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Seven Futures: Five Years Later

John Sener

„The Seven Futures of American Education: Improving Learning & Teaching in a Screen-Captured World" was released in March 2012. The impending five-year anniversary of its release seems like an appropriate occasion for reflection and retrospection. How accurate was the Seven Futures framework as a predictive model? How useful was Seven Futures as a tool for promoting the use of digital technologies to improve education in general and American higher education in particular?

At the heart of the Seven Futures framework are six scenarios for the future of cyberized education:

- Free Market Rules (= Formal education as we know it dissolves via market forces)
- Standards Rule (= Formal education becomes driven by imposed standards)
- Free Learning Rules (= Formal education as we know it dissolves via anarchic forces)
- Cyberdystopia (= Digital technologies degrade the quality of education)
- Steady As She Goes (= Incremental improvement; little changes)
- Education Improves (= Digital technologies improve the educational experience)

Individually, each scenario reflects an influential force for determining education's future evolution; collectively, they were designed as a tool for understanding how to use digital technologies to improve education.

These scenarios which the Seven Futures framework identified still seem to be the most important ones; no new ones of significance appear to have emerged in the past five years. For example, no „Faculty Rules" or „Teachers Rules" scenario has arisen in the past five years, at least not in the US. The only truly potent source of faculty/teacher power seems to come from efforts to improve education (i.e., Education Improves).

In practice, the past five years has seen a mix of these futures emerge. Each of these futures has had a significant influence on education's evolution over the past five years. At the same time, Seven Futures also noted[1] that most of these individual scenarios would be a disaster if they were fully realized, but their influences could improve education. As a result, the effects of each of these scenarios would depend on how we dealt with them.

So, how have these scenarios played out over the past five years? To what extent have they been influential or even disastrous?

The Driven Scenarios: Market, Market, Market

Seven Futures labeled Free Market Rules and Standards Rule as „driven scenarios" because they represent two distinct but often integrated driving forces. Market and business forces animate the Free Market Rules („Business Wins; Efficiency Works") scenario, while standardization and uniformity drive the Standards Rule („Consistency Wins") scenario.

Free Market Rules

The Free Market Rules scenario, in its extreme form, envisions that market forces will dissolve formal education as we know it. In this view, education is essentially just another market-driven business, so applying business principles to education operations will improve it.

Over the past five years, market forces have had considerable influence, and in some ways run rampant, in American higher education. American society's ongoing obsession with „free market" and business-related principles has continued to distort education, although some elements of this seem to be subsiding. Some notable examples:

The reign of „disruption" – Perhaps the most potent meme to pass through American education over the past five years has been *disruption*. The notion of dis-

[1] J. Sener, *The Seven Futures of American Education: Improving Learning & Teaching in a Screen-Captured World CreateSpac*e, North Charleston 2012, p. 66.

rupting education is based largely on the application of the theory of disruptive innovation, which originated with Harvard professor Clayton Christensen, to both K-12 education[2] and higher education[3]. In the past five years, Christensen and his associates at the Clayton Christensen Institute[4] have spread the gospel of disrupting education effectively, as illustrated by various books on the topic[5], [6]. More recently, however, there has also been pushback on both the theory in general, as illustrated for instance by Jill Lepore's withering 2014 critique[7], and on its application to both K-12 education[8] and higher education[9]. While the meme continues to influence the American education policy dialogue[10], the reign of disruption appears to be on the wane.

The rise, fall, and plateau of MOOCs – MOOCs were the last topic not to make the cut for Seven Futures when it was finalized for publication in December 2011. The first xMOOC (an Artificial Intelligence course offered at Stanford to 160,000 students) had just been offered in fall 2011, but xMOOCs had not yet hit the educational landscape in full force. As a result, the most that Seven Futures would have said about MOOCs would have been very minimal and not helpful, e.g., „keep an eye out on these". Of course, cMOOCs had been around for some time before that[11], but they fall into the Free Learning Rules scenario (see below for more details).

