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Liviu Warter, Ph.D.
Center for Socio-Economic Studies and Multiculturalism, Iasi, Romania
E-mail: liviu@warter.ro

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FROM KNOWLEDGE ENRICHMENT TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ISRAEL

Professor Tamar Almor, Ph.D.
Dean, School of Behavioral Sciences and Psychology
The College of Management, Israel
e-mail: talmor@colman.ac.il

Dr. Avi Shnider, Ph.D.
School of Behavioral Sciences and Psychology
The College of Management, Israel
e-mail: avi@otika.co.il

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Abstract

Over the last 20 years, higher education enrolment rates have risen by 7% per year in upper middle-income countries and 5% in lower middle-income countries, showing an ever-increasing appetite for higher education around the world. Most students that enter academia hope to improve their lives with better paid careers and relatively few of them dream of becoming professors and researchers themselves. Concurrently, the academic hegemony over knowledge is receding and sources of knowledge are increasingly moving towards digital platforms that are not owned by academia.

In this paper we address the development of higher education in the 21st century and the place of students in this process and analyse it in terms of preparation towards a world which will offer jobs that do not yet exist, exemplifying this process by describing the developments of higher education in Israel and by using the case study of the College of Management. We conclude that institutions of higher education need to change according to four dimensions: (1) The role of the student, (2) the learning process, (3) diversity and (4) skill and capabilities creation and we offer insights into how to manage this process of change.

Introduction

In a world which is increasingly interconnected, where old economic models are breaking down and new ones are being developed, knowledge is increasingly provided by digital platforms such as Google and YouTube, or TEDX, rather than by academia. In addition, economic growth has stalled in many places in the world and jobs, especially for the younger generation, are lacking or at least changing radically (Mourshed, 2013), thus creating the argument that academia cannot prepare its students anymore in an adequate way for adult life and that, in many instances, academia is lacking behind developments that are taking place in the world.

The World Economic Forum maintains that we are entering the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab, 2017) as a result of far reaching digitalization. Schwab (2017) argues that the revolution will affect our consumption patterns, our notions of ownership, how we develop our careers, cultivate our skills and even create our identities. According to Schwab, these changes not only impact our daily lives but also the way we teach and behave in

academia. As we will show in this paper, by focusing on the development of academia in Israel, higher education has moved from the creation and enhancement of knowledge to career development, by a process of democratization and corporatization. Academic education was once an option that existed mostly for the 'elites' and focused on knowledge transfer as well as critical thinking, but has now become the right of all, thereby raising questions about the function and responsibility of academia towards their students around the world.

In this paper we will address the development of higher education in the 21st century and the place of students in this process. We will analyse the role of academia in terms of preparation of students towards a world which is in a flux and which is experiencing far-reaching transformations, by suggesting several changes in the process of academic teaching. We recommend incorporating work experience during the learning process and address the issue of social mobility as well as inclusion and accessibility. We further discuss digitalization of higher education and the creation of international experiences, through the examination of the development of higher education in Israel.

Development of higher education in the world

In 1960 world literacy was around 42%, in 2015 it increased worldwide to 86% and this trend is still growing. Numeracy, the ability to work with numbers, while measured less, is developing as well. Overall, we can see that the world population has achieved rapid progress in education; moreover, younger generations are better educated than ever (Roser & Oriz-Ospina, 2018). As a result, we see growth in academic education as well. According to UNESCO, enrolment in higher education has doubled since 2000, from 100 million to 207 million in 2014 worldwide. Furthermore, institutions of higher education have diversified and have grown in numbers, size, specialization and mission. While higher education used to be the managed by universities around the world, private enrolment now accounts for 30% of all global higher education enrolments (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2017). Over the last 20 years, higher education enrolment rates have risen by 7% per year in upper middle-income countries and 5% in lower middle-income countries. Even low income countries are picking up speed, matching the global average growth rate of 4%. By contrast, high income country participation growth has slowed to 2% a year (ibid.). The democratization of academic education provides tools for a growing number of young people to become socially mobile. Despite popular thinking, studies show that also in the second decade of the 21st century, academic education is strongly correlated to occupational outcomes such as earnings, employment status, career attainment and job security (Vuolo, Mortimer, & Staff, 2016).

