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Open Network Innovation and Exploration: Drivers, Benefits, and Challenges

The students we are educating today are entering a world that requires substantially greater openness, flexibility, and innovation to navigate and survive. The networked information economy has been typified by radical decentralization of the capacity to produce and distribute information, high degrees of uncertainty, and rapid change. Innovation processes have shifted toward more open models, some commercial, some non-commercial, and are likely to continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The lifelong career and the well-defined employer are being destabilized; replaced by more fluid, dynamic relationships that replace exploration and rapid learning for security and well-understood trajectories for both organizations and the individuals who populate them. Autonomy and self-direction, trustworthiness and internal motivations therefore shift from being ideals of an open education system in conflict with much of the reality of adult productive life to becoming indispensable capabilities for those who are on their way to becoming tomorrow's young adults.