Soon after Seven Futures was published, MOOCs (more specifically xMOOCs) began their meteoric rise, and by the end of the year, 2012 had become the „Year of the MOOC"[12]. Free Market Rules advocates found the scale and low cost of xMOOCs to be irresistible, and so they were embraced as a sign of massive disruption[13]. Beyond the hype, however, a more reliable and utterly predictable dynamic of the Gartner Hype Cycle[14] was in play. The progression of xMOOCs through the hype cycle was accurately charted as early as November 2012[15], but most MOOC advocates remain caught up in the hype until the cycle ran its inevitable course, and expectations moderated even among advocates[16]. At present, there are differing opinions about whether MOOCs have reached their „plateau of productivity"[17, 18], but it seems clear that the overhyping of MOOCs was a classic case of Free Market Rules advocates dangerously oversimplifying education by applying a business model to it, resulting in proposed „solutions" to „fixing" education that appears all too unrealistic and naive in hindsight.

The worsening of the financial aid crisis – Perhaps the most corrosive effect of American obsession with „free market" principles has been the decline in public support for higher education, especially at the state level. For instance, state support per full-time equivalent student declined 37 percent, from $7,000 to $4,400 per year after inflation, between 2000 and

[2] C.M. Christensen, M.B. Horn, C.W. Johnson, *Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns*, McGraw-Hill, New York 2008.
[3] C.M. Christensen, H.J. Eyring, *The Innovative University: Changing the DNA of Higher Education from the Inside Out*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco 2011.
[4] Christensen Institute, http://www.christenseninstitute.org/, [21.07.2017].
[5] R. Craig, *College Disrupted: The Great Unbundling of Higher Education*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2015.
[6] K. Carey, *The End of College: Creating the Future of Learning and the University of Everywhere*, Riverhead, New York 2016.
[7] J. Lepore, *The Disruption Machine. What the gospel of innovation gets wrong*, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/06/23/the-disruption-machine, [21.07.2017].
[8] V. Strauss, *Reformers 'disrupted' public education. Now an Ivy League dean says the consequences for kids can be 'devastating.'*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2016/08/04/reformers-disrupted-public-education-now-an-ivy-league-dean-says-the-consequences-for-kids-are-devastating/?utm_term=.7abdadf28122, [21.07.2017].
[9] J. Napolitano, *Higher education isn't in crisis*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/higher-education-isnt-in-crisis/2015/03/12/f92b777e-bba2-11e4-bdfa-b8e8f594e6ee_story.html?utm_term=.8591eca6b96c, [21.07.2017].
[10] J. Kennedy, D. Castro, R.D. Atkinson, *Why It's Time to Disrupt Higher Education by Separating Learning From Credentialing*, https://itif.org/publications/2016/08/01/why-its-time-disrupt-higher-education-separating-learning-credentialing, [21.07.2017].
[11] T. Bates, *What Is a MOOC?*, http://www.tonybates.ca/2014/10/12/what-is-a-mooc/, [21.07.2017].
[12] L. Pappano, *The Year of the MOOC*, „New York Times", http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/04/education/edlife/massive-open-online-courses-are-multiplying-at-a-rapid-pace.html, [21.07.2017].
[13] D. Cooke, *Massive Disruption: MOOCs in Higher Education*, „The Evolllution", http://evolllution.com/revenue-streams/distance_online_learning/massive-disruption-moocs-higher-education/, [21.07.2017].
[14] Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hype_cycle, [21.07.2017].
[15] L. Schmidt, *The MOOC Hype Cycle*, https://www.slideshare.net/navigateHighEd/the-mooc-hype-cycle-nov-2012, [21.07.2017].
[16] H. Singh, *What's wrong with MOOCs, and why aren't they changing the game in education?* „Wired", https://www.wired.com/insights/2014/08/whats-wrong-moocs-arent-changing-game-education/, [21.07.2017].
[17] P. Shea, *Are MOOCs Mainstream?*, University of Albany News Center, http://www.albany.edu/news/59060.php, [21.07.2017].
[18] *State of the MOOC 2016: A Year of Massive Landscape Change For Massive Open Online Courses*, Online Course Report, https://www.onlinecoursereport.com/state-of-the-mooc-2016-a-year-of-massive-landscape-change-for-massive-open-online-courses/, [21.07.2017].

2012; over the same period, federal support grew, but not nearly enough to make up the difference[19]. The cumulative effect of this declining support has been to make American higher education far too expensive for an increasing number of people. As one recent book has argued, the ensuing complexity of federal, state, institutional, and private financial aid confuses numerous students and leaves them without the resources to pay for their education. The combination of increasing higher education costs for consumers, the elevation of higher education as the chief path to a middle-class life, and a long-standing wage stagnation for the vast majority of Americans[20] has made it much harder for many students to complete a degree[21].

