The Systemic Neglect of Inner Knowledge in Modern Education

Are we neglecting the most important knowledge for the future?

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Research Question
Is modern education systematically neglecting inner knowledge?

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Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to illuminate the extent to which modern education prioritizes or fails to prioritize inner knowledge, as it attempts to equip us for the unpredictable future of accelerating change.

This paper is however better understood in the larger context of my previous work. In the past I have argued that the western world is seeing a spiritual renaissance which properly began in the wake of the second world war and then evolved through various phases involving the hippie and new age movements and through today (Andersen, 2022). I have argued for this renaissance through demographic developments and the rise of spirituality in science, therapy and healthcare. I now conceive of this renaissance through a broader lens that scopes a renaissance of the inner dimension of life as a whole and I intend to continue this exploration in this paper.

In this context, the purpose of this paper is to illuminate the inner renaissance or lack thereof in the world of education to help inform the efforts of the movement. Such an overview should be interesting to anyone who for any reason would like to see greater priority given to the inner dimension of humanity in modern culture, whether it be from a spiritual or a scientific perspective. This paper will give an overview of where we are on the path to mainstream inner knowledge in modern education and thus add a crucial dimension to our picture of the inner renaissance as a whole.

Motivation

Bracing for Change - If you are alive to read this paper around the time of its publication, then you're facing more than the run of the mill perennial problems of the human condition such as intergroup conflict, the search for meaning, and suffering in general (Harari, 2014). Even if your life appears rather mundane at the moment, you are as unbelievable as it sounds, facing the greatest unknown in human history (Kurzweil, 2004). The culture shock experienced by indigenous peoples as the wave of modern culture crashed upon their shores

could plausibly pale in comparison with what the modern world is now facing as a whole. This is because historical change itself is accelerating (Kurzweil, 2004). New artificial worlds and minds are becoming increasingly regular headlines and slowing down the charge of technology is beginning to sound more and more like a nostalgic fantasy. The horizon of predictability grows ever nearer until one day it may disappear entirely in a hypothetical event known as the "technological singularity" (Eden et al., 2012). What knowledge could possibly prepare us for such an inconceivable torrent of change?

Preparing for the Unpredictable - To address this question, let us imagine a less abstract scenario of facing unpredictability. Suppose you are set to explore the amazon rainforest in a week's time. An unfamiliar reality full of wonder but of course also danger. If you have the slightest respect for the jungle then you do what you can to avoid an airlift to a US hospital within the first week of your trip. You look up essential guides, government recommendations, you contact the locals, you call experienced friends, you tap any source you know for knowledge. In terms of attitude, you willingly humble yourself and sincerely open up to the possibility that you could be fatally ignorant. As you entertain this scenario you can ask yourself, is it not appropriate for the modern world to take at least this attitude with respect to a future of accelerated change? Should we not pause in humility to consider our potential fatal ignorance? I personally believe this question answers itself, which has led me to pursue the following question.

Motivating question - "*Could we be neglecting the most important knowledge for our future?"*

Introducing the Research Question

The research question can be understood as an attempt to operationalize the motivating question, i.e. make it possible to answer. So how did we get from the motivation to prepare for accelerating change to the research question - *Is modern education systematically neglecting inner knowledge?*

First of all, we have operationalized *"the most important knowledge for our future"* as *"inner knowledge"*, implying that if we fail to find inner knowledge in modern education, it will reflect that we are likely neglecting the most important knowledge for our future. This of course

requires argumentation which you will find in the section “Arguing the Most Important Knowledge of Our Time”.

Secondly we have operationalized “are *we* neglecting?..” as “is *modern education* neglecting?” This is to say that “*we*” are speaking from the perspective of “*the modern world*” and that a look at *modern education* can tell us what knowledge we are neglecting in the modern world as a whole. I will make this argument in the section “The System of Modern Education”.

Finally we have introduced “*systematically neglecting*” into the research question. This is because we will be analyzing systemic aspects of modern education, such as its definition and measurement of success, to determine whether it is neglecting inner knowledge. I will argue why the measurement system could be the single most informative place to look to understand what modern education prioritizes in practice. You will find this argument in the section “The Age of Measurement”.

Before any of this I will now introduce what is meant by inner knowledge and inner education in this paper. In other words, what exactly is it that might be neglected in modern education? We will need this definition to identify potential neglect in modern education.

What is Inner Knowledge and Inner Education?

