INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

1. Understanding education through the lenses provided by different disciplines:
   We need to draw on different disciplines in order to make sense of the way education
   (formal, informal and non-formal) has defined what it means to be human. These
disciplines include economics, philosophy, sociology, and psychology. A historical
overview helps us understand how what is familiar and what appears ‘common sense’
to us (e.g. placing children and youths in closed environments for several years on a
row, organising classes on the basis of age groupings, etc) is in fact a human creation,
a social practice linked to a specific time (hence contingent) and underpinned by a set
of specific assumptions and beliefs. This awareness guards against ‘reification’, i.e.
the tendency to treat as ‘natural’, ‘normal’, or even as ‘divinely ordained’ practices
that have in fact been put into place by people, at particular points in time and in
particular places, with a view to serving particular purposes.

2. Some key questions
   Using the insights generated by these different disciplines, we are in a better position
to address such key questions as:
   - What are the purposes of education? (to learn, or is it perhaps also to unlearn?)
   - How do people learn? Is learning confined to schooling? Is some of the learning
     that takes place outside of schooling more powerful than that which takes place
     inside schools? If so, why is this the case?
   - Does education mirror society and reproduce it, or does it also serve to
     transform it? Should it?
   - Has education changed its form and content throughout the centuries? Are there
     continuities? Are there ruptures from the past?
   - What kinds of struggles has education been involved in? (e.g. struggles around
     access, around equity, around quality...)
   - What are some of the linkages between education and power (e.g. has education
     served to emancipate people or to dominate them along class, gender and racial
     lines?...or perhaps has it done both at the same time?)
   - Whose knowledge counts? Who decides what the formal curriculum (i.e. the
     legitimate diet of knowledge) should be? Why are some forms of knowledge
     excluded? (e.g. why do we teach Mozart but not Bob Marley? Is there a place
     for popular culture? What makes elite culture elite? Could it be that many are
     alienated from maths and science because the selection and jargon and ways of
     representing that knowledge are couched in ways that obfuscate rather than
     popularise knowledge? Why do some powerful groups with monopolies on
     knowledge (e.g. university academics) do that?
   - What is the role of the state in education? What is the role of private initiative in
     furthering education? Are there tensions between these providers? Why?
- To what extent does education serve to develop human potential? Does it necessarily follow that the more education that is provided, the more ‘human’ we become (e.g. some of the most atrocious deeds of the 20th centuries were committed by people with doctorates)
- Does schooling pay? What are the returns of education for the individual? For society? (e.g. is it less likely for an educated person to be unemployed, to get a first job quickly, to be promoted in his or her career?)
- Does education lead to development and progress? Is economic progress necessarily equated with social progress?
- What is the relationship between education and beliefs (including religions)?
- Is it still useful to make a distinction between education and training? What do these words mean? (e.g. What comes to mind when we hear that a school has introduced ‘sex education’, while another has introduced ‘sex training’?)
- In which direction is education moving? What forms of education, and what practices (e.g. pedagogical) are appearing on the horizon?

3. ‘Ideal types’ of schooling
Despite the fact that there have been many variations in the way societies have socialised the new generation and prepared them to assume the responsibilities that come with adulthood, Randall Collins (2000) notes that we can group all these forms under four Weberian ‘ideal types’ (i.e. types of schools that do not exist in their pure form in reality, but which nevertheless help us understand the key directions or ‘shapes’ that schooling took in different societies across time). The modern school draws on [a], [b] and [c] below:

[a] An entire community of a particular age group is kept in a ‘limbo’, being neither adults nor children. They receive an education or training, with a view to passing through an initiation rite that shows that they are capable of assuming the responsibilities associated with adulthood (e.g. tribes, classical Greece and Rome).*

[b] Apprenticeship: sharply divided enclaves (e.g. families, households, guilds): often secret, elaborate, exclusive – taking religious (e.g. free masons) or ethnic forms.

