

Innovation and Creativity in Human Resource Management. Why Should We Change the Way We Teach our Students?

Vladimir-Aurelian ENĂCHESCU¹
Costin DAMASARU

Abstract

The process of innovation and creativity can greatly improve the efficiency, transparency, accountability and responsiveness in educational systems. The education system in both private and public schools was created so that it could deliver the working force needed in the industrial era. That is why, the learning process is somewhat shaped like in an assembly line of a factory. We need to understand what we are facing so that we can deliver the right solution. The Khan solution it's great but it's not enough. We need to learn from the success of that model and others like it, and to adapt it to deliver results at a bigger scale, in order to make a real change.

Keywords: *human resources management, innovation, education, high education*

JEL classification: M12, M14.

1. Human resources management – conceptual overview

Human resources motivation is essential for the activity of any organization, no matter of its area of business or expertise, because without mobilized workforce, satisfied and with permanent desire to improve, no organization can develop. Knowing a person's motivation is all about finding the answer to the question - "what are the reasons for which a person undertake certain activities?" The answer is not easy because a person acting causes are multiple and cannot be reduced to external stimuli. In terms of organization policy, the most important topic to be taken into consideration are currently the motivational strategies, namely an accumulation of policies, plans, programs and specific activities that lead to increased employee motivation.

2. Education and its perspectives

As soon as the students enrollee in a company as employees, and thus become "the work force", the process of motivating them begins. But before ex-students begin to transform into "the work force" they must first get a proper education in school, may it be private or public. And this right now is a "delicate matter" in Romania, as it is all over the world.

Sir Ken Robinson, in his latest book, "*Out of Our Minds: Learning to Be Creative*"(2001), states that much of the countries around the world are reforming their public education system, for two reasons.

¹ Vladimir-Aurelian ENĂCHESCU, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania
E-mail: vld_enachescu@yahoo.com
Costin DAMASARU, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

A. Economic: "How do we educate our children to take place in the economies of the 21-st century?" We are at a turning point in many ways but perhaps the most important for us is the influence that new technological developments have on the education and motivation of the workforce in terms of human resources managers. Combine that with the fact that no viable predictions can be made on the development and outcome of the economic strategies that major global markets are working with , and you are sure to face a dilemma- "what the economy will look like at the end of next week" as Sir Robison puts it.

The education system in both private and public schools was created so that it could deliver the working force needed in the industrial era. That is why, the learning process is somewhat shaped like in an assembly line of a factory. We have students who are in the same classes solely based on the age factor disregarding their abilities and passions. We have a standardize process where, in fact, it should be completely different, reaching out to the real needs of the beneficiaries of this whole process, the kids and students.

Until a couple of years ago, this discrepancy between the needs of the students and what the education system is offering them in order to satisfy those needs, was not so visible, but due to recent boom in information access and both economic and social turmoil that the financial crisis has brought to the whole global economy, we are faced with a serious problem.

The unemployment rate in the European Union has reached staggering new peaks. As Eurostat estimates, 26.654 million men and women in the people under 28 years old of (whom 19.231 million were in the euro area), were unemployed in July 2013. Compared with June 2013, the number of persons unemployed decreased by 33.000 in the EU-28 and by 15.000 in the euro area. Compared with July 2012, unemployment rose by 995 000 in the EU-28 and by 1.008.000 in the euro area." (Eurostat, 2013).

