

Experiential Learning and the World of Tomorrow

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“I’ll Be Back”: The Future is Coming for Us...

If you have been paying attention, you may have heard that a robot is going to take your job. To listen to some of the rhetoric, it seems that most of us will wander aimlessly across a barren planet in search of work only to realize that the *Terminator* movies were actually documentaries sent back from the future.



While we may not be able to identify the exact job titles of tomorrow, current and emerging trends indicate that:

- 85% of the jobs in 2030 don’t exist today¹
- Nearly 50% of current work activities can be automated with existing technology²
- By 2030, ~375 million workers may need to change their occupation category³

Simply, the future will be different—really different. Compared to the present and the past, it will require different skills, different behaviors, and different mindsets. While the next twenty years will be defined by disruption on a historic scale that will redefine the world of work and life, it will also create a period of

incredible opportunity for individuals who can innovate, think critically, collaborate, and communicate effectively.

Getting “Future Ready”: Who Will Win and Why

How do we prepare today’s learners to thrive in tomorrow’s world when we don’t even know what it will look like? In short, experiential education is a proven model that powers cognitive, emotional, and social engagement. This engagement enables learners to foster the skills and competencies they need to compete and, more importantly, collaborate to build the world of tomorrow.

As the acceleration of technology fuels the growth of economies around the globe, research continues to demonstrate that in order to prepare for this future world:

1. Individuals need to develop strong social, emotional, and high-level cognitive skills and capabilities as these are difficult to automate and can transfer between occupation categories.
2. Individuals need to become innovators and problem solvers by leveraging their curiosity and permitting themselves to fail while iterating on new solutions to old problems.
3. Individuals need to be able to effectively communicate and collaborate with a diverse set of people and technologies.

Simply, the success stories of the future will be about individuals that can create solutions to challenging problems while communicating and collaborating with an increasingly diverse and global population. To channel Aristotle, we will need to become “fully human”. The ubiquitous nature of information and the application of technology through artificial intelligence will actually establish emotive and relational skills as the dominant traits of nimble and adaptable humans in the second half of the 21st Century.

After nearly twenty years of working in the K16 education space, I have found the fundamental issue impacting learning and the transfer of that learning to be engagement. Research continues to demonstrate that properly designed and delivered experiential pedagogy remains one of the best ways to engage students so that they can build the skills they need to succeed in the future.

And we need to get moving on this important work; the future is coming for us...

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¹ Institute for the Future and Dell Technologies. (2017). [The Next Era of Human Machine Partnerships](#).

² Chui, Manyika, and Miremadi. (2015). [Four Fundamentals of Workplace Automation](#). McKinsey & Company.

³ James Manyika, et al. (2017). [Jobs Lost, Jobs Gained: Workforce Transitions in a Time of Automation](#). McKinsey Global Institute.