What is inner knowledge? - If we wish to assess the prevalence of inner knowledge in western education, we must first define what we are looking for. That is, *what is and what is not inner knowledge and education*? In this paper I will define inner knowledge broadly as knowledge pertaining to inner life, that is the domain of lived experience, consciousness or subjectivity ect. This can be theoretical knowledge such as understanding developmental stages and it can be practical knowledge such as navigating states of consciousness through meditation. In more analogical language, you might imagine inner space as a domain of reality to be understood, navigated, cultivated and transformed to various ends with inner knowledge. I will therefore define inner knowledge as - *”Practical and theoretical knowledge pertaining to the understanding and navigation of inner life”* and I will define inner education as *“The teaching of inner knowledge”* This all means that paradigms of inner knowledge may be as disparate as spirituality and neuroscience, but where goes the line of what is no longer a paradigm of inner knowledge? Surely not every subject in school constitutes inner education?

What is not inner knowledge? While all education entails inner changes not all of those changes constitute inner knowledge. To have learned new vocabulary entails inner changes and indeed new knowledge. But if this knowledge does not pertain to inner life, i.e. if it does not directly inform the understanding and navigation of inner space, then it does not constitute inner knowledge. Of course any vocabulary has the potential to help understand and navigate inner space by providing new potential ways to conceive of it. Even a word from physics such as "temperature" could help conceive of inner space as "temperamental". But unless this new vocabulary is indeed applied to inner space, then it will not be considered inner knowledge. By extension if a subject in school does not apply its knowledge to inner space then it will not be considered inner education in this paper.

What subjects are inner education? - This means that subjects such as literacy, social science, humanities and arts do not constitute inner education, unless they are taught with the purpose of understanding or navigating inner space. I will assume that these subjects are not typically taught for this purpose, so unless it says otherwise in the educational agendas and measurement protocols, then I will assume that such subjects do not constitute inner education in my analysis. On the other hand subjects such as social and emotional skills will be considered inner education, as they do intentionally teach knowledge for the navigation of subjective and intersubjective space, i.e. inner space

Is Spiritual Education Inner Education? - This is an important question to answer, because if it is, then most of the progress in inner knowledge to date will have taken place under spiritual paradigms. This would make it highly important to integrate spiritual knowledge into modern education lest we intend to reinvent the wheel of inner knowledge with modern psychology. In my thesis "On the Universal Meaning and Significance of Spirituality" I have argued that consciousness i.e. inner life has universally been at the essence of spirituality and what it seeks to understand. This is based on extensive analysis of the etymology of spirituality across cultures and of the expression of spirituality across traditions. Since making this argument is outside the scope of this paper, a reference to the thesis will have to make do. (Andersen, 2022) On this basis I will work with the assumption that *Spiritual Education is Inner Education* in this paper.

In summary - We can now discern what is and what is not inner education in our analysis, allowing us to investigate to what extent inner knowledge is being neglected in modern education. But why might inner knowledge be the most important knowledge of our time?.

Arguing the Most Important Knowledge of Our Time

If we can't predict the future, then how can we prepare? If there are no packing lists, no experienced friends to call, and we expect the future to defy any expectation we might use to prepare, then how could we ever make the claim that inner knowledge might be the most important way to prepare? A philosophical argument is perhaps unavoidable here so I hope you'll allow a bit of interdisciplinary jumping. For a perspective on this deep question we will look to history for answers.

The Study of Change - Historian Yuval Noah Harari understands his field not as the study of the past but as the study of change (Yuval Noah Harari, 2023) and gives us a clue on how to prepare for lots of it. He suggests that there is in fact one crucial thing we can count on in an unpredictable future of accelerated change, which is that we will have to change with it. In his words, we will have to reinvent ourselves again and again (Harari, 2018). So by this logic, if there is one thing we can do to prepare for the unpredictable, then it is to learn the knowledge of inner transformation. This makes the first argument for looking specifically at inner knowledge as we humbly consider our potentially fatal ignorance. However, I will argue that there is an even deeper logic that argues for inner knowledge more generally.

The logic of invariance - The logic of invariance says that in the space of all that exists today, some realities are less likely to change than others. In other words, some realities that we know today are more likely to make it into the future than others, and if we can estimate what they are then we can use those realities as a basis to prepare for the future. So what realities may be least likely to change? The answer to this question can be represented as a spectrum, with the realities that are *least likely* on the *right end* and vice versa. Is there anything we can say about the right end of this *spectrum of invariance?*

Inner transformation - The first thing we might say is that the fact of change itself is on the extreme right end of the spectrum, giving us inner transformation at the core of our

curriculum as argued by Harari. But why would inner knowledge more generally dominate the right end of the spectrum?