[c] Licensing profession (e.g. lawyer, physician): elite public status, with education giving a recognised licence to practice (often sanctioned by government).*

[d] Bureaucratic schools with hierarchy of grades, exams, degrees (often in combination with type ‘c’).*
4. The classical Greco-Roman period: the origins of Europe’s education tradition/s:

*Three key issues here are:*

- Many of the terms that we use in education go back to antiquity, showing how powerful that heritage has remained (e.g. *pedagogos* = the person who took the student to the site of learning; ‘lyceum’ = for the Greek ‘lykeion’, and the name for Aristotle’s school; ‘schole’ Greek term for ‘leisure’).

- Most pedagogies draw from either Socratic or Aristotelian approaches to learning. For Socrates, education was about drawing out (“educere”) through questioning knowledge and insights which lay buried deep inside an individual’s soul. For Aristotle, the individual was an empty slate, and education was a question of transmitting knowledge. This transmission was facilitated by categorising knowledge in different compartments.

- For the ancients, knowledge was not related to competences or skills as much as to the search for a virtuous life. One of Socrates’ famous phrases remains very powerful today: “An unreflective life is not worth living”. An antidote to that notion of lifelong learning is the saying “Ignorance is bliss!”

5. Transmitting the Greco-Roman legacy:

*Three key issues here are:*

- Much of the Greco-Roman heritage would have been lost to the West had it not been for the Arabs. These translated, adapted, and built on key Greek texts, and developed knowledge centres that were the key beacons of learning to which European scholars flocked in order to learn (e.g. Cordoba, Toledo). Many of the disciplines that we are familiar with today (including sociology, demography, economics, cultural history, surgery) were developed by the Arabs, and remained influential up to the Renaissance. We should be talking not of a “clash of civilisations” but of civilisations that have essentially the same roots.

- Another vehicle for the transmission of the Greco-Roman legacy was the university: essentially universities were guilds of teachers (specialising in law, medicine and theology) who developed a monopoly in the definition of the knowledge base for these disciplines, and in licensing candidates who wished to practice these professions. Universities as corporations made deals with the highest political authorities (popes, emperors and kings) in order to have both
autonomy as well as the power to confer degrees. Thomas Aquinas, a student of the University of Naples, and then of Paris, tried to appropriate Aristotelian philosophy and to show that it was compatible with Catholic doctrine.

- A key development was Protestantism, which removed the intermediary priest common to Catholicism, encouraging the faithful to enter into a direct communion with God by reading the Bible (in the vernacular) and to see the relevance of the scriptures for their own lives. This led to a major investment in literacy across Europe. In the Catholic world, the counter-reformation led to much soul-searching and an attempt to develop catechism to counter the protestant ‘threat’. A key figure is Erasmus of Rotterdam, who is one of the best-known ‘humanists’, and who built on his knowledge of the classics of the antiquities in order to develop catholic theology.

6. Discipline and punish

Three key issues here are:

- Schooling has a dark side to it: one recurrent theme, from antiquity onwards, is the use of corporal punishments, beating, moral pressure, in order to shape the young generation in particular ways.

- Some sociologists have described the school as a ‘closed’ or even as a ‘total’ system, and point to resemblances with the prison, the factory, and the psychiatric ward (Foucault) in order to show that schools are not innocent places, or the shelters from life’s stresses that they are sometimes made out to be.

- It may very well be that in a hundred years from now, historians and educators will look back at schooling in the modern age as a barbaric invention, one that obliges children and young people to spend the best years of their lives cooped up between four walls, divorcing them from broader experiences in life and more powerful and ‘real’ learning environments.

7. Apprenticeship into forms of life and the invention of childhood

Three key issues here are:

- Children have traditionally been induced into adulthood through a long apprenticeship of observation: they were involved in various aspects of family life, including labour. Children were considered to be adults in miniature (see Philippe Aries Centuries of Childhood), and were not shielded from aspects of adult’s lives.

- We can date the ‘invention’ of childhood as a separate and qualitatively different ‘stage’ to the late 19th century. Psychology (see the work of Piaget, but also of Freud and Kohlberg), has popularised the notion that children are different from adults, and that their mental faculties go through biologically determined stages.