However, as argued in a recent report by the World Economic Forum (Bandelli, 2017), the traditional path of transferring skills by means of education is not working anymore. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is creating radical changes in our society which we cannot predict and therefore we need to create ubiquitous and contextual opportunities to unlock creativity, to embed empathy, and to question and challenge our own assumptions. This approach to education changes the narrative from education as something that is received to something that is generated by experience. It questions the core on which academic education is based and leads a growing number of the younger generation to question if higher education is still the panacea for career success. Moreover, it raises questions as to what academia's role is in higher education and how skills and capabilities should be taught in academic settings.

Higher Education in Israel: Historic development

By early 2019, Israel's population was about 8.7 million. The country, which is based on a market economy, with an estimated Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (PPP) of about $40,800 and a unemployment rate of about 4%, is considered the only democratic country in the Middle East. During the last decades, Israel has emerged as "startup nation": an important global centre of innovation and entrepreneurship. Knowledge-intensive industries, as well as private and public venture capital (both Israeli and international), have allowed for industry and service sectors to flourish, including that of higher education.

Even though Israel as a nation has only existed since 1948, various higher education institutions were already established as early as the 1920s in the land that constituted the British Mandate of Palestine. In 1924, the Technion Israel Institute of Technology was established in the Northern city of Haifa, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem followed in 1925 and The Weizmann Institute of Science was established in 1934. These three institutions were established by Jewish immigrants from Europe and therefore had a European orientation. Soon thereafter Israel was founded and other universities were established; Bar Ilan University in 1955; Tel Aviv University in 1956; the University of Haifa in 1963; Ben Gurion University of the Negev in 1969; and The Open University in 1976 (Almor & Bank, 2015). In 1990/91, these eight universities provided higher education for about 81,000 students, in 2019, more than 306,000 students were enrolled in Israel's 62 institutions of higher education.

Since the 1990s, education and especially higher education has been undergoing a process of expansion and democratization. At the end of the 1980s, the universities in Israel were not able to absorb all prospective students. As the existing universities did not increase their acceptance rates, many young people sought academic education outside Israel. This change in demand created two types of academic entrepreneurs: those that helped young people to look abroad for their academic education and those that sought ways to supply the demand for academic education outside the hegemony of the existing universities.

One of the first to change the existing industry structure was the College of Management (Bank & Almor, 2013). This organization was established by visionaries who recognized the need for higher education for a broad group of young people who were seeking undergraduate degrees that would allow them to develop themselves as professionals in various fields such as accounting, law and design. The College of Management was one of the first to break the hegemony on higher education held by the universities and established a new type of academic institution, one that, while overseen by the Council of Higher Education (CHE), is not funded by government (Clark, 2005). Change in policy of the CHE regarding the ability to grant an academic degree outside the existing industry structure, created a watershed of new institutions. During the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century, Israel witnessed the establishment of tens of new "michlalot" (colleges), which were established by academic entrepreneurs who foresaw increasing demand in higher education (Bank & Almor, 2013).

Israel's higher education in the 21st century

Academic education in Israel is overseen by the Council for Higher Education (CHE), a government-led body that recognizes institutions of higher education, oversees the quality of the programs and allows them to grant degrees. It also serves as an accreditation agency and provides government funding for all universities and part of the colleges. In 2019, Israel had 62 academic institutions, including nine universities, 20 colleges and 21 teacher colleges funded by the government, and 12 non-funded colleges. During the academic year 2018-19, about 231,000 students studied for their first degree, 63,400 for their graduate degree and 11,400 for their Ph.D. About 60% of all academic students in 2019 were women and about 48,600 were Arab Israeli students (Council of Higher Education, 2018). About 40% of all

undergraduates, study at the universities, the remaining 60% study in various colleges, compared to the 1990s when about 85% of all undergraduates were university students.

The most educated group in Israel are the secular Jews, about 50% of all working men and 60% of all working women have higher education. However, more and more ultra-orthodox Jews, Muslim, Christian and Druze are partaking in higher education and among all four groups, participation in academic education has grown, especially among Arab women (Ben-David, 2017). Thus, the academic colleges have created social change and enabled hundreds of thousands of young people to receive an academic education, especially those who would not have been able to do so previously.

Israel's students differ from those in most other countries in the world, as they are older and behave differently as a result. In Israel, Jewish men and women have compulsory army service, of a minimum of three or two years respectively. Most young Israelis, after having finished their army service, will travel for extended periods of time, before commencing their academic studies. Although Israel has a very high percentage of academics (about 49% of all 25-64 adults have higher education, compared to the OECD average of about 34%) (Education at a Glance, 2016), the average age that they start their undergraduate studies is much higher than in other countries. This is one of the reasons that most Israeli students work during their studies. Indeed, a study by the Council of Higher Education (Klein-Avishai, Ophir & Krol, 2014) reported that 35% of all students pay for tuition themselves and 63% reported paying for their living expenses themselves.