Inner knowledge - It has famously been said that *"the real problem of humanity is the following: we have Paleolithic emotions, medieval institutions, and god-like technology" ("Oxford Essential Quotations," 2016).* The relevant implication here is that much has changed over the course of history, but not the basic nature of our inner lives. Indeed, scientists like to call our prehistoric ancestors "anatomically modern humans" (Nitecki & Nitecki, 2013) implying that if we were to transport a prehistoric infant to our time, it would develop no differently than the rest of us, precisely because it has the same basic inner nature. It has thus proven wise throughout history to invest in inner knowledge and preserve it culturally due to its perennial relevance. This is why modern people still enjoy reading an ancient Roman Emperor's private meditations (Irvine, 2008). But will this continue to hold true? Will our descendants want to read the meditations of Elon Musk? After all, technological development is indeed on course to transform us from the inside too (Harari, 2018). While this will likely be the case, history still suggests that our basic inner nature may still be among the most resistant realities to historical change in the future, placing it at the right end of the spectrum of invariance.

Meta- knowledge - While it is not directly relevant to this paper, I feel compelled to add a complimentary logic we should use to inform the core of the modern curriculum. Just as we can prepare for unpredictability by mastering the most invariant realities such as inner life, we can also prepare by developing the kind of knowledge which is most independent of the realities that will vary. This knowledge includes meta-skills like communication and creativity ("Skills 4.0 a Skills Model to Drive Scotland's Future," 2018) and meta-truths like general systems theory (Goldberg, 1969). I intend to argue for meta-knowledge as a partner to inner knowledge at the core of the modern curriculum in future work.

In summary, I have now argued why inner knowledge might be the most important knowledge of our time. I have argued that the logic of invariance should inform the core of the modern curriculum as we face an unpredictable future and that this may place inner knowledge at the top of the modern educational agenda. There are plenty of other reasons to mainstream inner knowledge that I have covered elsewhere, such as addressing intersecting global crises, prioritizing the vital spiritual dimension of human life, and realizing the highest human potentials (Andersen, 2022), but I thought I'd go with a more unifying rationale for this paper by referring

to our shared future. This leaves us to argue the second part of the research question. *What is modern education and why does it reflect which knowledge is neglected in the modern world?*

The System of Modern Education

What is Education?

I will not offer a hard and fast definition of education here, but rather a perspective on education which is highly relevant for this paper. We can think of education as serving the function of cultural reproduction and the reason why every generation need not reinvent the wheels that run society (Erben et al., 1979). Instead of reinvention, we can swiftly learn the hard won knowledge of our elders through the educational reproduction of culture, whether it be education through schooling or simply *imitation* (Blackmore & Blackmore, 2000). Thus, by standing on the shoulders of our ancestors, we can reach higher fruits of cultural realization than they possibly could (Thomas, 2021). Without this unique capacity for cultural evolution, we would be gene bound to an ecological niche like the rest of the animal kingdom, with the proverbial stars forever out of reach (Richerson & Boyd, 2008). As it happens, we do have this capacity, and with it we have made at least "one giant leap" towards the stars (Pernet-Fisher et al., 2019). But cultural evolution is not to be taken for granted, for its function depends on the success of our educational reproductive system. If it fails, we risk forgetting the knowledge of our ancestors, falling off their shoulders and having to "*reinvent the wheels of culture"*. From this perspective, we can see that a neglect of modern education entails a neglect in modern culture as a whole. This makes modern education a crucial area to investigate to figure out if we are forgetting or neglecting the most important knowledge of our time. Finally, although education is much broader than schooling alone, we will nevertheless emphasize schooling in the current analysis, since schooling has never played a bigger role in education than it does in modern times (Thomas, 2021).

But is there really such a thing as a single worldwide educational system in the modern world order?

What is Modern Education?

If we want to say anything about an entity as abstract as modern education, we need to establish what it is, and if it is even a real thing. Can we say that? Are the many different educational paradigms around the world integrated enough to justify thinking of them as one thing? It's hard to give a simple answer to this question. What can be said more confidently, is that global education has almost certainly never been more integrated and globally governed than it is today (Elfert & Ydesen, 2023). This is due to the expanding role of transnational educational leaders such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), The World Bank, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and their associated international organizations such as the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), Global Partnership for Education(GPE), The European Union Education Area (EEA) ect. Some of these leading organizations have nearly all the world's countries as members, such as UNESCO with 194 member states (*Member States*, n.d.), and others have a narrower scope such as the EU with 27 European member states (*Easy to Read – About the EU | European Union*, n.d.). Despite this the EU may still be considered among the leaders of modern education, due to the global proliferation of European policy dubbed the Brussels Effect (Bradford, 2020). So, we may to a large extent be justified in thinking of modern education as a single system.