- One of the key forms of teaching that developed from the 12th century onwards was apprenticeship: this entailed a special relationship between the ‘meister’ and the apprentice, often in the context of a guild that carefully regulated the dissemination of craft knowledge in order to make sure that remuneration for work remained high. This contrasts with the unquestioned generosity implicit in modern education, where teachers are expected to teach their students skills, even if this creates competition for them on the market.
8. Pedagogies of learning

Three key issues here are:

- We see several attempts throughout the ages to find ways of representing knowledge to students in manners that facilitate learning. These pedagogies include the use of mnemonic devices, the development of illustrated texts (e.g. the ‘abecdaires’), the ‘disputatio’ (used by the scholastics in the Middle Ages, initially to marshall arguments against competing doctrines (by Jews, or by ‘heretics’)). In churches, the development of stained glass to make the illiterate common people familiar with biblical stories served to transmit not only (religious) knowledge, but also a sense of awe (a good example of addressing not only the cognitive, but also the conative, or the emotions). The Baroque style was also developed by the Catholic church during the counter-reformation, and represents the decision by the Council of Trent to develop the arts in ways that engaged the faithful in an emotional involvement (and commitment) to religious orthodoxy.

- Other powerful learning environments were provided through libraries, which saw a major renaissance in the 17th century, due to the fact that printing had made books cheaper, more available, and renaissance thinkers had revived an interest in classical literature.

- Some important pedagogies of learning were also developed in the aftermath of the counter-reformation: the Jesuit’s Ratio Studiorum synthesised much of the knowledge about pedagogy and was used as a guide in the 845 Jesuit schools that had spread across Europe by 1773. Jean Baptiste de la Salle developed the Simultaneous Method (moving away from one teacher for the whole class, to dividing students into groups according to their ability, with each group having its own teacher and textbook). We start seeing an attempt to develop a science of learning, with the foundation of the Normal School by the La Sallians, one of the earliest institutions to train teachers in pedagogical methods.

9. The politics of access: knowledge as power

Three key issues here are:

- The question of who should have access to knowledge has always troubled communities. Some of the groups that have to struggle to get access to formal education include women, the common people, subordinate groups, and persons with disabilities. Most societies in Europe have addressed this issue, even if full access (equality of opportunity) is not to be equated with equality of outcomes. Indeed, the evidence is that while all groups have improved access to education, elite groups are more successful in transforming their cultural and social capital into financial capital and power (see Bourdieu).

- Linked to the question of access to knowledge is the question of access to which knowledge: whose knowledge is given legitimacy and included in the curriculum? Which knowledge is considered to be dangerous (e.g. why have there been episodes of book burning in several societies, including modern ones? Cfr. The discussion among feminists in Italy, in response to the proposal that there be a public burning of Oriana Fallaci’s books, marked by anti-Muslim diatribes).
The poor in villages started to get access to education in some countries (e.g., England) through the development of so-called “Charity Schools”. Schooling was often equated with a religious mission: the ensuring that the poor were kept occupied and that they learnt a trade, since “idle hands do devil’s work.” We also see the rise of debates about what constitutes a “useful education”. One interpretation of these schools is that they were part of a strategy to ‘domesticate’ subordinate groups and to avoid social unrest.

10. The education of girls

*Three key issues here are:*

- Girls and women have been systematically excluded from education for centuries, and since antiquity. Notions of what constitutes women’s ‘proper’ place have fed prejudices through the ages, and even when education was offered to them, it reinforced these prejudices: women were expected to learn the skills of keeping house, of managing a household, of playing hostess, of being a good wife.

- Women have resisted these prejudices in various ways: sometimes they developed their own forms of knowledge (e.g. knowledge of medicinal herbs), but knowledgeable women were often accused of heresy, and of having acquired knowledge through colluding with the devil. Charges of witchcraft were commonly made as a result.

- While much progress has been made in the education of women, we still find women clustered in specific educational and training pathways (often the nurturing professions rather than the sciences, for instance). In the developing world. Millions of girls and women still do not have access to formal education, and where they do, this is limited to a few years’ of schooling.

11. The structure of pedagogical encounters

*Three key issues here are:*

- “We make architecture, and architecture makes us” (Churchill).