A survey by the Central Bureau of Statistics showed students mostly choose their studies by themselves. The main reasons for choosing a specific field of study were (1) whether the field is interesting and fits the student's skills (91%) and (2) whether the studies will enable the student to pursue a career and gain a profession (87%). Most students – 92% – studied a full curriculum. The students who studied a partial curriculum chose to do so because of the need to combine work with studies. Approximately 80% of the students reported that the studies improved their general and professional knowledge, but only 40% reported improvements in their command of English, creativity, research skills, and organizational and management skills. Approximately 70% of the students reported that the studies improved their critical thinking, their learning skills, and their verbal and written expression skills (Klein-Avishai, Ophir & Krol, 2014).

From knowledge enrichment to career development

In the 19th and 20th century, academic education was considered as a means to enrich knowledge, to develop and broaden analytical skills and encourage independent thinking. Thus, the primary purpose of academic education used to be learning and creating a well-rounded, academically schooled person. This is different from vocational education, the purpose of which used to be to prepare a person for the workplace. However, in the 21st century these definitions do not serve a clear purpose anymore. As can be seen from the Israeli data, 87% of all academic students choose their field of study in order to gain a career and a profession (Klein-Avishai, Ophir & Krol, 2014). Indeed, the agenda of the university of Utrecht, the Netherlands, one of the top universities in the world, states that: "*there seems to be a need for an academic community that contributes to the* 'bildung' *of young people, with enough time and space for experimenting, developing talents and reflection on ambition and capabilities. This implicates that good academic education focusses on students' search for a 'happy and meaningful life'. Secondly, there is a need for the expansion of the question of the societal usefulness*"[i]. Thus, it seems that the definition of what academic education is about, is changing. Indeed, when we consider Schwab's' (2017) argument that we are in the middle of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which will lead to a different definition of life and of self, it is important to re-think the purpose of academia.

Traditionally, universities have educated tomorrow's leaders, based on academia's experience and knowledge as well as traditions, networks and standing in society. These conservative institutions have created society's leaders for more than a century. However, while the world is experiencing massive changes, the question is how universities can remain relevant in the 21st century for their students as it seems that the world is changing faster than academia can keep up with.

As various studies show, whole job categories are disappearing, and new jobs are born every day. Artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, virtual reality and digital currencies will have major impact on all our lives and will create a new way of living. The question is, how do we help prepare the next generation of academically-schooled people for this world. What jobs will they have, what needs will society create and how will they be able to find their way in this world. While academia has become more labor market oriented, as can be understood from the fact that at end of the 20th century, universities started to be ranked by the salaries of their graduates, alongside with the traditional academic achievement ratings of research and publications, studies all over the world show that currently, only a minority of the employers believe that universities are preparing their graduates adequately for the job market (Mourshed et al., 2013; Staton, 2015). Indeed, data show that the correlation between education level and job performance is low and studies have found that intelligence scores are a much better indicator of job potential than academic degrees (Chamorro-Permuzic & Fankewicz, 2019). Companies like Google, Amazon and Facebook look for employees with learnability skills – being curious and having a hungry mind – more than technical skills. Interestingly, many academic degrees are viewed today as providing mainly technical skills, rather than those sought after by potential employers. Moreover, as disruptive technology grows, there is an increasing need for soft skills, creative skills, collaboration, problem solving and communication skills (Chamorrow-Premuzic & Frankiewicz, 2019), again, skills which are usually not taught in universities and other academic institutions. Thus, it seems that a gap has formed between skills actually taught in academia and skills and capabilities which future employers seek. Therefore, we believe that academic education in the 21st century should attempt to create a fusion of critical and innovative thinking with hands-on experience, rather than re-hashing models and theories that were mainly created in the late 20th century and which do not prepare students well enough for the future of work.

This raises the question how such a fusion can be achieved and how academia can create a learning environment that indeed encourages students to think in a critical and innovative way, while experiencing hands-on practices and forming new capabilities and skills. In this paper we will suggest three means to further this issue and which include: (1) practical work experience during academic studies and global experience; (2) accessibility and inclusion, and (3) blended learning and digitalization.

