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HIGHER EDUCATION TURNAROUND SUPPORTING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Abstract:

Since years the education system was about to change. Specifically, the focus with this paper is on Germany where the schools and most universities are public. Rules are related to the past, skills like deep functional knowledge, topics memorised in detail and repetitive methods have been on top of the educational syllabus. After the trends of globalisation, the introduction of the term 'Industry 4.0' provocative production and automation. All of a sudden industry has been challenged globally with new skills and requirements asking the education system to support with a more profound skills of graduates being 'digital natives' per definition. To change a system takes time, infrastructure and advanced training. (cf. Catalano, 2019, p.25f)

What if there is no time for this transformation? In the beginning of 2020 the Pandemic Covid-19 hit the world and all schools and universities been shut for people's safety. It started as a break but after a while people figured even arguing about the quality of online education versus in-person learning did not help. Remote education was the only way to get in contact with students and pure self-learning needed to be enriched by more motivating methods. All of a sudden, all parties had new roles. Some really felt overstrained and had very little experience. To start a mature semester in autumn, and moving from mainly remotely to an at least hybrid format for the rest of the year, teachers extended their knowledge of digital tools and exchanged it. Over the year faculty increased comfort and some approaches seems to remain even if all teaching could be in presence. (cf. Boivin et al., 2021, p.27ff)

Not only the education system was challenged during the pandemic in 2020/21, the entire world and business world had to adapt. Comparing only with the new business requirements of production companies, shows that a lot of the skills the students learned in remote sessions will remain in business situations (e.g. video conferencing, online presentations, self-motivated learning). In addition, the speed of change increased and with the penetration of digital transformation everywhere, now is the time to change the main structure of curriculums adding more profound skill sets in human interaction, practical adaptation of skills versus just having knowledge building new characters for life-long learning. (cf. Meilleur, 2018)

The questions are remaining; 'What is the role of online-education past the pandemic?' 'What could be a new setting in education taking the learnings from the pandemic Covid-19 to map new requirements from the industry and for future jobs?' The paper will not be able to provide one clear answer but will provide a good start of research.

Keywords:

Life-long Learning, Higher Education, Industry 4.0, Education 4.0, Digital Change, Digitalization, Learning Methods, Project Based Learning, Self-paced Learning, Post-Pandemic Teaching

JEL Classification: A20, D20, D83