- The way we build our schools reflects important philosophies and assumptions about education: several values are signalled by architecture: it tells students what their place is, who is important, the relative status of the different actors, and whether they are being constantly surveilled or given the freedom to be. Schools can be open or closed to the communities they serve, with barricades keeping students in, and parents out, for instance. Schools can also be designed in ways that make specific groups more or less welcome: In New Zealand, some schools have integrated traditional Maori architectural features (e.g. ancestral carvings) to help indigenous groups identify with formal education.

- Purpose-built schools are a relatively recent phenomenon, and little work has been done across Europe to analyse the learning environments that we are constructing, how these vehicle new forms of education, and whether the older buildings that we still use as schools support new theories of learning or obstruct them.
12. ‘Modern’ times
Three key issues here are:

- The French Revolution had an enormous impact on education: it installed a new ideology of meritocracy, where what mattered was no longer who you were, but what you were capable of. Effort and ability, as expressed within the different levels of schooling, would ensure greater social justice, social mobility based on merit, and better outcomes for society since those who were most capable got the most responsible jobs (in principle at least).

- The industrial revolution also had a major impact on the development of schools: children had to be ‘schooled’ in the new values required by the factory system, including time discipline, ability to stand repetitive work, working for an extrinsic motivator (grades, and later for wages), and accepting the bifurcation between work and leisure.

- The push for education represents the coming together of three interest groups: the ‘public educators’ (who argued that all persons had a natural right to be educated), the ‘old humanists’ (who argued that education was the only way to ensure social stability), and the ‘industrial trainers’ (who wanted skilled and suitably socialised children for their factories). These three interest groups had different agendas for shaping schools in particular ways.

13. The rise of mass schooling
Three key issues here are:

- Schools are the signature project of the nation state: with the movement of the unification of states (e.g. Germany under Bismark, Italy under Cavour and Garibaldi), the state wanted to ensure that it had literate citizens to run its bureaucracy. States also looked towards schools to socialise citizens into the value systems of the new political entity, and to generate a sense of identity that was national rather than sub-national in scope. Choosing one dialect from the several used in the conglomeration of states, giving it the status of a national language, and having schools legitimise that choice and teach it to all citizens was a major challenge.

- Several forms of schooling were developed across Europe. One of the most influential was the monitory system, with classes having hundreds of students, grouped around monitors or ‘repetiteurs’. These were older or more achieving students who repeated what they had learnt to other students, under the watchful eye of the teacher, who gave orders and orchestrated the process.

- The working classes had a sufficiently robust culture to generate forms of education that were compatible with their needs and value systems. This is in contrast to more recent times, where schools have tended to become standardised fare for all, and boundaries between vocational and general schooling are becoming increasingly blurred. Some argue that this promotes equity. Others are concerned that large groups of students are not finding the formal education on offer meaningful. The tension here is to create forms of education that are compatible with cultural orientations of specific groups, but to avoid locking them in low status pathways. Such tensions are of course caused by the way the economic system is organised.
14. Teachers

*Three key issues here are:*

- Teachers became an increasingly important group of workers as compulsory education became a feature of the modern state. Most teachers were public employees, and were often poorly paid. Teaching became the ‘royal’ road to social mobility for many men and women of modest origins.

- Teachers were entrusted with the task of promoting a sense of national identity in students as part of the state formation process. In some cases, attempts were made by the state (and sometimes by the church) to enrol teachers in promoting particular agendas. In some cases, the politics of the teaching corps came into conflict with the ideology of state or church: in 1850, as many as 4000 teachers were dismissed in a few months, on the basis of suspicions of anti-clericalism. The sensitivities around teachers (and education generally) also arise from the nature of schools, which render students a “captive audience”.

- With time, the teaching profession has become better qualified and more trained in teaching methods. Societies and governments expect more and more of teachers, with teachers (and schools) suffering from a serious ‘role overload’ and impossible expectations: teachers have to be parents, social workers, knowledge transmitters, equalisers of chances for an increasingly heterogenous group of students, to include students with disability in their teaching, to keep students away from drugs, to practice safe sex, etc etc. In some ways, societies are setting up teachers and schools to fail, as the expectations keep increasing, particularly as the nature of the primary socialisation agent – the family – is changing radically (e.g. one parent families; re-constituted families). Governments too have tended to ‘export’ economic crises onto teachers and schools: it is easier to blame these and claim that inadequate schooling is causing a crises than to address the economy.

