

Chapter 21

Positive Scholarship for K–20 Education in Africa: Using Experience–Led Learning to Improve Career and Scholarship

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ABSTRACT

Challenges of the modern global world require a change in thinking and reform of educational curricular to incorporate means through which education can enhance scholarship and career advancement for adult learners in Africa. The main objective of this chapter is to develop K-20 educational strategies that promote scholarship and career development to meet the complex human resource demand of the business industry in Africa. The exploration focuses on the type of education that combines both work and scholarship through formal and informal means. The chapter critically examines the approaches that educational institutions should follow to enrich their curricular activities with work experience. The author discusses the means through which the opportunities from the industry could be employed to create conducive learning environment for learners pursuing K-20 education.

INTRODUCTION

Positive scholarship and career enhancement are attained through learning acquired from both formal and informal means that facilitate the learners' ability to obtain more knowledge and skills through work experience (Dolan & Tanner, 2005). The chapter focuses on K-20 education that uses experiential legitimacy for lifelong progression of career for people of African descent working in the business industry with penchant for scholarship. In Africa, many school drop-outs, resulting from abject poverty, misdirection, and poor advice seek menial jobs in the business industry. Promotion of workers in most cases is dependent on acquisition of both academic qualification and work experience. Therefore, after working for a while, the young adult workers seek avenues for continuation of their education by attending weekend school, evening school, or pursuing online educational programs. In Africa, many deprived families fail to send their children to school and push them to do menial jobs at early ages. Most of the

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illiterate workers begin to learn as adults when working (Aydin, Guclu, & Pisapia, 2015). K-20 learning approach as discussed by the author aims at promoting scholarship and career advancement leading to job creation in Africa and other parts of the underdeveloped world where unemployment is very high.

This chapter considers how the educational institutions in Africa can extend their academic programs to cover learning acquired from the industry. The chapter considers how higher education institutions in Africa can also enrich their academic programs with experience from the industry using industrial attachment and field trips. It covers areas such as using experiential learning, problem-solving approach, and sharing of tacit knowledge through project teams and role plays to enhance the learning development of the student at work. The chapter also discusses some of the unintended consequences using the experience-based methods that may result. The flexibility required using both classroom and industrial approaches to add value to the abilities of the learner to meet the requirement of the academic institutions and the business industry is also discussed. The global economy can derive meaningful benefits from this chapter based on the approach that promotes scholarship, practice and leadership.

K-20 Education and Experiential Legitimacy

K-20 education in this context is about both formal and informal learning that takes place from educational institutions that incorporate work experience in their curriculum development. Learning that incorporates experiential legitimacy for enhancement of scholarship and career advancement improves the learners' ability to contribute meaningfully to the emerging learning society that meets the advanced global needs (Dolan & Tanner, 2005). The learning takes place from both systematic and unsystematic studies. The systematic studies start from pre-schools through university education where the scholars seek academic attainments including certificates, diplomas, and degrees. The unsystematic approach is in the form of self-directed study that aims at lifelong learning to improve career. Experience-led learning has been considered as one of the vital means of learning based on work experience which improves career and develops individuals at work and their organizations (McCombs, 2003)

Enhancing K-20 education in Africa requires a learning conversation with skillful inputs from educational and organizational leaders. According to Dann and Richardson (2015) and Boyd (2014) learning conversation involves the use of dialogic strategies to create a space for conversation. The conversational learning discourse involves epistemological and ontological means or apprehensive and comprehensive approaches using tact and abilities that include listening, seeing, touching, smelling, feeling, tasting, and reading skills. The conversation enhances the learners' ability to use their working experience to construct memory (Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, 2005).

Redesigning K-20 Education for Career Enhancement

Challenges of the modern world require a change in thinking and reform of educational curricular incorporating the means through which students acquire skills alongside the learning that takes place in the classroom. The education needed for the current generation requires a change that supports students to become creators of jobs through career advancement instead of becoming job-seekers from the job markets. In Africa, the rate of unemployment is high due to unavailability of jobs for fresh graduates. Acquisition of industrial skills whilst at school promotes scholarship with professionalism that pave way for more graduates to have the ability to research into jobs as students. The knowledge acquired leads the learners to become practitioners and creators of jobs through research and skills obtained from the

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