

SSPS Review



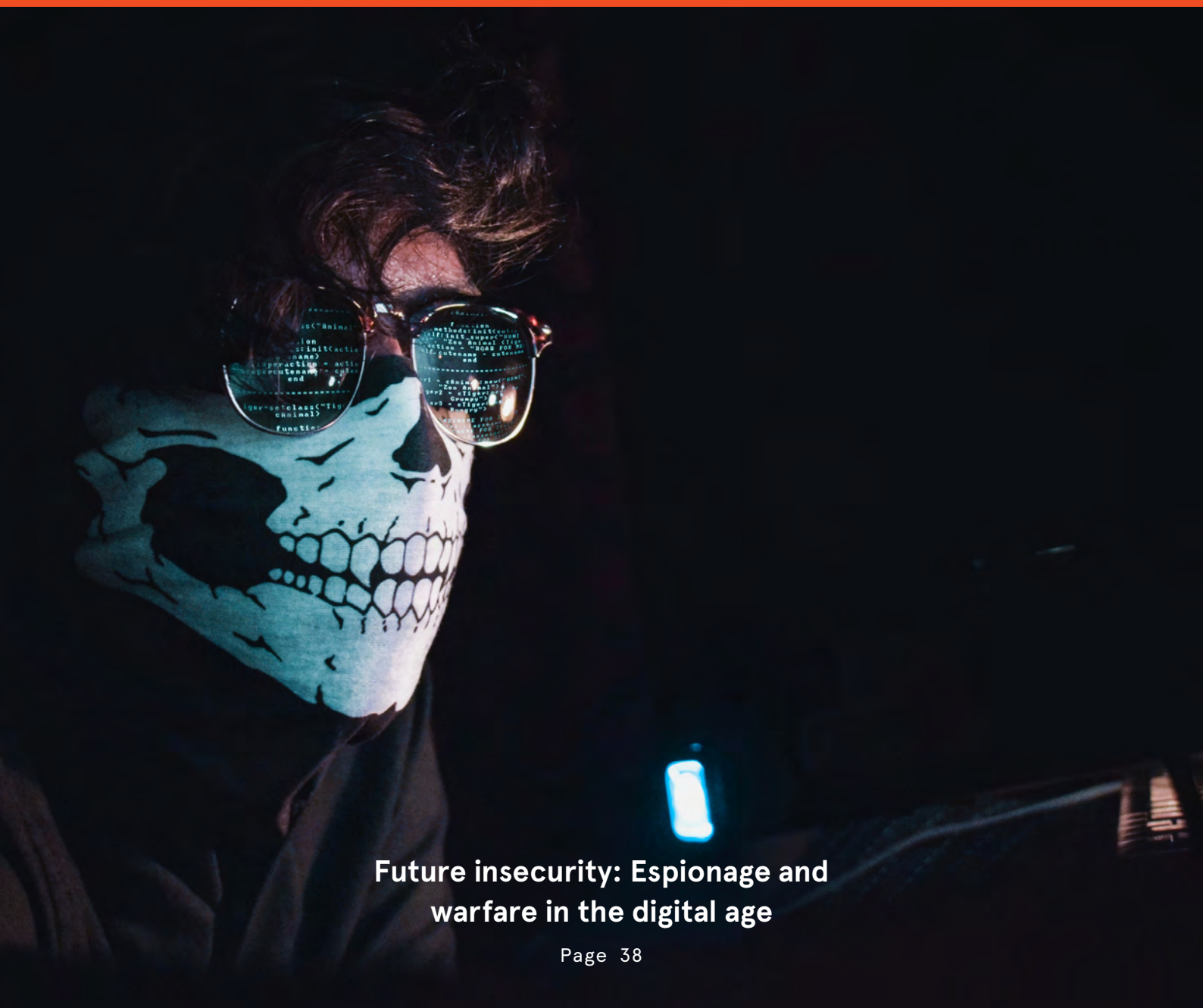
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Transforming education around the world

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Photo: Neonbrand

There seems no end to the creative ways people are using Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) to transform education around the world. Changing the way teachers engage with students in classrooms from primary schools to universities, helping to rehabilitate prisoners in the UK and China, 'decolonising' the curriculum in countries like South Africa, shaping the entire design – right down to layouts of building – of an entire engineering faculty at a new university ...these are just some of the ways LCT is impacting education.