15. New forms of schooling

*Three key issues here are:*

- The end of the 19th century and the 20th century saw the rise of human capital approaches to education (particularly so in the 1950s through the economist T. Shultz). Increasingly the belief was that the nation which had the best schools would become the most powerful nation. We see the rise of comparative education: countries looking at economically powerful nations (such as Germany) in order to copy its educational system. A recent ‘take’ on this is the Open Method of Coordination, which acts as a ‘soft policy’ instrument to encourage states to copy ‘best practice’. This can be problematic as it is difficult to uproot a plant and hope that it will grow in a different soil and climate.

- Technical and vocational education struggled hard to become a respectable and legitimate part of the mainstream school curriculum, both at secondary school and at university. It was a long struggle in the face of the status that the humanities had enjoyed for centuries.

- These new forms of schooling, however, tended to cater largely for students from modest backgrounds, and right up to today, vocational schooling raises issues about the reproduction of class positions from one generation to the next.
16. The ‘short’ 20th century

*Three key issues here are:*

- Schools take on more and more roles, and are required to respond to more and more demands. They are expected to compensate for deficits in family, in society, and of individuals. New curriculum subjects are introduced, such as health education, personal and social education, values education. In some cases, subjects are initially reserved for girls (e.g. housecraft, babycraft, cooking). Feeding programmes (e.g. distribution of free milk rations) are introduced to ensure that students are healthy. New forms of pedagogy are developed to reflect changing views of how children learn: students are taken for lessons out in nature; laboratories are introduced in schools as science becomes more and more central in the curriculum; new technologies (radio, TV) are introduced, even if these have little impact on changing the ways teachers teach. Role overload is leading to teaching becoming less attractive as a profession, with some countries experiencing scarcity.

- Can schools make society more equal? This was a key challenge for many governments, particularly after the introduction of comprehensive education in Scandinavian countries. In England, tripartism was the rule for many years, i.e. three types of schools that essentially catered for three different ability groups (which by and large corresponded to three different social classes): the grammar school for the academic (and social) elite, the secondary grammar and the modern secondary school. The underlying conviction is still that some are good with their brain, and some with their hands.

- The issue of inclusion becomes increasingly important: co-education becomes the rule in most countries, even if there is evidence that girls tend to perform better (especially in maths and science) when in single sex schools. Persons with disability are increasingly mainstreamed in regular classrooms, presenting new challenges for teachers. Classrooms become more and more multicultural, partly due to the need for industrialised countries for immigrant workers.

17. Education of the future? Quo vadis?

*Some key issues here are:*

- How can we have equity and excellence at the same time? What features of learning environments (e.g. small or large schools, teacher to student ratio, types of pedagogy, use of ICT) facilitate success for all? How can we develop pedagogies that are inclusive, knowing that different students learn in different ways (here the work of the Russian ‘Mozart of psychology’, Vygotsky, is critical).

- A key concern among educationalists is the increasingly technicist view that we have of education. In some ways this has also been promoted by the Lisbon agenda, where education is seen in terms of building up human capital. The watchwords are skills, competences, techniques, flexibility, targets, performance indicators, outcomes, and new managerialist forms of organising learning. But is this education? There is a suspiciously close to the agendas of the industrial/business class (cf. the influence of the Round Table of European Industrialists in setting the agenda for the Lisbon goals for education). Grundtvig, among others (such as Dewey and Freire), provide us with an important alternative to ways of seeing and valuing education. Does the Commission have a
role in moving outside of the box when it comes to education, where learning has become almost obsessively and exclusively geared to the performativity of the economic system? This is particularly important given that while we might have a knowledge society, we do not have a knowledge economy: many of the claims that more and more education lead to a high ability society are empirically unfounded. There are still many knowledge poor sectors in the labour market alongside knowledge rich sectors. Schooling, education and training can, under a set of specific circumstances, contribute to economic success, but they are far from being the only or the key variable.

