Exploring the frontier of informal open learning

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EXPLORING THE FRONTIER OF INFORMAL OPEN LEARNING (IOL)

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Objectives

• To serve as a point of discussion about the next frontier of learning and education

• To offer a suggestion for an alternative learning approach

The image was retrieved from http://www.innovationmanagement.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/innovation-capacity-learning-education.jpg
Traditional Education System

• Structured curriculum

• Standardised examinations

• Emphasise on academic achievement ("elitist" model)

• Produced in “batches”
Critics of Education System

Ken Robinson (Author, educationist):
- The system suppress diversity and creativity.
- Learning should be personalised, and not standardised.

Joichi Ito (Director, MIT Media Lab):
- Education is what people do to you and learning is what you do to yourself.
- People are more motivated to learn independently.

The image was retrieved from http://datafirstintelligence.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/TED-logo.png
Open Distance Learning (ODL)

- A breath of fresh air..
- Break away from the constrains of physical classrooms
- Conduct class to large student population
- Reduced the dependency of students on teachers
- Retained characteristics:
  - Curriculum structure
  - Standardised examination

The image was retrieved from http://distance-educator.com/wp-content/uploads/MortarBoardComputers_01.jpeg
Alternative from the classroom: Problem Based Learning (PBL)

- Focus is shifted from the learning content to the problem to be solved
- Learners take control of their own learning
- PBL approach helps to break away from rigid curriculum structures

Tan, O.S. (2003). Problem-based Learning Innovation
Alternative from the Community: Maker Movement

- Extended from the extension of the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) culture
- Constructivism - emphasises on learning-through-doing
- Technology applications: product design, fabrication, calligraphy, movie making and software programming

The image was retrieved from http://www.enterrasolutions.com/media/The-Maker-Movement.png
Why Informer Learners?

- Moore (1973): more informal learners than formally registered students
- “Invisible” learners who have left formal education but continue to learn for career or leisure
- Self-directed in determining what and how they learn.
Informal Open Learning (IOL)

- No fixed syllabus
- No examination
- No certificate
- Lifelong
- Focus on value

The image was retrieved from http://www.growthengineering.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Many-people-chatting-about-everything-learning.jpg
Knowledge Management Approach

- Managing informal learning is difficult - it does not have fixed curriculum.
- There is a fixed pattern in the learning process.
- Learning process involves flow of knowledge.
Knowledge Management Approach

- Nonaka and Takeuchi (1999), SECI model
- The conversions of “tacit” and “explicit” knowledge across four quadrants
- Tacit knowledge - in the brains
- Explicit knowledge - codified and recorded
Value Creation

- Solve a problem
- Create a product
- Make life better

SECI Plain

Q1
Q2
Q3
Q4

Value
Environment for IOL

- Socialising: Space for meeting and discussion
- Externalising: Platform for sharing the recorded activities
- Combining: Facilities for previous work references and publications
- Internalising: Online learning contents searchable by functional topics
- Create an environment that encourages self-directed learning.
Alternative to Exam & Certificate: Show your skills online

• The results of learning is reflected directly from the values of work (Flores, 2014)

• E-portfolio can serve a few purposes,
  – to validate the work
  – to advertise the capabilities of learners
  – to be used as record knowledge so that others can learn from the experience
Target Shift in Learning

- **Formal education:**
  - Standardised
  - Just-in-case
  - Pass examination
  - Qualification and assessment

- **Informal learning:**
  - Diversified
  - Just-in-time
  - Create value
  - Skill and capability

Bridge the Academia-Industry Gap

- Academic research are far ahead in time to be relevant to the industry
- Researchers who seek publication avoid “industrial relevant” projects
- The projects for informal learning should fill the gap in terms of industrial relevancy
- Project value should directly meet industry needs

The image was retrieved from http://m.c.lnk.d.licdn.com/mpr/mpr/p/3/005/074/0f3/2ee21f7.jpg
Education Reform

- Almost all countries in the world are looking for education reform
- Usually education reforms started from lower education
- With informal learning, reform can also start from another end - the pool of experienced learners

Former Education

Primary  Secondary  Tertiary

Usual reform direction

We start from here

Adult informer learners
Benefits for School Dropouts

- More drop out of schools due to the increase in education costs or lack of interests
- Most of school dropouts have little chance to succeed (Carlozo, 2012)
- IOL can play the role in guiding dropouts to work on their interests and redevelop skills

The image was retrieved from http://preventhighschooldropouts.weebly.com/uploads/1/9/7/8/19787253/1771728_orig.jpg
Benefits for Sharing Economy and Aging Society

- Informal learners present themselves as service providers (as employee or self-employed) through the skills demonstrated.

- Retired personnel can be financially independent and continue contributing their skills or re-skill through sharing economy (Burns, 2013)

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In the Nutshell

Informal Learning  Value creation

Sharing  Employment  Self employ
Possible Future Directions

• Improve usage of Self Directed and Problem Based Learning in the current system

• Introduce IOL in corporate training

• IOL in independent projects or Makers’ projects

The image was retrieved from http://top-10-list.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/following-the-right-path.jpg
Conclusion

• The quest for academic excellence must continue in traditional education.
• IOL can bridge between the industry and academic needs.
• IOL offers an alternative path for lifelong learners to take control of their learning.