There have been some counterexamples, for instance the recent decline in for-profit colleges and university enrollment and influence[22]. Much of this was due to an improving economy and more aggressive regulation from the Obama administration[23]; however, this latter factor also suggests that this trend may reverse with the new presidential administration.

Standards Rule

The Standards Rule scenario has several different varieties, including a strong emphasis on a core curriculum with „rigorous" standards, the use of standardized tests to assess learning, and the use of (quasi-)experimental research methods to assess program efficacy. The common aim is to establish „accountability" and attain consistent results through the collective attainment of uniform standards applied to students, teachers, and institutions. The pressure to demonstrate accountability and articulate higher standards has continued in US higher education. Initiatives such as the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) were introduced as a counterweight to recommendations of more rigid mandates, and the VSA has continued evolving over the past five years to include broader criteria such as critical thinking and communication[24, 25]. The last few years have also seen an „explosion" in the number of college rating and ranking systems, which are often too narrowly focused on limited criteria such as cost, graduation rates, or post-graduate earnings[26].

Free Market Rules/Standards Rule hybrids

As Seven Futures anticipated, many notable initiatives in US higher education reflect an integration of multiple scenarios. The Free Market Rules/Standards Rule hybrid is probably the most common one since their goals are often compatible, for instance combining efficiency and uniformity. Performance-based funding is a primary example, with its emphasis on using market-like incentives to induce more efficient institutional performance on measures such as graduation, job placement, retention, or transfer, course completion, developmental education completion, program completion, and attainment of credit thresholds[27, 28, 29]. The Completion Agenda is another notable example[30].

The Dramatic Scenarios: Dreams and Nightmares

Seven Futures labeled Free Learning Rules and Cyberdystopia as „dramatic scenarios" because they reflect two very different viewpoints about the future of cyberized education. Free Learning Rules (or „Openness Wins") is the dream scenario whose extreme form envisions the magic of openness dissolving the need

[19] H.M. Hastings, *Lessons From the Tragedy of the Commons*, Inside Higher Ed, https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/01/16/reversing-decline-state-support-public-universities-essay, [21.07.2017].
[20] E. Gould, *2014 Continues a 35-Year Trend of Broad-Based Wage Stagnation*, Economic Policy Institute, http://www.epi.org/publication/stagnant-wages-in-2014/, [21.07.2017].
[21] S. Goldrick-Rab, *Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2016.
[22] Z. Kumok, *The Decline of the For-Profit University*, „The College Investor", http://thecollegeinvestor.com/18211/decline-profit-university/, [21.07.2017].
[23] D. Lederman, *For-Profit College Sector Continues to Shrink*, Inside Higher Ed, https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2016/07/15/profit-college-sector-continues-shrink, [21.07.2017].
[24] *History of the VSA*, http://www.collegeportraits.org/about/vsa_history, [21.07.2017].
[25] C.M. Keller, *Lessons from the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA): The Intersection of Collective Action & Public Policy*, „Change" 2014, Vol. 46, No. 5, pp. 23–33, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2014.941767.
[26] D.G. Greer, M. Lucide, *Why College Report Cards Are Flawed on College Value*, WIlliam J. Hughes Center for Public Policy, Stockton University 2015, https://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/hughescenter/content/docs/Why%20College%20Report%20Cards%20are%20Flawed%20on%20College%20Value_2015-0323%20(3).pdf, [21.07.2017].
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[30] J. Sener, *A better Completion Agenda…,* op.cit.

for formal education.[31]. Cyberdystopia (or „Humanity Loses") is the nightmare scenario in which digital technologies dehumanize education and degrade its quality. Both scenarios are still very influential five years later.

Free Learning Rules

Free Learning Rules advocates believe passionately in the vast potential of digital resources to revolutionize learning and education, with openness being the key to radical transformation. Seven Futures discussed two important dimensions of openness: open content and open interaction. The most common form of open content, open education resources (or OERs), has come a long way in the US. Five years ago, the OER movement was on the sidelines of mainstream education[32], but the range of available OERs has expanded considerably since then[33]. The US Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology aims to support an „open education ecosystem" that includes support of openly licensed educational resources and open data[34]. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation had given almost US$20M in grants to OER projects through 2015[35]. Open textbooks, one form of OER, has gained traction in American higher education with an expanding catalog of OER textbooks[36].

