically in terms of particular legitimacy discourses linking leaders and the led, governors and the governed. 'The public good' is what is best for "each and all of us," and its determinations vary widely across, but also within, cultures and societies.

In a completely homogeneous society, there might be minimal tension related defining and accepting **the** public good. But a plurality of interests brings to light differences— and potential tensions—in the conception of public good and hence the purposes of higher education. As higher education becomes increasingly globalized, such tensions can easily intensify. But important issues are also now being raised as to whether higher education contributions to **the** public good might be adversely affected if higher education is no longer treated as **a** public good. That is, tensions are beginning to appear between issues of provision and purpose as such.

Capacity
When discussed in the context of higher educational systems, capacity is seen to embody the physical, social, intellectual, fiscal and probably political and moral ability of an entity (nation state, province, municipality, private entity) to create, maintain and sustain higher education activity. Capacity is directly related to level of pretense or aspiration, and is knowable through various means of measurement, monitoring and assessment. Tensions in regard to higher education capacity reflect shifting arrays of interests and values, and often the changing complexion of higher education's public good(s) profile.

For example, research capacity and teaching capacity are often in direct competition for limited resources, with each reflecting distinctive dimensions of quality assessment, serving public good purposes, and establishing institutional ranking. In the context of increasing higher education globalization, tensions also exist in regard to whether capacity needs to be understood in a single (for example, national) or multiple (for example, cross-border) contexts.

Cross border
Cross border issues are increasingly central to discussions about the future of higher education. Growing global interdependence has been recognized within higher education for decades, usually seen as "international education" and having its primary manifestations in student and faculty exchanges between countries. Over the past decade, and especially since the passage of the GATS agreement, higher education has been redefined in part as a tradable commodity, and the amount of "globalized education" taking place is on the increase. We have come to realize that cross border education phenomena are prevalent in multiple ways in many countries, constituting a significant component of service trade, and are associated with an environment characterized by continual change. Cross border education has become a major component of the transformations taking place within the higher education private sector environment, as well as a central element of how quality is recognized within higher education.

Leadership
Our approach to leadership in 2020 has not been to stipulate what it might "be," but to suggest problematically that what we know about leadership may have to be rethought in the context of tensions between the homogenizing and pluralizing effects of globalization and changing educational paradigms.

One effect of globalization on higher education has been a tendency to recognize the necessity and value of standards and standardization. We have argued that leadership is one arena in which standards and standardization have potentially negative consequences of narrowing the cultural bases and resources for educational leadership. Empirical evidence exists that differences in leadership approaches may yield considerable benefits, especially in cross-border or multicultural contexts. A post-industrial leadership model may require a "de-centering" of leadership, both within the classroom (in which the receiving student is replaced as object by an active learner) and within the administration and visioning of higher education. This has been a basic component of how we discuss the changing classroom, and the progressive shift in

quality assurance and accreditation toward assessing higher education on the basis of outcomes and opportunity structures rather than inputs—or toward asking questions about alignment and learning, rather than merely tallying inputs in terms of some accepted metrics.

2) **Conceptual Tools**

Interdependence
We have used this concept in very general ways to refer to the interactive dynamics within and among complex systems. Focusing on interdependencies emphasizes attention to relational dynamics. Global interdependence is demonstrated and concretely illustrated by the interrelationships among the many parts, elements, actions, structures, dynamics and impacts of globalization. A key feature of our approach is to attempt to identify clearly the various 'parts' of higher education as a complex whole and indicate how these parts interact. We also examine how these interactive dynamics are linked to other systems (social, economic, political, technological, and cultural) and the relationships among them.

Our approach has also emphasized that there are many different "lenses" through which to view globalization, describe and analyze it, and value it. This approach also emphasizes that globalization will appear differently depending on where one is "located" within it. Our goal is to promote a self-consciousness of this location for all participants, seeking to engage us all in reflection on where the portion of higher education we inhabit and interact with is located in the global educational landscape.

Complexity
Complexity is understood as that attribute of physical and social environments in which the interactive effects are such that predictability (and to some degree explanation) is limited, often in association with what is now commonly referred to as "emergence" and the generation of ironic or unintended consequences. Complex systems are characterized by feedback and feedforward relationships that facilitate patterns of mutual adaptation between systems and their environments. *Complexity* is not just a function of high numbers of variables—as in complicated systems—but rather of a distinctive *quality of system dynamics*. The contemporary system of global interdependencies interfusing the social, economic, political, technological and cultural domains is well treated as a complex system.

Emergence
Emergence is a property of natural and social phenomena, often poorly understood, in which novel patterns of behavior arise interactively. Emergence is often associated with complex systems and with re-configurations of existing resources in ways that yield "wholes" that are greater (or at least other) than the sum of pre-existing parts. Emergence is also associated with the super-additivity potentials implicit in diversity. Networks and information systems are increasingly seen to be associated with emergent phenomena. Exploring the social and educational implications of the information and network revolutions takes one in the direction of exploring the nature of emergent phenomena and has the potential for triggering a paradigmatic rethinking of the means to and meaning of knowledge generation.

