

Chapter 1

Leadership: In a Time When Learners Take Ownership of Their Learning

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ABSTRACT

The rapid developments led by the digitization of society have been described as heralding the fourth industrial revolution. Individuals have more learning choices than ever before in both formal and informal settings. A fundamental change is needed in the way we think about education's role in global development because it has a catalytic impact on the well-being of individuals and the future of our planet. This chapter explores the topics of open online learning, learning spaces, personal learning and learners' orchestration of their own learning, leadership and the digital transformation and quality related concerns raised by the global digital transformation. Quality related questions are today on student satisfaction, short and long time impact, for individuals, and for the society. Leaders and managers in higher education have to take their responsibilities, and can make a huge difference related to the role of higher education, its offers, services, processes, quality and impact.

INTRODUCTION

Individuals have more learning choices than ever before in both formal and informal settings. UNESCO's education goal for 2030, which was included in the Incheon Declaration (UNESCO, 2015a), is to foster and ensure inclusive, equitable, and

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quality education and to promote global, lifelong, and lifewide learning for all. This goal will be achieved through access, inclusion, equity, gender equality, and lifelong learning opportunities. In the Qingdao Declaration, UNESCO further stated that the transformation in education will be achieved through the promotion of digital opportunities and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to achieve education targets and new sustainable development goals (UNESCO, 2015 b). Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO (Today's Newspaper, 2016), emphasized that although digitization has affected almost all sectors of society, the education system still lags behind. She has argued that education needs to change fundamentally to keep pace with global development:

[A] fundamental change is needed in the way we think about education's role in global development because it has a catalytic impact on the well-being of individuals and the future of our planet.... Now, more than ever, education has a responsibility to be in gear with 21st-century challenges and aspirations and foster the right types of values and skills that will lead to sustainable and inclusive growth and peaceful living together.

UNESCO's goals for 2030 present fundamental, imminent challenges to the educational sector. All educational sectors, not only higher education, are now operating in increasingly competitive global, regional, and local environments, which have resulted in rapid glocalization. The term glocalization means to act both globally and locally to meet the demands of globalization. These challenges include changing demographics, digitization, the increased focus on individuals and personal learning, as well as collaboration and networking. In addition, the traditional line between formal and informal education has become increasingly blurred. Moreover, because of the unbundling of traditional settings, education and educational offers are urged to adopt new business models. Indeed, according to Pakman (2011), and to Ferreira, Ornelas, and Turner (2015) unbundling has been called *the great disruptor*. The neologism unbundling refers to the process by which new players provide expertise and methodologies that undermine the classical model of the university as the leading producer and disseminator of knowledge. In this case, unbundling refers to the effects of the ubiquitous use of mobile devices, Internet connectivity, consumer web technologies, social media, and information access in the 21st century on traditional institutions (education, broadcasting, newspapers, games, shopping, etc.). Unbundling separates the packages offered by such institutions and provides particular aspects of them at a scale and cost unmatched by the old order (Chatfield, 2012; Watters, 2012).

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