The fate of open interaction initiatives over the past five years appears to have been more mixed. For instance, Peer to Peer University appears to have run out of steam[37], but the University of the People received accreditation from a recognized agency and expanded its enrollment to 5,000 students[38, 39]. Connectivist, more free learning-oriented cMOOCs still exist but were dwarfed by their xMOOC counterparts. Free Learning resources still suffer from some of the same limitations as was the case five years ago. For instance, the Open Learning Initiative (OLI)'s Open & Free Courses are still limited to informal, non-credit learning purposes while its formal education courseware requires access through a participating educational institution[40].

While it is unclear whether OERs have become part of the American higher education mainstream, they appear to have continued momentum. Perhaps not coincidentally, the more extreme expressions of Free Learning Rules appear to have moderated over the past five years, reflecting a greater emphasis on joining the education mainstream rather than dissolving it.

Cyberdystopia

The Cyberdystopia scenario remains relevant because human society and culture remain inextricably linked with technology. The related questions Seven Futures discussed remain important: what do we gain, what do we lose, what new dangers do we introduce when we adopt new technologies into education?[41] Seven Futures endorsed MIT professor Sherry Turkle's concept of *realtechnik* as a process for critically examining our technologies and confronting their true effects[42, 43]. Turkle's more recent book *Reclaiming Conversation* expands her argument with its claim that current social media and devices are more powerful, compelling, and thus more dangerous than previous technologies, which increases our need to ask whether a new technology serves our human purposes and how to make them better at doing that[44].

Over the past five years, we don't seem to have made much progress in developing our capacity to determine our human purposes and how to serve them best. Online education continues to be reflexively criticized as isolating, lacking interaction, and diminishing the human factor. Meanwhile, new technologies and applications such as social media, MOOCs, and others were too often received with uncritical enthusiasm and lack of thought about longer-term consequences. Even Turkle's latest work oscillates between reasonable strategies for determining how to have our technologies serve our

[31] J. Sener, *The Seven Futures of American Education…*, op cit., p. 83.
[32] *The Open Education Resources ecosystem*, Boston Consulting Group, http://www.hewlett.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/The%20Open%20Educational%20Resources%20Ecosystem.pdf, [21.07.2017].
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[35] *Open Educational Resources*, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, http://www.hewlett.org/strategy/open-educational-resources/, [21.07.2017].
[36] *Open Textbooks: The Current State of Play*, American Council on Education, https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/open-textbooks.pdf, [21.07.2017].
[37] Peer 2 Peer University's web site is still available (https://www.p2pu.org/en/about/), but most of its courses appear to have been archived or not run since 2014, and its Wikipedia page references are even more dated.
[38] S. Coughlan, *Onlinea 'university of anywhere' opens to refugees*. BBC News, July 19, 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/business-36738442, [21.07.2017].
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[40] *Open Learning Initiative website*, Carnegie-Mellon University, https://oli.cmu.edu/, [21.07.2017].
[41] J. Sener, *The Seven Futures of American Education…*, op.cit., p. 93.
[42] S. Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*, Basic Books, New York 2011.
[43] J. Sener, *The Seven Futures of American Education…*, op.cit., p. 95.
[44] S. Turkle, *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*, Basic Books, New York 2015.

purposes (e.g., creating device-free times and places) and misguided ones (e.g., uncritically accepting the classroom lecturer as „a model for how thinking happens, including false starts and hindsight")[45].

Meanwhile, concerns about the negative effects of new technologies continue, ranging from screen time before bed[46] to the relationship between social media and lowered self-esteem[47], informing perceptions about the use of new technologies in education. As our technologies continue to be an ever more powerful mix of good and bad, the need to get better at anticipating the possible ramifications of new digital technologies and figuring out workable responses has become even more important.

The Decisive Scenarios: Change or Not?

Seven Futures labeled Steady As She Goes and Education Improves as „decisive scenarios" because they captured diametrically opposed forces with regard to American education's ability to change. Steady As She Goes (or „Who Wins?") describes education's legendary capacity for stability and resistance to rapid change[48]. Education Improves (or „Everyone Wins") describes the most desirable scenario from the Seven Futures perspective: a focus on using digital technologies improve the educational experience.

Steady As She Goes

Seven Futures described the Steady As She Goes scenario as the smartest bet to describe education's future. A cynic might say that this will always be the case, and the past five years have certainly provided evidence for this view. Calls and predictions of radical transformation in American education continued unabated over the past five years, and American higher education endured waves of disruption, rode the MOOC hype cycle, mainstreamed online education and blended learning, flipped classrooms, and adopted many other technological innovations to varying degrees. Yet few if any observers describe the net effect as a radical transformation; substantive change appears to have been gradual and often barely noticeable.