But let's back up. The world does not have an official government so can we really think of these organizations as the government of modern education? This is important since we will be analyzing these organizations as representative of modern education as a whole.

Educational Governance without a Global Government

It all depends on how you think about governance. There are many ways to systematically rule the world and having an official government is but one way. There are many softer yet powerful means of governance that organizations like the OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank use to rule the world without the hard power of government. And indeed these three organizations have evolved different primary ways of wielding this soft power. UNESCO "*the Idealist*" governs with what we may call **diplomatic power** by setting norms through the frameworks of human rights and sustainability, and through its declarations and coordination of

international efforts ect. The World Bank *"the master of coercion"* has emphasized the use of **financial power** by offering conditional loans to developing countries and contractually influencing their educational policy (Elfert & Ydesen, 2023). However the form of governing power I'd like to emphasize in this analysis is perhaps best represented by the OECD "*the master of persuasion*".

This is **the power of defining the truth** of what constitutes educational success, using objective standardized measurement, and the competitive ranking of countries against each other (Sellar & Lingard, 2013). We may further think of this as a dual power involving both the ontological power of *defining success*, and the epistemic power of *defining how success is measured*. This governing strategy has come to define modern education so much that we can be said to live in the age of *measurement* (Biesta, 2008). On this basis, I submit that if we can find how the governing bodies of modern education define and measure success, then we will have solid empirical grounds from which to answer our research question. That is *to know whether modern education is systematically neglecting inner knowledge.* We will therefore investigate five of the most influential governing bodies of modern education, and their most influential studies of educational measurement in the analysis to answer the research question.

But why should we think that measurement holds the power to define modern education? And why is it not enough to analyze the educational goals they seek to measure as representatives of what knowledge is actually taught around the world?

The Age of Measurement

How Measurement Shapes Education - Large scale educational measurement has become a deeply integrated and defining governing technology in modern education with the power to shape curricula across the world (Biesta, 2008). To take an example, we can look at perhaps the single most influential governing technology of modern education, called the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the OECD. When individual countries score low on this measure, they may experience what has come to be known as a PISA shock (Meyer & Benavot, 2013). Upon experiencing this shock, nations are often quick to adjust their educational systems, including their curriculum, to beat the average in the next round, or even better to beat the famous champion Finland.

However PISA is far from the only assessment technology that makes nations eager to beat each other in internationally defined games of education. These standardized tests are collectively known as **International Large Scale Assessments (ILSA's).** And through the competitive incentives that they facilitate, ILSA's have the power to shape the knowledge that gets prioritized and neglected in modern education. What is taught around the world begins to accord with what knowledge they measure and how they measure it which can lead to blindspots unique to the age of measurement.

If knowledge isn't measured it isn't taught - Crucially for this paper, this means that we can infer educational neglect in modern education from blindspots in these ILSA's. That is, *if inner knowledge is not measured, then it is with all likelihood neglected in the classrooms of planet earth.* But why would we hypothesize that modern educational measurement has a blindspot for inner knowledge? And perhaps more fundamentally, if ILSA's simply measure progress towards the goals of modern education, then why are the blindspots of educational measurement not the same as the blindspots of educational goals?

How the Measurement of Education Steals the Goal Function of Education - The reason that the goals of modern education cannot stand alone as representatives of what is taught in modern education, is because goals and measurement can end up working across purposes with each other. Even worse, educational measurement can end up defining educational goals instead of the other way around. That is, educational systems end up teaching what they can measure, i.e teaching for the test, instead of teaching the knowledge that is most valuable. We end up valuing what we measure (Biesta, 2008) or in the words of the OECD "treasuring what we are measuring" (OECD, 2021). As argued by Biesta, there is a potentially great disparity between the knowledge that is most important and the knowledge that we can measure. It is on this basis that I argue that we may have created a detrimental blindspot in modern education with respect to the knowledge that is hard to measure due to our reliance on educational measurement. Crucially, this is a blindspot which is likely to select against inner knowledge insofar as it is harder to measure. There are many good reasons to believe that inner knowledge is hard if not impossible to measure through standardized quantitative measurement. But since I can't fit the argument in the scope of this paper, I will leave it as an undefended hypothesis to be confirmed or falsified by the analysis alone.