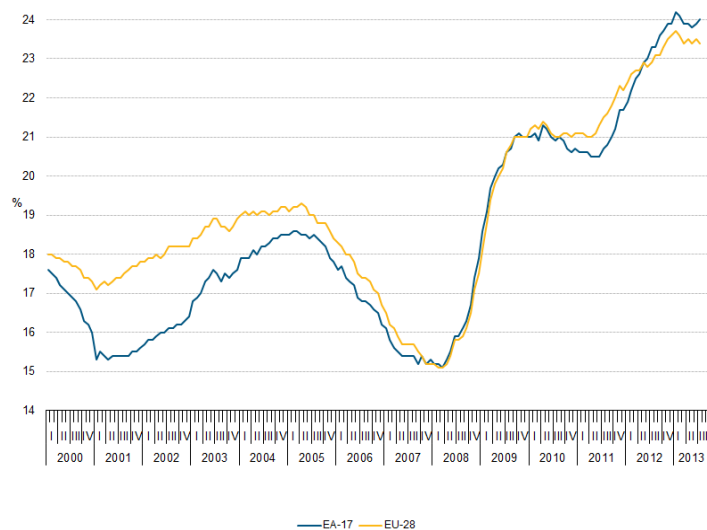


Figure 1. Source: Internet: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/

	Youth unemployment rate				Youth unemployment ratio		
	2010	2011	2012	2012Q4*	2010	2011	2012
EU-27	21.1	21.4	22.8	23.2	9.0	9.1	9.7
Euro area	20.9	20.8	23.0	23.7	8.7	8.7	9.6
Belgium	22.4	18.7	19.8	22.0	7.3	6.0	6.2
Bulgaria	21.8	25.0	28.1	28.4	6.7	7.4	8.5
Czech Republic	18.3	18.1	19.5	19.3	5.7	5.4	6.1
Denmark	14.0	14.2	14.1	14.2	9.4	9.6	9.1
Germany	9.9	8.6	8.1	7.9	5.1	4.5	4.1
Estonia	32.9	22.3	20.9	19.3	12.6	9.1	8.7
Ireland	27.6	29.1	30.4	29.4	12.0	12.1	12.3
Greece	32.9	44.4	55.3	57.9	10.0	13.0	16.1
Spain	41.6	46.4	53.2	55.2	17.8	19.0	20.6
France	23.6	22.8	24.3	25.4	8.9	8.4	9.0
Italy	27.8	29.1	35.3	36.9	7.9	8.0	10.1
Cyprus	16.6	22.4	27.8	31.8	6.7	8.7	10.8
Latvia	37.2	31.0	28.4	24.7	13.9	11.6	11.4
Lithuania	35.3	32.2	26.4	24.2	10.4	9.0	7.7
Luxembourg	15.8	16.4	18.1	18.5	3.5	4.2	5.0
Hungary	26.6	26.1	28.1	28.8	6.6	6.4	7.3
Malta	13.1	13.8	14.2	14.5	6.7	7.1	7.2
Netherlands	8.7	7.6	9.5	9.8	6.0	5.3	6.6
Austria	8.8	8.3	8.7	8.7	5.2	5.0	5.2
Poland	23.7	25.8	26.5	27.5	8.2	8.7	8.9
Portugal	27.7e	30.1	37.7	38.4	8.2	11.7	14.3
Romania	22.1	23.7	22.7	22.2	6.9	7.4	7.0
Slovenia	14.7	15.7	20.6	23.2	5.9	5.9	7.1
Slovakia	33.9	33.5	34.0	35.1	10.4	10.0	10.4
Finland	21.4	20.1	19.0	19.3	10.6	10.1	9.8
Sweden	24.8	22.8	23.7	24.1	12.8	12.1	12.4
United Kingdom	19.6	21.1	21.0	20.7	11.6	12.4	12.4

* The quarterly youth unemployment rate is seasonally adjusted.

e: estimate

Figure 2. Source: Internet: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/

"Educational qualifications are still the best insurance against unemployment, which clearly increases the lower the level of education attained. This characteristic was noted in all Member States in 2012, as the average unemployment rate in the EU-27 for those aged between 25 and 64 having attained at most a lower secondary education was 16.8 %, much higher than the rate of unemployment for those that had obtained a tertiary education qualification (5.6 %)." This is the message that the European Union officials had to deliver in order to begin the development of a viable strategy that would solve this problem with such a great impact on the future economic and social European context.