From learning to doing: - Internships, practicum, co-operative education and work experience

Many of today's students will work in jobs that do not yet exist, so how can higher education prepare them for this and increase their employability? Academic institutions around the world have started offering students internships, practicum experience and other types of experiences that combine an 'out in the field' experience with academic skills. In a report compiled by McKinsey (Mourshed et al., 2013), 60% of the students interviewed for the study viewed 'hands-on experience' as an important way to get integrated into the job market even if they would intern in jobs that they would not work in later. However, only 24% of the respondents said that they received such opportunities during their education. One

solution may be to encourage students to work during their studies, like many Israeli students do, as the data we presented previously, showed.

Previous studies showed that students that engage in work during their studies (for instance, in order to fund them), achieve less academically than those who do not (Callender, 2008; Hunt et al., 2004). It is further reported (Carney et al., 2005; Mounsey et al., 2013) that students who combine studies with work, rate themselves as having poorer physical and mental health and higher anxiety than members of the general population of the same age group. However, employability skills are difficult to teach in the classroom, while employment-based experience and training are likely to increase the likelihood to gain professional employment after graduation. Indeed, a study by McGregor (2015) reported that most of the students believed that working throughout their academic studies would have a positive impact on their employability even though it would affect their grades in a negative way. Dennis et al. (2018) reported that students in non-skilled jobs working more than 10 hours a week indeed showed lower academic performance, but those in skilled jobs in which they worked relatively few hours, actually showed better academic results than their peers. These results seem to suggest two things: (1) students should be encouraged to work part-time during their studies in skilled jobs and (2) academic institutions should put less emphasis on grades, which may be affected by work and instead, encourage the students to view work during their studies as a good opportunity to prepare themselves for the job market and even give bonus points for those who work in skilled jobs.

The College of Management was one of the first colleges in Israel that decided to generate work experience opportunities for undergraduate students. A special program was created named "The Leaders" which allowed students to shadow senior managers of large companies for a few weeks, part-take in special projects in these companies and create a report about their experiences on digital media which was then posted on Facebook and other digital means. Not only were the students that participated extremely satisfied with the project, hundreds of them presented themselves as candidates for the next installment of "The Leaders". Moreover, a high percentage of the students that participated in the program, were offered jobs by the companies in which they "worked" for a short period of time. While this project has been discontinued since, the results were much above expectations and it is projects like these that can create that bridge between academia and job opportunities and allow students to develop skills which are applicable to real-life situations, while learning to use their analytical skills at the same time.

The philosophy of “doing” instead of pure learning, nowadays also includes the international experience. ‘Internationalization’ as an academic course has been part of the curriculum for quite a while, especially in Business Schools for instance. However, academia now teaches internationalization by practice as well. Academic institutions send their students to study abroad, to work abroad and to intern abroad and their implicit aim is to prepare them to become citizens of a global world. While not all students will work in business organizations, command of the English language as well as experience with different cultures, with a diversity of people and with the experience of being ‘an outsider’ in a different country, help form young people who are more tolerant of others. Thus, we see that for many academic institutions nowadays, a study is not well-rounded if the student has not participated in some sort of international experience.

Academic institutions that want to include practical experience, need to re-think the way they organize their teaching. For instance, at the College of Management, classes are arranged in such a way that students can easily work concurrently. Thus, undergraduate classes are organized according to certain days in which students come to class for a whole day, thereby freeing up other days. Graduate studies are taught in the evenings and on Fridays, which is a free day for most in Israel (for those who wonder, Sunday is a workday).

Academia may consider teaching short modules rather than whole semesters, and generally invest in ideas that will allow the system to become more flexible than it was in the past in order to allow for these types of blended learning.

In conclusion, we argue that hands-on experience in terms of internship, part-time work, or externship as well as international experience have to become part and parcel of academic education. These kinds of experiences develop skills and capabilities that are nearly impossible to develop in a purely academic setting. As they are requested in the workplace and as most students see academic education as a vehicle to further their careers, academic institutions should make a supreme effort to incorporate such experiences in the academic curriculum.

Social mobility, inclusion and accessibility

Academia used to be accessible mostly to those who had proven academic skills and belonged to certain social groups. Indeed, people with special needs, those with learning disabilities, but also those who come from immigrant families and other minorities, and even women, encountered difficulties entering academia. However, in the 21st century, which is characterized by social mobility, as well as geographical mobility and gender mobility, inclusion has become the new norm. Inclusion and diversity in academia means that institutions of higher learning are opening their doors to new social groups in terms of students as well as staff.