'Legitimation Code Theory' is a framework used by a growing community of scholars and educators. The heart of this multidisciplinary and international community is the LCT Centre for Knowledge-Building, in the School of Social and Political Sciences (SSPS). Created by Professor Karl Maton, LCT reveals 'the DNA of knowledge', showing the principles underlying what people say and do in education, principles which are often tacit and so leave many students at a disadvantage. By making these principles or 'codes' explicit, LCT empowers students and teachers to succeed.

Here are some examples of the social impact that scholars associated with the LCT Centre in SSPS are making in education internationally.

Decolonising the curriculum in South Africa

Drs Hanelie Adendorff and Margaret Blackie from Stellenbosch University are using LCT to help make sense of an intense debate over decolonising the curriculum in South Africa.

Since the #RhodesMustFall movement, issues of how to engage with the legacy of colonialism in shaping what is taught and learned in education have come to national prominence. Adendorff and Blackie are using LCT to make sense of the science curriculum, holding workshops with educators at universities focusing on creative assessment practices that use LCT. This can be a very passionate and difficult issue to address and these educators say that LCT allows them to make sense of the issues in less confrontational and more productive ways.

Teacher training

A major area that LCT is shaping around the world is teacher training. In the USA, Dr Andrés Ramírez of Florida Atlantic University is exploring how primary school children are taught.

Using LCT as his guide, Ramirez is working with teachers and providing workshops in the university's teacher-training lab. For Ramirez, as for other teacher educators

in Australia, South Africa, Denmark, Latin America and elsewhere, LCT provides a practical but rigorous framework for both analysing and shaping practice. Using the approach, he identifies what practices work and how those practices can be taught to teachers.

A whole university faculty

In South Africa, Dr Karin Wolff is designing an Engineering Faculty for Stadio Multiversity, a new private tertiary education provider. The Faculty will open in 2021 and is entirely shaped by ideas from LCT. Wolff was supervised by Professor Karl Maton and is a regularly visitor to the LCT Centre.

“I am very excited about how we have started our work on building the faculty – from the design of programmes and the curricular elements to the infrastructure,” says Wolff.

“LCT helps to articulate the ‘relational idea’: engineering is the practice of scientific principles and technological possibilities in service of the needs of society.”

Research translation

A key area for social science generally is research translation: turning research findings into practical impact. At Queen Mary University of London, Jane Waite is using LCT to help achieve this translation in reports for the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) in the UK.

“The NCCE is funded by the Department for Education in England, with a provision of £84 million to support improved teaching and learning of computing in our schools,” says Waite.

The first report will be published in June and will provide British teachers with more precise teaching tools in computing education.

High-security prisoner rehabilitation

LCT is not just confined to education, scholars at Guangzhou University in China are exploring how LCT can be used to match prisoners with different forms of counselling. In the UK, a prisoner rehabilitation program

in Durham uses LCT to make sense of relations between academic theory and the lived experience of prison. The Inside-Out program pairs Durham University’s criminology students with maximum-security inmates – the different ways of thinking and knowing brought by these two groups are articulated through LCT.

LCT Centre for Knowledge-Building

What unites all these diverse endeavours are their concern with social change, with research having real social impact, and with LCT as their guiding way of thinking. All these projects, and many more, are also connected through the School’s LCT Centre for

Knowledge-Building. As associate member Karin Wolff states, “here is the reality: for every single ‘problem’ one finds in the literature on how we are failing globally in the higher education space, there is an LCT instrument to help us understand the problem.”



Photo: Flickr

“You want to discuss the ‘theory-practice divide’? LCT gives you ‘Semantics’ – concepts that allow you to address that issue. You want to address the fact that practices like engineering are not just scientific but social. Well, LCT gives you ‘Specialization’ – concepts that allow you address that issue. LCT empowers!”

And there is more to come, with LCT underpinning new and innovative ways of teaching at the University of Sydney, innovative ways of thinking about supporting Indigenous communities in Mexico, new approaches to Chinese education, and many other projects underway.

Find out more about the LCT Centre for Knowledge-Building:

- bit.ly/2wDPPrO

For more information


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