The reality is that we have a huge unemployment rate mainly because the students can't find work after they finish school, on one hand, in the case of those who actually access the education system, and on the other hand, for those who are reluctant in attending some form of higher education because most of them don't find any utility in "climbing the education ladder" on the fact that they feel as they will not benefit from the information delivered in those education patterns. For those who have a degree it's hard finding well paid job and for those without a degree it's nearly impossible, as the statistic shows. This issue is strongly linked with the social, economic and political conditions in the increasingly unstable and the sky rocketing youth unemployment rate in the European Union, which has

reached alarming levels. It's becoming obvious that one of the solutions out of this crisis both financially and motivational in the active population, is the education that students receive in school.

B. Cultural: Another side effect of this entire "information flood" that we are experiencing, is that people are losing their cultural identity in the process of globalization. To motivate students in attending a higher form of education, was easy until a decade ago, because the message was plain and simple " if you want a well paid job and a happy life you need to go to college, get a degree and then you are set for life". That is not the case anymore. So, what happened? Why is there extremely difficult to find a proper job even if you have a college degree ?Why does a degree no longer offers the same guarantee for a successful career, as it did two decades ago? Information access is virtually unlimited , and, as some corporate managers have observed, there is a change in employee behavior at work, which in turn leads to an increasing need in maximizing the efficiency of motivational strategies, which can be done only by radically change them in order to meet the new realities which the labor markets its providing.

One of the great education entrepreneurs of this information boom ,a man highly appreciated for his role in changing the education paradigms and delivering efficient alternative education systems is Salman Khan who funded the Khan academy, which is". A non-for-profit organization with the goal of changing education for the better by providing a free world-class education for anyone anywhere. All of the site's resources are available to anyone. It doesn't matter if you are a student, teacher, home-schooled, principal, adult returning to the classroom after 20 years, or a friendly alien just trying to get a leg up in earthly biology. Khan Academy's materials and resources are available to you completely free of charge", as the introduction of their websites states.

Khan's way of thinking and drive is reflected by his speech - "My sense is that in Einstein's generation there were probably a hundred potential Einstein's that were just completely squandered. They turned into some crazy person on the side of the street or something. Who knows? Now we can go into a reality where that could be nurtured in a more scalable way and be identified in a more scalable way. And this is the "beauty" of the internet. There's a classic example of the genius who is not so appreciated by the non-genius people around them, and then they get told that they're an idiot and so they think that they're nothing. But the internet now allows that genius to get that exposure and hopefully other geniuses around the world will recognize that genius for what it is."

All that Khan did was to identify the real education needs in our days and deliver a solution. This is what we need to do as well. We need to understand what we are facing so that we can deliver the right solution .The Khan solution it's great but it's not enough. We need to learn from the success of that model and others like it, and to adapt it to deliver results at a bigger scale, in order to make a real change. Also we need to understand the side effects that this kind of alternative education can bring as well, due to the lack of professional guidance that certified, experienced, real flesh and blood teacher can deliver.

Internet development influences all spheres of social life, including the education system. First digital influence gradually replace paper books with digital books that are available on the Internet, free or paid. Internet can provide various forms Auxiliary for high school and university for courses and seminars. We will give one example, spectacular documentary. "A trip to the moon," by George Melies made in 1902 to the present day, the documentary has evolved both in terms of content and production technology. The documentary, widespread Internet is a very useful teaching tool in high school biology and history fields. Type structures poetic, expository, observational, participatory can be found in documentary films thus an understanding of the topics presented in support of school hours. The internet is very useful as a pedagogical tool for higher education. In the course of advertising spots can be viewed quickly over the Internet, can be analyzed prescriptions for achieving them. Documentary films can also be great for media courses and seminars (I. Stavre; 2011)

The transition from reception to discovery, from conditioning to constructivism calls for the socio-emotional variables of learning, internal and external motivation (to be pedagogically assessed), the students` interaction with the school environment, the teaching style appropriate for the class and students, the democratic discipline. All these socio-affective factors dependent on students, but mostly on teachers support social learning that enables the achievement of superior learning objectives. (M. Drămnescu, 2010)

The risk is that in all this on-line training sessions, which are a huge hit these days, available at the touch of a keyboard, the human factor, the real "face to face meetings" can become obsolete, and all the advantages that come with that would simply vanish.

