

The Last Human Job: What Schools Teach Us About the Future of Work

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In a world increasingly shaped by automation, AI, and efficiency-driven systems, what remains uniquely human in the work we do—and how can independent schools lead the way in preserving it?

Key Themes

1. Intro: Seeing the Other in the Age of Automation

- Schools increasingly integrate technology to provide personalized learning experiences.
- “Tech Academy” exemplifies a model where students engage with software for customized lessons and the teacher role is radically modified, with implications for teacher-student relationships.

2. Connective Labor – What It Is, What It Does

- Connective labor involves "forging an emotional understanding of another person to create valuable outcomes."
- The importance of empathic listening and reflective witnessing in the teacher-student relationship promotes dignity, motivation, and self-understanding.
- Efficiency campaigns lead to productivity pressures, which lead to the corrosion of connective labor, and the harms of misrecognition.

3. AI in Education

- Sold as three kinds of better.
- The unintended consequences of AI in personalized education
 1. The rationalization of teaching and learning
 2. The hegemony of work
 3. The individualization of education
- Generative AI in the classroom
 1. Retention, reflection, self-assessment outcomes
 2. Emotional snacking versus “an audience that matters”
 3. Impact on relationship: Consumer pressures to keep users locked on
 4. The role of friction

4. Lessons for Independent Schools

- Practical adaptations to teaching and assessment
- Intrinsic motivation

- Relationship as both stakes and solution
- Human value in the future: navigating social relations
- Factors that help: connective culture, relational design, resource distribution

5. Conclusion

- A critical juncture: technology as solution to political challenges.
- A “connection criterion” to adjudicate between AI tech.
- Our task: Protect and preserve the meaningful work of connective labor.