

THOUGHTS ON A TRANSITION TOWARDS EDUCATION 4.0

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Let's start with a little disclaimer:

Firstly, I would like to make it clear that I do not see or define education as "luxury good", but as a needed human right that should be available for everybody and at all times. Intellectually though, I do find it very interesting to look at Higher Education through new prisms and to sometimes radically shift paradigms: Trying to bring certain thoughts or concepts, usually linked to Luxury Goods or Fashion, towards education is a thrilling exercise and results have been very positive so far.

Secondly, I do not publish my thoughts for transformation in the educational field because of the current sanitary crises. The research has been compiled before and the proposals have already been successfully applied during my work as a Director of Education in HE. The violent changes in our environment, be they professional, educational or private, due to Corona have just shown how important and needed these proposals could and should be for other schools.

**“Transformation today is not just digital. It is total.
Education is part of that profound transition.”**

Back in May 2020 the New York Magazine published an interview with Professor Galloway. In his nonchalant and direct style, he explains and predicts an in-depth crises of Higher Education. "It will be like department stores in 2018. Everyone will recognize they're going out of business, but it will take longer than people think. There will be a lot of zombie universities. Alumni will step in to help. They'll cut costs to figure out how to stay alive, but they'll effectively be the walking dead (*Galloway, 2020*)".

Even if the interview and his point of view are clearly focused on the US market, I felt apparent parallels to my own world. There was a sort of déjà-vu with developments in the sector of Higher Education I have been arguing against these last years, when I started to elaborate and apply concepts to radically innovate HE for my part. A steady process of discussions, questions and other research results in a first proposal for a fundamental transition towards Education 4.0. These few pages will share 6 articles I posted on my blog putting a few thoughts out there for discussion.

THOUGHTS ON A TRANSITION TOWARDS EDUCATION 4.0

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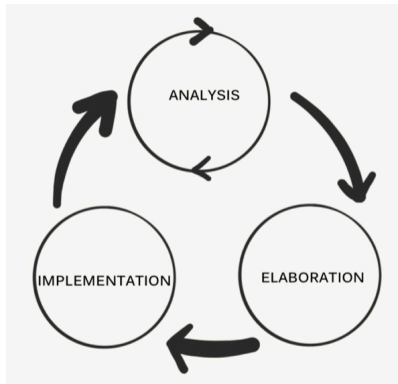
PART VI: FROM OMNI-CHANNEL TO OMNI-PERSONAL

PART I: FROM DISRUPTION TO AGILITY

(posted on 27.11.2020)



Transformation in 3 stages:



Feeling disrupted

We surely all agree that disruption is the word of the hour. It is used as an argument for everything that is wrong with the world, on the same time, it is also seen as the groundwork for entrepreneurship, change and creativity. Professor Schumpeter has somehow become a real Influencer, a cool international reference, be it in classrooms or in must-read business books of the moment. Following his proposal, disruption could be defined as throwing into disorder, or as creative destruction. Today this disorder has clearly been created by the ongoing sanitary crises, by lockdowns, by violent shifts in work environments or by forced digital pedagogic delivery methods. Sometimes even too heavily and massively for certain companies or educators. I seriously don't think that the use of disruption as metaphor for innovation or change may be correct for Higher Education and its working force, not even now.

A lack of courage

No secret, the educational sector is in a desperate need of transformation, but not of disruption. As I often like to say, we've have come to know a lot and payed way too much for it, just to get rid of it all or to destroy it. I prefer and propose to talk about radical, unquestionable and complete inclusion. I know for a fact that providers of Higher Education are not lacking ideas or creativity. They more likely fail to develop innovative longterm solutions going forward for fear of hurting their seemingly lucrative but often obsolete business-models. They lack courage to truly question themselves and the system in which they act. They miss the audacity to build something new (even in parallel) and the agility to execute all of it perpetually.

Becoming agile

Like all businesses in general, universities really need to be highly agile, now more than ever. Agility is the ability of an organization to sense, anticipate, and respond efficiently and effectively to constant changes that are occurring, or are likely to occur. Besides innovative, new business and collaboration models, academic programs and their accreditation systems need to follow the current time and its transformation.

An institution's pertinence needs to be regularly and sincerely analyzed, elaborated or adjusted and finally implemented in well defined micro-cycles. A University and its offer, if based on agile business models, will continuously and rapidly evolve critical structures and attributes that help them to survive, thrive in rough terrain and be of interest for society.