More and more education is leading to what Randall Collins calls "qualification inflation": citizens require higher and higher qualifications for jobs whose content and skills demand have not necessarily increased. Ronald Dore had already warned, in his book "The Diploma Disease" (1976), that "More qualification earning is mere qualification-earning – ritualistic, tedious, suffused with anxiety and boredom, destructive of curiosity and imagination – in short, anti-educational!" Collins has traced how throughout history, there have been cycles of qualification inflation that led to societies becoming disillusioned with formal learning (cf. history of China, for instance, and the influence of examinations that were needed to get a post in the imperial bureaucratic service).

Religion is becoming an increasingly important phenomena and a motivating force. Some countries have managed to keep a separation between the secular and the religious in educational affairs (e.g. the French position on "ostentatious religious symbols" such as the cross, the veil, and the kippa). On the other hand, religious groups all over the world, including in Europe, are trying to ensure that their faiths shape the way education unfolds, either through the promotion of denominational schools, or by infusing their faiths and agendas in mainstream schools.

Education is still not a science (as we understand this term in the natural sciences) – and may never become due to the many variables that affect learning and over which we have little if any control. However, we are becoming increasingly more effective in creating powerful learning environments. In some cases, ICT is making a difference in the way we approach learning, shifting education from a linear and sequential mode to a more networked, synergistic mode. These networks engage the individual in a new learning ecology, and are slowly transforming the role of the teacher. Assessment modes too are changing. Many traditional boundaries are becoming blurred: e.g. the boundaries between learning inside and outside school; the boundaries between education and entertainment ("edutainment"); the boundaries between formal and informal learning. The way young people engage with learning nowadays, thanks to the internet and other forms of communication, suggests that they are increasingly 'wired differently'. Some are expressing concerns that this kind of learning is somewhat shallow, and insufficiently reflective.

One of the more remarkable and promising paths towards new learning is represented by advances in neuro-science. The 'black box' of the brain – what some have called the 'last frontier' – is becoming more accessible. New insights into how the brain works and increased abilities to intervene and control that functioning have important implications for learning – and for ethics? So too does increased understanding of the genetic elements in one's DNA that have an impact on learning. These represent major and radical challenges to the way we understand and practice education in the future.
HOW MAY ALL THIS IMPACT ON YOUR WORK IN EDUCATION?

- This travel through time will hopefully have served to help you both appreciate more the long history associated with educational activity, and to become more aware of how complex and important the issues are. In some ways, we are all expert in education as we have spent most of our lives receiving it, and are now seeing our children go through it themselves. This “long apprenticeship by observation” is important, and we have developed theories about education, many of which we hold in an unconscious and unreflective manner. It is important to examine these theories by engaging with what the best research has to tell us about education, and to be as aware as possible of the issues at stake.

- What is at stake? Education is not just about technical issues of how to get from point A to point B – it is also, and principally, about defining what it means to be human. Such definitions cannot be made unilaterally, of course, but are arrived at in ways which also permit multiple forms of humanity to be legitimate.

- Education is not an innocent endeavour: it is the site for contestation of many groups who have different, and sometimes conflicting interests and agendas. We need to be aware of what these interests and agendas are, what the implications are, and to take a stand.

- To take a stand in education requires quite a sophisticated understanding of different disciplines, such as economics, sociology, psychology, philosophy, pedagogy, and history. None of us can have all this knowledge, but it is possible to develop increasingly profound insights, especially in the context of multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary teams. One needs to ask whether the Commission’s working environment facilitates such connectivities.

- To take a stand also requires a coming to terms with what kind of society we want to live in. In antiquity, education was closely associated with democratic and virtuous living (even if such democracies and such virtue were based on exploitation of slave labour, and on unequal treatment of women). How does our activity in education square up with the vision for a just society within and beyond the European area? Is that vision compatible with our deepest convictions concerning what it means to be human?

- The way we define education (and what we fund in education sends out clear signals as to what we value) has very real impacts and effects on the real lives of real people. History has shown how educational policies work to include some and exclude others. Who are we including and who are we excluding now?

- What is driving the discourse on lifelong learning? Does the master narrative of progress and competitiveness – as articulated in the Lisbon agenda, for instance – do justice to a broader understanding of education? Are we transforming education into a consumable good, where more consumption merely serves to drive even more consumption, leading to a qualification inflation, which, as history has shown, itself leads to an alienation from education?