Summary - Taken together, the theory I have proposed is that educational measurement shapes the knowledge we teach in modern education, by acting as the de facto goal structure of modern education, and selecting against the knowledge that is hard to measure, such as inner knowledge. For this reason, analyzing the agenda of modern education is not sufficient to infer educational neglect in practice. According to this theory, we are likely to find educational goals in the modern agenda that will not be found in the measurements, because they are hard to measure. So to infer neglect in modern education, we must look both at its idealistic agendas but also on what they measure in practice. On the basis of this theory and on the assumption that inner knowledge is indeed hard to measure, we can hypothesize an answer to the research question.

Main Hypothesis - We will find a severe systematic neglect of inner knowledge in modern education.

Methodology

Documents - To answer the research question we will look into five of the major governing bodies of modern education, namely the UN, UNESCO, The World Bank, the OECD and the EEA. For each of these bodies we will perform one document analysis on their educational agenda i.e their vision and one document analysis on their assessment framework i.e their educational measurement. See the chapter on the modern educational system to review the argument on why I choose to focus on these two aspects of modern education. The documents provide clear lists of their goals and measurements with brief elaboration which we will use as evidence to infer potential educational neglect.

Method - To answer the research question I will go through the 27 goals and 18 studies of modern education and estimate what percentage of these represents inner education. This is by no means meant as a scientifically rigorous method as there are many important variables that will not be taken into account, such as weighing the ILSA's by their relative impact on policy. This is only meant as an extremely rough estimate to give a broad sense of where we are on the road to mainstreaming inner knowledge in modern education. For simplicity we will give goals and measurement equal weights as we combine them to form the final result.

Hypotheses

Main hypothesis - We will find a severe systemic neglect of inner knowledge in modern education.

To operationalize this hypothesis we will break it up into the following three sub hypotheses.

(H1) - We will see that what is measured will systematically diverge away from what would best represent the goals and towards what is easier to measure, resulting in a significant disparity between the representation of inner knowledge in the goals and measurements..

(H2) - We will find a severe neglect of inner knowledge in the goals of modern education (0-10%)

(H3) - We will find a severe neglect of inner knowledge in the measurement of modern education (0-10%)

Interpretational Framework

I have formalized a framework with which to interpret the results of the analysis and test the hypotheses. These benchmarks are once again not meant as any scientific indicators. You are very welcome to form your own ideas of what percentages constitute varying degrees of neglect and priority. This is only meant as a very rough framework of interpretation.

Severe Neglect: 0-10%
Moderate Neglect: 10-20%
Mild Neglect: 20-30%
Mildly prioritized: 30-40%
Moderately prioritized: 40-50%.
Highly Prioritized: 50% and above

Analysis

United Nations - Sustainable Development Goal 4

Agenda - It arguably makes most sense to start off with the United Nations SDG4 (UNESCO, 2016) which is possibly the single most influential document in modern education, as it is widely used by the rest of its governing bodies to justify their own visions and initiatives (Elfert & Ydesen, 2023). The SDG4 sets out to be a universally relevant agenda with sustainability and human rights at its core. The headline of the goal is **"Quality Education - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"**. This goal is then broken down into five key objectives "**(1) People** - to end poverty and hunger; **(2) Planet** - to protect the planet from degradation **(3) Prosperity** - to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives **(4) Peace** - to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies and **(5) Partnership** - to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development".*

Measurement - The SDG4 has formulated a total of 11 global targets in their educational measurement paradigm (UNESCO, 2016). Of these 11 targets, 0 are devoted to inner education and only 1 to sustainability education. The rest are focused mostly on increasing **access**, increasing **equality**, and increasing **employability** and **eligibility** for higher levels of education. In terms of educational content, we find the usual focus on **literacy, math, science, technology ect.**

Breakdown - As predicted by **H1** we see a divergence between the core goal of sustainability as it is only represented by 1/11 of the measurements. Instead the measurement seems dominated by more easily measured targets such as math, literacy, science ect. Consistent with **H2** we have found no representation of inner knowledge in the goals. While the goal of ensuring fulfilling lives could entail inner education, we find no such elaboration in the intended implications of the goals. Neither do we find inner education represented in the measurements of the SDG4 as predicted by **H3**. Taken together SDG4 seems to reflect a complete neglect of inner knowledge.