This is not to say that American education is not changing, or even that it is changing entirely on its own terms. The influence of business and market-driven forces on American higher education over the past five years has too often been more invasive than coevolutionary[49]. The financial aid crisis has gotten worse and remains a threat to American higher education's long-term durability[50]. Nonetheless, anyone who expected radical transformation in the past five years surely must admit that this did not take place. For the most part, American higher education has continued doing what it does best: steady as she goes.

Education Improves

As noted previously, the Seven Futures framework is less important as a predictive model. Its real intended value was as a tool for influencing the future by explicitly promoting the use of digital technologies to improve education and to highlight selected strategies and practices which would improve education if they were adopted more widely[51].

Unfortunately, to a large extent, the above observation about „steady as she goes" applies to educational improvement; American higher education has not been radically transformed by market-driven, standards-driven, or open learning forces, and efforts to improve American education have not radically transformed it either. For example, the continued mainstreaming of online learning into American higher education seems to have slowed down its capacity to be a wedge for various innovations.

At the same time, the Education Improves scenario has had a significant influence on American higher education over the past five years. There seems to be a growing, if not exactly overwhelming, interest in using digital technologies to improve educational practice as distinct from simply using technologies to reproduce existing practices. For instance, the New Media Consortium Horizon Report (2017 Higher Education Edition) broadly defines educational technology „as tools and resources that are used to ***improve*** teaching, learning, and creative inquiry"[52] [emphasis added]. The report identified advancing cultures of innovation and deeper learning approaches, both of which depend on having an explicit focus on educational improvement, as among the key trends that are accelerating technology adoption in higher education.

Seven Futures highlighted over a dozen strategies and practices for using digital technologies to improve education. Providing an extensive review of

[45] Ibid.
[46] M. Wood, *Electronic devices, kids and sleep: How screen time keeps them awake*, „Science Life", https://sciencelife.uchospitals.edu/2016/02/17/electronic-devices-kids-and-sleep-how-screen-time-keeps-them-awake/, [21.07.2017].
[47] A. Sifferlin, *Why Facebook Makes You Feel Bad About Yourself*, „Time", http://healthland.time.com/2013/01/24/why-facebook-makes-you-feel-bad-about-yourself/, [21.07.2017].
[48] J. Sener, *The Seven Futures of American Education…,* op.cit., p. 98.
[49] Ibid., p. 73.
[50] Ibid., pp. 102–103.
[51] Ibid., pp. 64–65.
[52] Adams Becker, S. Cummins, M. Davis, A. Freeman, C. Hall Giesinger, V. Ananthanarayanan, *NMC Horizon Report: 2017 Higher Education Edition*, Austin, The New Media Consortium, Texas, http://cdn.nmc.org/media/2017-nmc-horizon-report-he-EN.pdf, [21.07.2017].

each of these areas is beyond the scope of this paper; however, here are a few representative examples, based on the author's consulting practice and observations, which illustrate some of the ways in which the Education Improves scenario has progressed in the past five years.

The 2017 Horizon Report identified *blended learning* and *collaborative learning* as two other key trends accelerating technology adoption in American higher education[53]. As Seven Futures predicted[54] blended learning has hastened the integration of online technologies into the classroom; a 2016 survey reported that over 70 percent of faculty respondents teach blended courses[55].

Online education as professional development: Quality Matters is one organization whose explicit mission is to promote and improve the quality of online education and student learning. Over the past five years, Quality Matters has grown considerably, offers an extensive schedule of professional development opportunities, and currently has more than 60,000 members[56].

Event-anchored learning: Student competitions, for instance cybersecurity competitions conducted as virtual events, can create an ecosystem of educational opportunities anchored by the competition event(s) themselves[57].

The search for g*reater granularity* has certainly progressed. While the Carnegie unit remains in place as the primary method for measuring student learning[58], competency-based education (CBE) has drawn renewed attention as an alternative[59], although it is not yet clear the extent to which CBE's Free Market Rules overtones will result in it being a coevolutionary improvement or invasive replacement. The use of digital badges has become perhaps the most visible manifestation of greater granularity in higher education[60].

