

Can They Be Fixed: Some Thoughts After 40 Years in the Business

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Abstract. If there is one thing the great Greek teachers taught us, it was to question what is, and to dream about what can be. In this audience, unafraid that no one will ask me to drink the hemlock, but humbled by the realization that I am walking along the beach where great thinkers of the past have walked, I nonetheless am willing to ask some questions that continue to bother those of us who are engaged in education: professors, students, and those who expect the products of our educational system to be useful hires in their companies.

As I sit in my office contemplating which questions to ask between the start of my talk and when the dinner is ready, I have come up with my preliminary list. By the time July 21 arrives and we are actually on Samos, I may have other questions that seem more important. Or, you the reader may feel compelled to pre-empt me with your own challenges to conventional wisdom, which of course would be okay, also.

In the meantime, my preliminary list:

- Are students being prepared for careers as graduates? (Can it be fixed?)
- Are professors who have been promoted to tenure prepared for careers as professors? (Can it be fixed?)
- What is wrong with education today? (Can it be fixed?)
- What is wrong with research today? (Can it be fixed?)
- What is wrong with our flagship conferences? and Journals? (Can they be fixed?)