3. Innovative methods for a better education

We must not go extreme and state that the future of education will be on line, but to make a mix of the cyber world education system that it's currently developing at an incredible pace, and the traditional learning platforms that need to adapt to the new realities and needs of this new informational world.

But how do we do that? How we can make this mix of the on line and the traditional learning platform and create a new way of teaching our children and students? Well, it may seem as a surprise, but some entities, who are very interested in having highly efficient driven education systems, already solve that problem. We are talking about the corporate world, the multinational companies that we're faced with this kind of problem decades ago, and they soon started working on solving it. The multinational companies worldwide were the first to be faced with the problem of poorly educated students that became their "workforce", at the beginning of the 80's. They had a problem in the Human Resource Management department, due to the poor level of education that the new employees were showing. So, the question that were facing was "what can be done?" The solution that they figured out after intense research was not only to

invest in the private and public education systems so that it can deliver highly educated recruits, but in this process they had very poor control on the modus operandi and thus on the results, but to create their own "learning platforms" for their employees.

A very good example of multinational company that had delivered an alternative "corporate learning system" is Motorola who developed the Motorola University's Six Sigma Methodology that is a proven tool set for driving and achieving transformational change within an organization. Six Sigma is a continuous improvement process focusing and organization on Customer Requirements (Process Alignment, Analytical Rigor and Timely Execution)" (www.motorola.com). It's only one of the numerous multinational companies that had to adapt and make the best of the situation and thus develop an "in-house" learning platform in order to upgrade the employees' education level.

All over the world, from IBM to Coca Cola, from Exxon to Macdonald, corporations had to adapt in order to give their employees the education tools to succeed in this highly competitive world. When the foundation of the employees' education was very unstable, they had to deliver and develop training sessions to fill the gaps that the public education systems failed to do.

4. A brief overlook over the educational process in a corporation compared with public education

In this next part of the article we will focus mainly on the situation in Romanian education sector and the solutions that we propose in order to improve the current situation. The education system in Romania has undergone a huge process of transformation in the last twenty years that have set Romania to a democratic trajectory. Not all the changes were adjusted to the real needs of the educational system and we can see now why. Our focus in this article is to understand the similarities and differences between the learning systems in the corporate world on one hand, and the education system in both public and private schools, in Romania. We were very interested to see how the particularities that give the corporate learning system his strengths could be transferred to improve the students experience in the education system of public and private schools. It's quite important to understand how we can change gradually the way we teach our student because due to an unprecedented increase in information access, from numerous devices available at affordable prices, we are now faced both with a paradox and a problem. We have a future work force, the students, that we are trying to educate, who have access to a great deal of information , from an overflowing on-line alternative education platforms, but the trick here is that without proper guidance the students face the risk of being lost in all this ocean of information.

For understanding the particularities of a great learning system that has been proved to be highly efficient, we are going to focus on the learning platform of the biggest telecom company in Romania, Orange. Orange Romania is part of

the France Telecom group, and has about 10 million customers and around 2000 employees. Orange Romania has been the number one telecom company in Romania since 2003, because has invested and focused on developing a great team, most of that being done with the help of a highly efficient learning platform, part of an international education program for the employees, developed by France Telecom and adapted for the Romanian particularities. The learning platform that we have studied and examined for this research, it's called Sales Academy.

The Sales Academy platform was part of a bigger program created for the purpose of bringing to all 2000 Romanian employees, the information needed in order for them to perform better and to create added value for the company.