Diversity is created when group members come from heterogeneous backgrounds that reflect varied cultural norms, skills, abilities, ways of thinking and interpretational abilities. Diversity has been studied with respect to the individual in the organization, the work group and top management, regarding processes as well as organizational outcomes (i.e. Kalev et al., 2006; Richard et al., 2006; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Much of the research on diversity assumes that this is a topic fraught with difficulties, which brings many challenges to organizations in the short run, especially at the individual level. However, in the long term, studies point out the positive outcomes of diversity such as increased information, increased creativity and higher quality decisions (Cox, 1993; Cox, Lobel & McLeod, 1991). Diversity of the group in general, is considered a way to broaden the skill set of teams, reduce group-think and inertia, enlarge the knowledge pool, and encourage organizational ambidexterity (Almor et al,. 2019; Carpenter et al., 2004; Pitcher & Smith, 2001; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1997; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998).

Gender diversity in academia is still a major, unsolved issue. While more women than men study in academia in most developed countries, women are still underrepresented in senior academic positions at an international level (Brink & Benschop, 2012). Part of the explanation may be that behavior of women in organizations is measured differently from that of men. For instance, Brink and Benschop (2012) argue that women's work product is frequently held to higher standards than men's and that information that supports pre-existing stereotypes tends to be noticed and remembered, while information that contradicts them tends to be overlooked and forgotten. Women have to prove themselves time and again in the workplace, while men do not (Williams & Dempsey, 2014). However, studies show that gender inclusion in any organization and also in academia has positive long term results for the organization as well as for the individual. Research concerning the inclusion of minorities in academic settings, as well as inclusion of people with special needs, shows that, while fraught with difficulties in the short term, can create tremendous benefits to the organization and society at large (Williams & Dempsey, 2014). Inclusion means bringing new voices, themes and methods in teaching and in research. It means considering gender and ethnicity, as well as special needs in the way in which courses and research projects are developed and run. Basically, it means challenging the existing status quo of proper academic standards and

practices. Thus, inclusion of groups that were not found in academica previously, creates innovation at the individual and the group level as well as at the organizational level.

Summing up, creating inclusion at the student level means that academia has to adapt its language (for instance, in Hebrew it was common until recently to use only the male language form), adapt to different ways in which people learn (for instance, use technologies that allow students to record lectures so they can hear them again afterwards, allow students who are not able to read, to hear the texts rather than read them), to adapt the way in which we examine knowledge retainment (for instance allow students to work on projects rather than exams), and to create an atmosphere that allows students to feel part of the student body, despite the diversity, to mention just a few changes. It also means creating more job opportunities in academia for those that were not included previously so that they can function, among others, as examples for the younger generation. Moreover, it is especially important to encourage inclusion at the senior academic levels.

Digitization of higher education

Our world is becoming more digitalized by the day. Our phones have become an integral part of our daily lives and we manage ourselves and our environments increasingly through our smartphones. Students use their smart phones to record classes, to partake in quizzes and to take notes. Academia has responded to this digitalization by offering, among others, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). MOOCs are offered by leading universities such as Harvard, MIT and Stanford and universities around the world have jumped on the bandwagon by creating various online options, which enable distance learning at a personally paced tempo. Universities have started to add social media, TEDX and other platforms to the learning experience in order to enable students to experience the process of learning in novel and exciting ways. The use of digitization (i.e. creating online textbooks, online interaction, online exams for instance) enables universities to attempt for a global reach, especially if the MOOCs are taught in English, and work with students who are located in other time zones in various places on the globe. It is expected that the combination of MOOCs with social media platforms will facilitate a more democratic process of learning by allowing professors and students to exchange information, and generate new contents (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2016). However, digitalization also is changing the higher education industry in a radical way; academia is not viewed anymore as the sole source of knowledge and education. New players like Google, TEDX and Coursera are joining the game – and from the perspective of many young people, they are more attractive and fitting to the 21st century than the old academic framework.

The College of Management has started to embrace digitization by providing online courses in Hebrew, by allowing students to participate throughout courses using technologies such as 'Kahoot!' and creating learning environments that can exist off-campus, in a virtual world. In general, students greatly appreciate the digital options that are offered, even though they prefer blended learning experiences which allow them to come to campus part of the time. In our experience, students appreciate on-campus learning, enjoy the opportunity to network and experience real-life interaction with professors and fellow students. Therefore, the focus of the College of Management is now on blended learning, i.e. allowing students to experience both on and off-campus learning, using digitized frameworks together with the classic face-to-face learning experience.

