

The Future-Centered Course

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Tyler Cowen, *Average is Over*, 2013, Dutton (Penguin Group), New York, NY
ISBN: 978-0-525-95373-9

Lynda Gratton, *The Shift: The future of work is already here*, 2011, HarperCollins,
London **ISBN: 978-0-00-742793-2**

Cowen's (*Average is Over*) key ideas:

- 1) The split in material outcomes (AKA "The Divide") expands. (p. 4)
 - productivity of intelligent machines increases
 - economies are affected by globalization
 - economies are split - very stagnant vs. very dynamic
 - skilled vs. unskilled workforce causes an imbalance in technological growth
- 2) Successful workers will be able to team up with computers. (p. 4, 5, 21, 92, 93)
 - ability to work with intelligent machines
 - skills that complement, support, and extend what computers will do
 - avoid being in competition with computers' abilities
 - able to combine technical knowledge with real-world problem-solving
- 3) The number of mid-level, mid-wage jobs will continue to decrease. (p. 58, 59, 62, 63)
 - low-productivity employees are being fired or laid off
 - bosses are getting higher pay, with greater inequality for top earners
 - job creation mainly produces low-wage and part-time positions
 - costs of hiring and employment are rising
 - the cognitive elite are experiencing big gains in employment
 - workers without relevant skills are being left out
- 4) Micro-jobs and free-lance contracting will expand. (p. 62, 63)
 - employers avoid the cost of providing expensive benefits
 - ephemeral work provides personal freedom for younger threshold workers ("Generation Limbo")
 - job match-ups are easily handled through web postings, particularly in the services sector
- 5) Education will have two main modes:
 - Machine-aided self-education for motivated, independent learners ("prodigies").
 - Face-to-face education for the poorly motivated and intellectually undeveloped.

Gratton's (*The Shift*) key ideas:

1) Technology trends shaping the future of work: (p. 28-30)

Connectivity gets cheaper; Accessibility becomes universal; Most information is digitized; Mega-companies develop; Micro-entrepreneurs emerge; Avatars enable virtual workplaces; Cognitive assistants are adopted; Technology replaces jobs.

2) Globalization trends shaping the future of work: (p. 32, 33)

Emerging economies bloom; Frugal innovation develops; Power shifts to educational talent pools (India, China); Increased urbanization; Continued economic bubbles and crashes; Regional underclasses (unskilled) emerge.

3) Demographic trends shaping the future of work: (p. 38)

Influence of Gen Y; Increased longevity; Some old, poor Baby Boomers; Increased global migration.

4) Societal trends shaping the future of work: (p. 41, 42)

Families are rearranged and redefined; Increased reflexivity (values and goals no longer culturally defined); More prominent roles for women; More balanced roles for men; Increased distrust of institutions; Decline in consumption-based happiness; Increased passive leisure.

5) Energy and resources trends shaping the future of work: (p. 47)

Increased prices; Environmental catastrophes occur; Populations are displaced; Culture of sustainability emerges.

6) Workers will need to be "serial masters" rather than shallow generalists. (Ch. 8)

7) Workers will need to be "innovative connectors" rather than isolated competitors. (Ch. 9)

8) Career satisfaction will derive from being "impassioned producers" rather than voracious consumers. (Ch. 10)

Four Goals for Faculty of the Future

- 1) Empower learners: Research and teach techniques for studying effectively and learning independently, to enable students to take full advantage of educational opportunities.

- 2) Motivate and inspire: Poorly motivated students will need instructors who can coach, mentor, and "evangelize" in addition to presenting course material.

- 3) Model technical fluency: Use and adopt technologies in your personal life and in your courses to stay current with academic developments and draw in prodigal learners.

- 4) Embrace and release: Teach students based on their future, not based on your past, by adopting better methods or letting go of outmoded methods to best meet the changing needs of your students.