We are going to do a very brief SWOT analyze on the learning system in this multinational company compared to the public education system. One of the many interesting parts in this program was that the message that the company has provided for the employees when first introducing the education program was set to motivate them in embracing this learning initiative. This is one of the key advantages of this learning platform. There is a strong connection between the managerial vision and managerial culture that will be reflected in the way that its functions are performed and, finally, in the organization's evolution (M. Nastase, 2009).

The corporate world is a world where everything is developing at high rate, where every month you have sales targets to achieve, customers to deal with and keep them happy in order to pay the bills, managers with egos, colleagues, subordinates, team members, deadlines - where every second counts, where every customer is very important, where "the customer is king and always right". So, in order to face all this challenges, the Sales team must be well prepared in facing them.

Strengths:

- Huge resources that can be invested in the development of highly efficient and up to date learning platforms.
- Experienced managers that can deliver valuable information based on their personal "on the field experience"
- A more efficient information flow, achieved through the well structured information channel
- Well managed, accountable and results driven departments fully interested in delivering efficient learning programs
- Quarterly reviews on the results of the programs, on the Board Members meetings, with highly stakeholders interests guarded.
- The "corporate education strategy" developed on a medium and long term, with all the resources allocated on an approved budget, which is crucial in the continuity an efficiency of the whole program.
- The understanding that a very efficient education system can bring the competitive advantage that will keep the corporation ahead of its competitors.

- Worldwide infrastructure able to bring innovation available to all the subsidiaries
- The growing recognition of the need to ensure healthy ecosystems, social equity and good organizational governance in order to determine the corporate performance in relation to the society in which the company operates and to its impact on the environment when it comes about measuring its overall performance and its ability to continue operating effectively (R. Filip, I. E. Iamandi, S. M. Munteanu, 2013)
- Highly efficient International information transfer.
- Highly professional trainers with modern teaching methods
- Well paid motivated trainers.

Weaknesses:

- The main focus is delivering results, no time for those who can achieve the demanded performance criteria.
- Main focus on maximizing the corporation profit rate
- Limit to the trainers carrier and thus a non motivating facto

Opportunities:

- Informational boom that has "erased" the distances between regions of the world, now every region being connected via internet thus enabling commercial advantages suitable for development
- New emerging markets that can bring added value to the companies capitalization

Threats:

- Unexpected shift in the global market structure that can have an effect in the requirements from the learning platforms
- Change in the stakeholders component thus in the management strategy and the deliverables expected, that can have repercussions on the long term strategy of the learning platform.

Predicting the major factor of progress, Daniel H. Pink considered that education and medicine will be the most important factors of progress for the future of the human race. More than that, the same author suggests that a university education will be free to every man and woman and that several great national universities will have been established. We can see in the contemporary world that his predictions are real and we strongly believe that both education and medicine have to be addressed as top priorities by every government and developed accordingly. As Mihaila and Mihaita (2012) argument "a dynamic action model development of numerous factors, labor market should provide an adaptive environment, enabling each of us to find the desired role as an actor in this market" and we always have to relate this to the educational system.

Conclusion

We strongly believe that innovation in the human resources in education represents a key factor for the development of the educational system on the way of gaining performance as answer to the social challenges. Social dynamic evolution needs prepared specialists to cover the emerging jobs and to develop new bridges of knowledge in order to secure future. Under the impact of information and communication technologies, the way in which learning occurs has changed. Current solutions try to combine current modalities of e-learning and traditional ways of making education by mixing methods, techniques, models of instruction that facilitate an effective and fun learning. The solution found is called blended learning (C Căce, R Richiteanu-Nastase, C Stăiculescu, 2012). The first step in order to build a innovative system is to facilitate communication between universities and the major actors on the labour market. We appreciate that cooperation through research projects and internships are also a key to implement the openness toward innovation. Worldwide academic studies reflect the need of research for innovative ways of approaching educational system. We consider that if there is a gap between the current human resources educators and their job requirements, the preparation of the future teachers needs to involve active involvement of the actors from the job market and a permanent communication between them and the academic community.

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