Digitization of academic studies seems to be a fait-accompli in the eyes of many, even though most academic institutions still grapple with the question how to integrate digitization into the academic learning process. Blended learning, Kahoot!, synchronic and a-synchronic learning, digital textbooks, online exams and visualization are all part of this process, which eventually will lead to a more engaged and democratic learning process. For now, it seems all

the involved stakeholders are still learning how to adapt to the changes taking place in our daily lives and how to integrate them into the academic learning process.

Discussion and Conclusion

Academic institutions around the world find themselves in a bind. On one hand they are increasingly ruled by global measures, rankings, and indices through which they must prove their academic worth. They are required to show that they are innovative and creative and create a steady flow of academic research, but they must also be cost-efficient (Katila, Merilainen, & Tienari, 2010). Indeed, corporatization of academia can be detected all over the world (Burawoy, 2008), with ever increasing pressure to absorb even more students and prepare them for a world which is experiencing as Schwab (2017) calls it, a fourth revolution. From existing in an ivory tower which focused mainly on research, academia nowadays must serve the younger generation and prepare them for careers outside that ivory tower, and for jobs that do not even exist yet.

In this paper we have attempted to show how the function of higher education is changing and what academic institutions can do to prepare their students for careers in the 21st century by focusing on four dimensions:

1. *The role of the student – from a passive listener to an active partner in the learning process*

We develop the argument that rather than viewing the student as an empty vessel which can be filled with knowledge, students in the 21st century find themselves in need of capabilities that involve soft skills, problem solving, presentation skills and the ability to work in an environment that is inclusive of a wide variety of people. We suggest that, alongside with traditional academic teaching, academic institutions should include work experience, international experience, inclusion and diversity as well as digitation in their frameworks in order to help their students to become successful participants in an ever-changing world. Thus, we suggest that academia should encourage students not only to listen, write and read but also to experience (by participating in a practicum, through international experiences and so forth) and to become active partners in the learning process.

2. *The learning process – using multiple learning methods*

The traditional academic teaching method of frontal lecturing is not able to compete with the digital platforms of the 21st century. Students who want to know something look it up on Google, students who want to understand how to do something, use YouTube for instructions. Thus, part of the academic learning process is becoming increasingly obsolete. For academia to remain current and attractive to the generation that was born at the beginning of this millennium, it must re-invent its teaching methods and re-think the learning process. In this paper we argue that academia must join the era of digitalization and use it, by incorporating tools such as TEDX, online teaching, using social platforms to allow students to contribute throughout the semester to the learning process and so on.

3. *Diversity*

In order stay relevant, academia is required to become more flexible and to think about teaching in a different way, starting with the concept of inclusion. Inclusion concerns all groups that were not part of academia traditionally but have become part of academia recently. Inclusion refers to minorities, people with special needs and even women when we address the issue of senior academic staff. However, inclusion also concerns the bridge between academia and career development. Thus, we suggest that students should be exposed in class not only to professors who mainly teach theory and critical thinking, but also to professionals from the industry that can demonstrate how the theory can be used in the work environment, as well as young graduates who are making their first career moves. Learning is

becoming less about transferring theorical thinking and more about applying theory and knowing how to use theoretical models in the work environment.

4. Creating skills and capabilities

In this paper we argue that academic education is shifting from focusing mostly on theoretical learning to the creation of skills and capabilities, which are considered central to success in the 21st century, including soft skills, analytical skills, global interaction skills, presentation skills and the ability to think independently. Although academia started out as a place where free dialogue between professors and students was encouraged, the commercialization of academia has created routines and standardization of curricula which do not serve these purposes anymore. Thus, we argue that academia must re-invent itself in such a way that it creates a learning environment that is based on self-learning, on mentoring and participative activities. We argue that academia should create more situations in which students learn by doing and become active members of the learning process, through experiences in the "real" world during their studies, accompanied by analytical processes, through reflections on their learning processes, through digitation options that allow them to study according to their schedules and by creating an inclusive learning environment. By cheerleading their students, professors can create learning experiences for their students that were unimaginable in previous generations of students. Thus, we argue that professors as well as the academic institutions must learn how to change their vision of higher learning and how academic studies are taught.

Summing up, while the position of academia in the world is changing, we argue in this paper that its function in educating the next generation, has never been more vital. Although the education models which were effective in the 20th century are lacking in relevance for this new generation, we believe that by implementing the changes that we discuss in this paper, academia will lead the next generation of young people into the future and into career and job opportunities that will only exist for those who will receive higher education, providing the academic institutions will be able to understand what the work environment is looking for and how to deliver the goods.

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