10. Demystifying the Perceived Advantage of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the Role it will Play in Higher Education Pedagogy on the African Continent (Larry E. Jowah)

If the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is about automation and the over-hyped notion of radical change in everything we do, it is important to indicate otherwise. The 4IR may be touted as scary because of the uncertainties of the future, but the human being, at the heart of all this, remains as a social animal. Pedagogy is one element that can be tempered with to the detriment of the society, and the perceived advancement. Based on the current situation in the South African education context, supported by the natural instincts of pedagogy – the human learning systems remain static. Human beings are social animals and learn through interaction. The status quo on the continent is gloomy with 63%-71% of the inhabitants classified as chronically poor on a continent with the youngest population. The use of technology for learning cannot take place amongst 71% of the people because of ever-increasing poverty. Replacing the classroom with technology simply means less people schooling, further making the poor poorer. The current failure and dropout rate in institutions is scary, even though these students are aided by lecturers and friends. What will the rate be if classrooms are reduced, and assistance reduced when they struggle now with a teacher? The robbery of the gadgets (as it is now) is a direct negative for the South African situation, as evidenced by the rate of robberies of cell phones, tablets and laptops. Besides, research has shown that students use less than 11% of their data on education related issues with 67% on romance and jokes, and 22% spent on family and friends. In the study, the history of the other revolutions has also been chronicled with clear evidence that the learning system and processes have remained the same. What has changed has been the material and facilities, but the human mind has one way of learning – the 4IR should not be dreaded as a revolution on pedagogy.

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