Rory: The question is who ends up as the beneficiary of the efficiencies created by standardisation and the extracted value.
Also, we might consider whether the standards we're discussing (in education or elsewhere) are rigid and restrictive or open and flexible.

Justin: Another question worth looking at is to what degree does standardisation and homogeneity in education deliver the skills needed by the so-called global economy? Or is a more pragmatic approach needed that takes account of local contexts, culture and specific needs?

Sthepen: The Liss paper does a good job of describing the moves towards standardisation, and some of the thinking behind it, as well as its potential impact on 'objective' and 'subjective' knowledge.

Clegg: To return to the major themes of the paper, we have suggested that the meta-narrative linking of ICT's, globalisation and supply side economics is contradictory.

If we are to understand the impact of technologies on pedagogy we need to take account of these local conditions and the range of possible responses to particular pressures, rather than rely on over-deterministic accounts of global tendencies.

It presents only one model of what it means to learn; that is to become an individually more competitive item of human capital. We suggest that this is not what education is or should be about.

Words from the underdevelopment…

Hi everyone, thanks for all these really useful postings and specially to Justin for summarizing the main points in the papers. I started my readings with the Liss paper, and I found the concept of constructive destruction a very elegant form to introduce a replacement of something (not necessarily bad). I'm sure I will call this concept in my future projects, especially to introduce changes to old staff resisting the new ideas.

A little more serious, I think there are many ideas that I share with Liss paper when he supports that standardization and interoperability offer a better landscape to share knowledge. The highlights are:

1.'At this point, it bears repeating that the Internet revolution occurred because of the development of a standardized computing platform'. Excellent examples are UNIX and LINUX platforms.

2. 'The greater the interoperability, the more powerful the platform becomes, because less efficient platforms will be destroyed by it. The new platform is better—or more powerful, at any rate—because it reaches even more users or institutions'. Everything about free software is aligned to this idea.

In the other hand, I am not sure if is the case that standardized education has a direct effect in 'innovation, growth of knowledge, and progress' as Zhao pointed, when comparing United States and China moving to different directions with regard to the focusing on accountability, centralization, and standardization. In reality, I think that democracy, political freedom and something more prosaic: money, have more to do with creating the right environment for innovation that even Europe can't reproduce. BTW, USA have most of the college dropouts who changed the world, such as Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, Steve Wozniak, Steve Ballmer, Michael Dell, Larry Ellison from ORACLE, etc.

As for the Cleggs paper, I felt a little sceptical with her conclusion that the linking ‘between of ICT’s, globalisation and supply side economics’ is an incorrect way to bring improvement in learning. Indeed, I think for most of the economies ‘here in the underdevelopment’ is an ideal to be achieved. Anyway, the reality is that ICT and globalization are present in our lives nowadays a lot more then in 2003 when this paper came out and, in fact, I assume that the current sense of the ones without a basic understanding in ICT is ‘to be left behind’ and incapable to access any ‘globalized knowledge’. Therefore, I consider that technologies must impact education in ways that it can truly deliver advantages to any group of learners in their concrete social circumstances.