UNESCO - Education is Everyone's Right Throughout Life

Agenda - Moving on to UNESCO's visionary document "Transforming Education for the Future", we find a vision for 2030 titled "Education is everyone's right throughout life" (UNESCO, 2022). This vision highlights an explicit focus on quality education for everyone as well as a priority on gender and Africa. In this report we once again see the agenda broken down into five objectives for the future. **The first** is inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools, framed as creating the right space to learn. **The second** is learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development, framed as "keeping pace with the changing world". **The third** is Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession framed as "there is no substitute for a teacher". **The fourth** is digital learning, framed as "making technology work for education" and **the fifth** is financing education, framed as "closing the gap with strong policy and data".

Measurement - The report refers to the Global Education Monitoring Report which uses the SDG4 monitoring framework covered above for global educational measurement. Since we have already established that there are no targets involving inner knowledge in SDG4, we will look to the organization IEA which came out of UNESCO.

IEA measurement - The IEA was born in 1958 from a scholarly meeting at the UNESCO institute for Education, and have since become world leaders in Large Scale Assessments of Education (IEA, n.d.). So what does the IEA measure in their different studies? IEA's core studies are Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS), Civic and Citizenship Education study (ICCS), International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS), Responses to Educational Disruption Survey (REDS), reporting on the challenges of the COVID19 disruption of educational practices, and the Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (LaNA) (IEA, n.d.-b).

Breakdown - Consistent with **H1** we find a disparity between the ideals of learning skills for life and sustainable development, and the measurements which represent neither sustainability nor life skills. Instead we find the measurements of more easily measurable targets such as math, science, literacy, computer and information skills. Skills for life was elaborated to mean "*the knowledge, skills and values needed for well-being"* which qualifies as inner knowledge, giving us a total of 1/15 representation of inner education among the 5 goals as it is only a third of a single goal. This is still consistent with the prediction of **H2**. Finally we found no representation of inner education in UNESCO's ILSA's as predicted by **H3**. Taken together

UNESCO is consistent with all three hypotheses and therefore reflects a neglect of inner education.

The World Bank - Learning for All

Agenda - On to The World Bank, we are looking at their agenda in the report "Realizing Education's Promise a World Bank Retrospective" with the slogan "Education for Everyone Everywhere" (The World Bank, 2023). The front page gives a clue as to what kind of education: "Education is a human right, a powerful driver of development, and one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty and improving health, gender equality, peace, and stability." It seems that the education they want to provide everyone, is intended to secure universal humane living conditions and promote economic development for all. Further into the document we once again find the vision divided into five objectives. **(1.)** Learners are prepared and motivated to learn, **(2.)** Teachers at all levels are effective and valued, **(3.)** Classrooms are equipped for learning, **(4.)** Schools are safe and inclusive spaces and **(5.)** Education systems are well managed.

Measurement - The World Bank Uses the Global Education Assessment Database (worldbank, n.d.) to measure educational outcomes, which includes the IEA studies TIMSS and PIRLS covering math, science and literacy, as well as a Latin American study called the Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (ERCE), the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SAQMEC) and the French African Programme d'analyse des systèmes éducatifs de la CONFEMEN (PASEC). Once again these assessments measure primarily the usual math, literacy and problem solving skills, with the exception of SAMEQ that also focuses on HIV-AIDS knowledge and Tuberculosis knowledge, and ERCE which includes socio-emotional skills.

Breakdown - While the goals refer to things like teachers feeling valued and student motivation I did not find this reflected in the five studies of the world bank. Rather there was a focus on the math, literacy and problem solving skills which were not referenced in the goals. This is partially consistent with **H1** because although there is a big disparity between goals and measurement, it does not seem like any of the goals were particularly hard to measure, suggesting another explanation for the disparity. Consistent with **H2** there was no reference to inner knowledge in the goals. However, although this was not represented by the goals, there was a 1/5 representation of inner knowledge in 1/3 of the unique tests of the world bank (excluding

TIMSS and PIRLS), which included socio-emotional skills giving a total of 1/15 representation of inner knowledge. This falls within the prediction of **H3**. Taken together the analysis indicates a severe neglect of inner knowledge in The World Bank.