Problems and Predicaments
We have found it useful to draw a qualitative distinction among the kinds of difficulties posed by global interdependence, the impacts of scale, and issues of difference. **Problems** arise when changing circumstances make evident the failure of existing practices for meeting abiding needs and interests. *Solving* problems involves developing new or improved means for arriving at ends we intend to continue pursuing. **Predicaments** occur when changing circumstances lead to or compel awareness of conflicts or competition among values, aims, interests, and constructions of meaning. Predicaments are *resolved* through enhancing clarity about situational dynamics and meaningfully coordinating commitments. Whereas problem-solution typically does not require a reconfiguration of situationally relevant values, predicament solution always does so.

Difference
Issues of difference are central to addressing both problems and predicaments, especially in the context of increasing global interdependence and its affects on education in terms of such key factors as access, quality, equity, interdisciplinarity, and multiculturalism. We have found it useful to engage difference as an intrinsically dynamic process and as the basic condition for mutual contribution. That is, *difference* signifies ongoing *processes of differentiation*.

Diversity and Variety
In the context of recognizing the dynamic nature of difference, we have found it heuristically useful to distinguish between variety and diversity as two types, orientations or meanings of differentiation processes. **Variety** is a function of simple co-existence, a *quantitative* index of factual multiplicity: a surface characteristic that is visible at a glance. **Diversity** is a function of complex interdependence, a *qualitative* index of self-sustaining patterns of mutual contribution: a relational achievement evident, if at all, only over time.

Equity and Equality
Concerns about difference are implied in each of the areas of tension noted above, as well as in the dynamics of their interdependence. In responding to these concerns, appeals to the values of equality and equity differ importantly.

In practice, promoting **equality** involves establishing parameters of relevance. That is, equality is never total and so principles or 'rules of thumb' must be employed in determining what commonalities are centrally relevant and what differences are irrelevant. Appeals to equality are useful in establishing thresholds of acceptability or minimal standards (as in universal human rights conventions), and often assume that the test of how well equality-promoting policies are working is well they respect and protect the fundamental independence or autonomy of each.

In contrast, promoting **equity** involves taking differences more fully and aptly into account. Appeals to equity assume the irreducible nature of interrelationships and seek to insure that their dynamics exhibit fairness to all. Appealing to equity is useful in establishing conditions for shared flourishing, and crafting common patterns of aspiration. One operational definition of equity that stresses its relational nature is that equity is enhanced when all relevant individuals (persons, communities, states, etc.)

enjoy capacities-for and commitments-to acting resolutely in their own self interest, in ways that are deemed valuable by others.

These minimal characterizations suggest that policies framed in terms of achieving greater equality and equity may be differentially effective in responding, respectively, to problems and predicaments. That is, an equality bias will tend to encourage framing issues of concern in terms that idealize homogeneity of response, whereas an equity bias will tend to encourage framing these "same" issues in terms that idealize heterogeneity of response. In basic education, *gender inequality* might be addressed, for example, by legislatively mandating education for all and insuring that enough teachers are hired and classrooms built to insure that space is available to all boys and girls in a given locale. Boys and girls are treated the same to insure common educational opportunities. A bias toward addressing *gender inequity* will involve taking into account differences in personal, familial and cultural values surrounding gender, employment expectations, and aspirations for civic or political contribution in framing policy recommendations. Boys and girls will be treated differently to insure fair educational outcomes.

It should be noted that in educational (as well as broader development) contexts, equity is most often defined in terms of "equality of opportunity." But such a reduction of equity to equality runs the risk of biasing educational change in the direction of problem-solving reforms rather than predicament-resolving paradigm innovation.

Innovation
Innovation has come to be highly valorized, not only in education, but in virtually every domain of contemporary life. Often, however, innovation is understood as a "one-step" process: a new idea or practice is formulated and then implemented, innovation complete. In 2020, innovation is understood to be on ongoing activity of *creative engagement*, where creativity implies, not simply change, but *significant change*. To capture this, we speak about the need to "innovate innovatively." Innovation involves continuously evolving strategies for discerning how best to make meaningful contributions.

For instance, if we fully acknowledge the complexity of the educational challenges that are being faced in each country, we can ask what kinds of creative engagement might work to bring about feedback/feedforward loops suited to fostering the emergence of paradigm-challenging initiatives? Innovating innovatively requires structuring such initiatives in ways that are at once recursive and open--that is, in ways that are conducive to engaging in ongoing challenges of the axiomatic and presupposed.

For instance, a major axiom seems to be that "educational equity" depends on broadening educational access. This axiom operationalizes a very complex relationship in a way that suggests the work is done when doors are opened and classrooms supplied with teachers and texts. But if equity is tied to diversity (as we've argued), then there are real questions about the content, purposes and cultural modalities of education that have to be factored in alongside access. Like human rights that warrant certain ideal structures of opportunity for each, but cannot guarantee positively progressive structures of outcomes for all, access to education cannot by itself insure equitable structures or processes of learning. Understanding the task of realizing more

equitable education as one of innovating innovatively leads to seeing educational equity, not as a pre-determined destination, but as a continuously revealing direction.