Seven Futures: The Next Five Years

What does the Seven Futures framework have to say about what's going to happen in American higher education over the next five years? How can the framework be used as a tool for influencing the future? Here are a few thoughts:

More of the same: The major forces that have shaped American education for the past five years have not changed appreciably, and each of them is still in play. As a result, the Seven Futures framework should continue to be useful as a predictive model:

- *Steady As She Goes will continue to prevail; slow, incremental change will predominate for the most part.*
- *Market- and standards-driven forces will continue to wield considerable influence.* The waning of some market-driven factors may diminish, but certainly not remove, their influence. The recent ascendency of the Republican party to control the presidency and both houses of Congress indicates that the Free Market Rules scenario, and to a lesser extent the Standards Rules scenario, will likely be a boost to these market- and standards-driven advocates.
- *Open learning will continue to be a force for positive change,* and open education will move closer to entering the mainstream of American higher education.
- *Cyberdystopia will continue to be a concern* for the structural reasons previously stated.
- *Education will continue to improve* in a variety of ways; some localized improvements will be considerable, but the overall picture is likely to remain a pattern of relatively slow, incremental change.

In addition, a future in which everyone's education truly matters („Education Rules", the Seventh Future), will remain as distant as it has been for the past five years. Although there are signs that a major pendulum swing may occur soon, it will not occur soon enough, nor will its effects be sufficiently manifested, to make an appreciable difference in the next five years.

Caveats: Seven Futures described two main threats to the durability of American higher education: the worsening financial crisis in education, and the failure to keep up with increasing expectations and accelerated need[61]. These threats are still very much in play, and there is also a third possible threat looming as well. Seven Futures discussed the authoritarian strain in American education and its consequences[62]

[53] Ibid.
[54] J. Sener, The Seven Futures of American Education…, op.cit., pp. 119–120.
[55] D. Schaffhauser, R. Kelly, *55 percent of faculty are flipping the classroom*, „Campus Technology", https://campustechnology.com/articles/2016/10/12/55-percent-of-faculty-are-flipping-the-classroom.aspx, [21.07.2017].
[56] MarylandOnline, https://www.qualitymatters.org/why-quality-matters/about-qm, [21.07.2017].
[57] J. Sener, *The Role of Student Competitions in Cybersecurity Education*. National CyberWatch Center, April 2016, https://www.nationalcyberwatch.org/resource/role-student-competitions-cybersecurity-education/, [21.07.2017].
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[60] *Digital Badges website*, MacArthur Foundation, https://www.macfound.org/programs/digital-badges/, [21.07.2017].
[61] J. Sener, *The Seven Futures of American Education…*, op.cit., pp. 101–103.
[62] Ibid., pp. 79–80.

and expressed the view that authoritarianism in American education was generally on the wane. Five years later, the view is much less sanguine. Political developments have introduced an element of authoritarianism into American society which has not been seen in many decades and which will inevitably affect American education at all levels. While the smart bet remains on Steady As She Goes, the possibility that a confluence of these triple threats could deliver a historic blow to American higher education's durability cannot entirely be dismissed out of hand.

For the next five years, American higher education will almost be living under the aphoristic curse „May you live in interesting times"[63]. One of the disadvantages of developing a conceptual framework is that it becomes exceedingly difficult to escape that framework and view the world in a different way. Nevertheless, the Seven Futures framework has been a useful way for me to understand developments in American higher education over the past five years, and I look forward to using it over the next five years as we encounter the interesting times ahead.

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Polecamy

***3rd World Conference on Blended Learning (IABL2018)*, 18–21 kwietnia 2018, Warszawa**

International Association for Blended Learning (IABL) serdecznie zaprasza pracowników naukowych, nauczycieli wszystkich szczebli, trenerów oraz przedstawicieli przemysłu do wymiany doświadczeń i kształtowania przyszłości edukacji. *3rd World Conference on Blended Learning (IABL2018)* odbędzie się w Warszawie w dniach 18–21 kwietnia 2018. Konferencja jest organizowana we współpracy z Instytutem Lingwistyki Stosowanej UW.
Organizatorzy IABL2018 stawiają sobie za cel m.in.:

- przegląd teorii, podejść, zasad i zastosowania różnych aspektów blended learningu,
- podzielenie się lokalnymi i międzynarodowymi doświadczeniami,
- zachęcanie do badania i wdrażania blended learningu,
- promowanie networkingu.

Więcej informacji na temat konferencji można znaleźć na stronie **http://iabl2018.org**