OECD - Individual, Collective and Planetary Well-being

Agenda - On to The OECD we find perhaps the most surprising development in modern education. The organization charged as a primary culprit for the economization and hegemonization of global education, has now put individual, collective and planetary well-being as opposed to human capital at the center of their agenda for 2030. They have called this agenda the OECD Learning Compass 2030 (OECD, 2021). As a further surprise, this framework has explicitly been designed to allow for what cannot yet be measured. Indeed, the outer ring of the compass comprises qualities as difficult to measure as **(1) creating new value, (2) reconciling tensions and dilemmas, (3) taking responsibility and even (4) transformative competencies** as recommended by Harari. Of these four goals, two refer directly to inner knowledge, namely transformative capacities and reconciling tensions and dilemmas. Further towards the center of the compass we find the three "Core Foundations for 2030" which are **(1) cognitive foundations**, **(2) health foundations**, including mental health, and **(3) social and emotional foundations** including morals and ethics. Of these three, social and emotional foundations refer most directly to inner knowledge while health foundations provide an indirect opening for inner knowledge with its emphasis on mental health.

Measurement - The OECD features seven studies of educational outcomes. **(1) PISA** is a comprehensive survey that aims "To assess the extent to which 15-year-old students have acquired the key knowledge and skills essential for full participation in society". The survey covers Math, Reading, Science, Creative Thinking (*PISA 2022 Results (Volume I)*, 2023). **(2) In the PIAAC test of adult competencies** focusing on numeracy, literacy and adaptive problem solving in technology rich environments (OECD, 2019b) **(3) "Measuring innovation in education"** seeks to measure the ability of education to adapt and reinvent itself. (Vincent-Lancrin et al., 2019). **(4) Education at a glance** has 22 indicators measuring the social impact of education, access to education, financial investment in education and teachers and learning environment and school organization ("Education at a Glance 2023," 2023) **(5) Survey on Social and Emotional Skills** was developed with the aid of experts on the basis of extensive

literature review of multiple approaches to social and emotional skills assessment and of relevant fields, including personality psychology, education, developmental psychology and 21st century skills ect. (Kankaraš & Suarez-Alvarez, 2019). Without going further into the details, this will qualify the whole study as an assessment of inner knowledge. **(6) The International Early Learning and Child Well-being Study** also includes a component of social and emotional skills totaling an eighth of the survey. **(7) Finally the "Benchmarking Higher Education System Performance"** did not include an aspect of inner knowledge assessment "(OECD, 2019).

Breakdown - We see an almost complete overhaul of what was predicted in the OECD. About 1/2 goals represented inner education, falsifying **H2** and indicating a strong prioritization of inner knowledge. In the measurement a total of 1,125/7 studies were found to measure inner knowledge in the form of social and emotional skills which is also more than predicted by **H3** indicating a moderate neglect. However we still find a definite disparity between goals and measurement towards more easily measurable targets, which is reflected in the drop in representation of inner knowledge, supporting **H1**. Taken together, we find an average of 33% representation of inner education in the OECD indicating a mild prioritization.

European Education Area

Agenda - Looking into the European Educational Resolution for 2021 to 2030, we again find five visions for the future of European education (European Union, 2021). **The first** is improving quality, inclusion and success for all in education and training. **The second** is making lifelong education and mobility a reality for all. **The third** is enhancing competencies and motivation in the education profession. **The fourth** is reinforcing European higher education and **the fifth** is supporting the green and digital transitions in and through education and training.

Measurement - The EU resolution establishes the following measurable targets for 2030 (European Union, 2021) - **(1)** less than 15% of 15-year-olds should be low-achievers in reading, mathematics and science **(2)** less than 15% of eighth-graders should be low-achievers in computer and information literacy **(3)** at least 96% of children between 3 years old and the starting age for compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education and care **(4)** less than 9% of pupils should leave education and training early **(5)** at least 45% of 25-34 year-olds should have a higher education qualification.

Breakdown - Consistent with **H1** the goal of green education disappeared in the measurement while the typical subjects of math, literacy and science which were not mentioned in the goals, suddenly appeared in the measurement. Consistent with **H2** I found no representation of inner knowledge in the goals and neither did I find any representation in the measurements as predicted by **H3**. Taken together the European Union is found to be consistent with all three hypotheses and therefore to completely neglect inner education in its goals and measurement.

Conclusion

We have tested the hypothesis that we would find a severe neglect of inner knowledge in modern education against a total of 27 goals and 18 international large scale assessment studies across 5 of the major governing bodies of modern education. We broke the hypothesis down into three to operationalize it.

