Book Review

Selwyn, N. (2016). *Is Technology Good For Education?*

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In the preface, Selwyn states that the intention of this book is

> "to present the key issues and debates relating to 'ed-tech' in appropriately nuanced and aware ways. This book therefore seeks to shift the nature of the conversation about technology and education. It does not set out to make spectacular predictions or present hitherto unseen evidence. Instead it offers an opportunity to pause for thought and to take stock." (viii)

And this is exactly what it does. While the slightly controversial title might pique your interest and reel you in (it certainly did for me), the book itself offers a space for the reader to reflect on the state of education and technology by presenting a focus on a number of circumstances in which technology intersects with today's education landscape.

It starts with an overview. Entitled 'Digital technology and Educational Change', the first chapter sets up the importance of digital education in contemporary society and the resulting need to ask some critical questions before digital opportunities for education are lauded as a silver bullet that will magically transform education as we know it. In that spirit, the following four chapters each pose a central question – will/can technology make education more democratic, personalised, calculable, commercial? Rather than presenting a definitive answer, this book presents contextual information that allows the readers to think about education and technology in their particular contexts and then come to their own conclusions, always encouraging critical questions and debates. A conclusion of sorts is provided in chapter six, which muses on what might have to change in order for the digital to support 'good' education. Again there is no answer provided, on the contrary, it ends with a call to continue and deepen the debates so that stakeholders will be able to help shape the partnership of education and technology in the best possible way.

On a practical level this is an easy book to read: all the chapters are clearly set up, starting with an introduction to the particular focus, a number of clearly headed sub-sections and ending with a conclusion. As the chapters are linked, but overall self-contained, it is easy to dip into the book for just one of the chapters, or chapter sections, for the reader with little time.

I found it refreshing to not be presented with conclusions, particularly because many of them simply would not have been relevant for my position within education. Rather it

presented a larger context, some of which was a reminder, some of which was new to me, and some of which I had known, but never really thought about, thus encouraging me to become more aware of the potential and challenges of education for me as both learner and educator.