H1 - *"We will see that what is measured will systematically diverge away from what would best represent the goals and towards what is easier to measure, resulting in a significant disparity between the representation of inner knowledge in the goals and measurements."* Four of the governing bodies showed a clear disparity between goals and measurement toward the more easily measurable targets. These targets were primarily math, literacy, science, computer and technology literacy and problem solving skills. Inner knowledge followed this pattern with a significant drop from 11% representation in the goals to only 4.5% in the measurements. **This indicates a systematic bias in the educational measurement system of modern education that selects against knowledge that is harder to measure, including inner knowledge.**

H2 - *"We will find a severe neglect of inner knowledge in the goals of modern education (0-10%)"* - I found an average of 11% representation of inner knowledge across the goals of modern education 10% of which was accounted for by the OECD alone. **This is slightly above the 10% or below predicted by the hypothesis and indicates a moderate neglect.**

H3 - "*We will find a severe neglect of inner knowledge in the measurement of modern education (0-10%)"* - I found an average of 4.5 % representation of inner knowledge in the

measurement of modern education, 3.2% was accounted for by the OECD. **This is within the 10% predicted by the hypothesis, indicating a severe neglect.**

Taken together we can observe a significant drop in the representation of inner knowledge from the goals to the measurement of modern education, indicating a systematic measurement bias against inner knowledge. Overall we find that inner knowledge is represented by an average of 7.75% of the goals and measurements. **We can therefore conclude that modern education is systematically neglecting inner knowledge to a severe extent.**

Discussion

I initially framed this paper as an effort to consider our potentially fatal ignorance in the face of accelerating historical change. If indeed inner knowledge turns out to be as important as I have argued that it is for such a future, then the results of this paper should be staggering. *It would mean that we have on our hands a severe neglect of what should right now be at the core of the modern curriculum.*

However the analysis was not without evidence for an inner renaissance in modern education. The OECD assigned a very high priority to inner knowledge in its educational goals, and almost single handedly swayed the conclusion of the analysis. This trend was also visible in some of the other governing bodies, which was most notably represented by social and emotional skills. *This seems to be good evidence for the early ongoing emergence of an inner renaissance in modern education.*

However the movement must be aware of the systemic biases that may resist this renaissance, especially in the system of educational measurement. The results of this paper showed a strong systemic bias against inner knowledge and other important goals that are more difficult to measure in the measurement of modern education. It is possible that the most important inner knowledge will resist quantitative measurement for at least many years to come, if not indefinitely. This is especially true when it comes to the spiritual domains of inner knowledge which may by their very nature defy reliable and comparative measurement.

It is therefore imperative that we limit the political power of educational assessment until we are actually able to assess the most important knowledge for our future. By extension, it is

imperative that we find and invest in other ways of translating educational goals into action, such as educational funding and diplomatic efforts.

It is also important to note that not a single mention of spirituality was found in the analysis of modern education. This is a great problem if indeed most of the historical development of inner knowledge took place under spiritual paradigms. Returning to the idea of education as cultural reproduction, this would indicate that *we have indeed fallen off the shoulders of our ancestors and that we are attempting to reinvent the wheel of inner knowledge.* I have argued for how to reconcile spirituality with the modern world in my thesis (Anderson, 2022)

I recommend that inner knowledge be promoted towards the core of the modern curriculum to future proof our education and our world. I also recommend other means of future proofing such as prioritizing meta-education that is relevant independently of changing circumstances.

Finally I would like to end with a recommendation for all the dreamers out there who care for the cause of an inner revival in modern culture. Do not make an enemy of the establishment. All my work suggests that the inner renaissance is happening and that you might be able to make a much bigger change by seeking funding and collaboration through organizations such as the OECD. Mainstreaming the alternative cannot go around the establishment forever. Just think of the sustainable revolution which is now at the heart of the global agenda of the UN.

Limitations

There will necessarily be many limitations in an analysis that seeks to answer questions of the scale that I have set out to answer and especially within the small scope of this paper.

One broad limitation lies in the focus on measurement as the enforcement of educational goals to the exclusion of other means such as funding power as represented by the World Bank and diplomatic power as represented by UNESCO. While the goals of inner education are not represented by the assessment frameworks of modern education, they may be represented in other means of enforcement. Even so, in an educational system that is so heavily influenced by

measurement as is modern education, a neglect in measurement is likely to constitute a systematic neglect in and of itself.

Another limitation is that I have analyzed the goals and measurement of modern education only at the surface level, looking only at their explicit titles and immediate elaborations. This potentially leaves out much relevant information that could change the interpretation of the explicit goals and measures to some extent.

Finally, there were many important variables that I did not take into account such as weighing the ILSA's according to their relative impact on educational policy. For this and other reasons, the results should only be considered as rough estimates.

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