References:

Walsh, J.D., The Coming Disruption. (11.05.2020), New York Magazine
GLEN, The 7 Rules For Reinventing Your Luxury Business Model Post Pandemic. (28.04.2020), Bloomberg (press releases)

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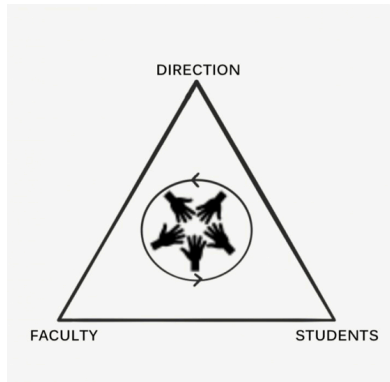
PART II: FROM STUDENTS-FIRST TO FACULTY-FIRST

(posted on 30.11.2020)



PART II: FROM STUDENTS-FIRST TO FACULTY-FIRST

Stakeholders listening:



Listening to a voice or understanding the words

Every serious school is somewhere stating that it is student-centered and listening to the student voice. Out of personal experience I know that this slogan may be deeply felt by the school's administration and faculty, doing whatever possible to listen, while most students have a slightly different feeling. They don't sense to be the center of educational gravity and often don't feel understood. Unfortunately, listening is not the same as understanding what is said, making the clear and precise definition of a felt center impossible.

Working on corporate culture

While working with a high-end private school, I always drew comparisons with legendary hospitality companies such as the Four Seasons or the Ritz-Carlton. Their notion of experience and provided service to their clients is unquestionably one of the best within their field. Such corporate cultures, when they operate at their peak, always take care of staff first. Any brand or school, to execute its purpose, must first build a shared high moral purpose and values as guiding posts for all employees (ie. administration, admission, faculty), internally as well as externally, and live them daily. Human beings, even in a digital environment, must feel cared for and valued. They must have access to education, continuous learning in critical skills that drive domain expertise (*GLEN, 2020*), as well as psychological support to better cope with possible change.

PART II: FROM STUDENTS-FIRST TO FACULTY-FIRST

Including all stakeholders

Additionally to the faculty, if not more, the school's administration, admission and service staff must learn, practice, and master the emotional intelligence life skills that promote deep empathy, trustworthiness and generosity. These fluid soft-skills, if honestly practiced by staff first, will undoubtedly drive collaboration and finally allow a real and profound before mentioned "listening = understanding" experience. In consequence, staff and faculty as well as students, may hold each other accountable for treating all involved stakeholders accordingly. Unfortunately without a Staff- and Faculty-first foundation, student-centricity will never be achieved and therefore felt.

References:

GLEN, The 7 Rules For Reinventing Your Luxury Business Model Post Pandemic. (28.04.2020), Bloomberg (press releases)

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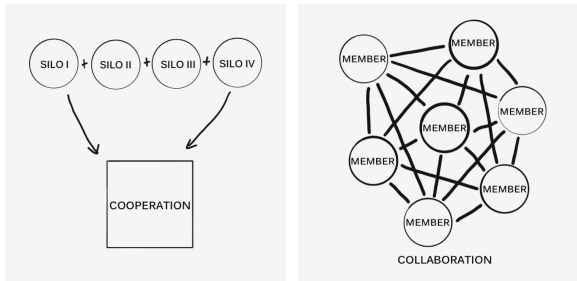
PART III: FROM LINEAR COOPERATION TO HYBRID COLLABORATION

(posted on 02.12.2020)



PART III: FROM LINEAR COOPERATION TO HYBRID COLLABORATION

Cooperation & Collaboration::



References:

Williams, G., Maeda, J., WIRED Virtual Briefing, (24.04.2020), Wired Magazine
GLEN, The 7 Rules For Reinventing Your Luxury Business Model Post Pandemic. (28.04.2020), Bloomberg (press releases)

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Cooperation is not Collaboration

For a lot of general businesses the shattering of the often dysfunctional departmental silos has forcefully taken place during and because of these last few months of a sanitary crises. The more horizontal alignment and deeper coordination of production, technology, finance, e-commerce, human resources, sales and marketing departments was more often than not the only way to survive. I am not sure that the reactions to the crisis have happened in similar ways in the educational field. Sure, different departments such as faculty, technology, admissions, marketing, quality assurance and student services are cooperating, but that's it unfortunately not enough anymore.

"Cooperation is accomplished by the division of labor among participants as an activity where each person is responsible for solving a portion of the problem. Whereas collaboration is a coordinated, synchronous activity that is the result of a continued attempt to construct and maintain a shared conception of a problem (Maeda, 2019)".

In order to be really effective, not just efficient, providers of Higher Education will need to radically reshape their organization into prioritized project teams of staff, as well as students and external experts if needed (multiple stakeholders), to come up with and build innovative, agile solutions. Schools will need to optimize the work of internal specialists with that of external experts. Linear and departmental business— as well as education models are about to die. Agile, emotionally intelligent expert hybrid teams are not.

PART IV: FROM BIG DATA TO RELEVANT, RICH & REAL-TIME DATA

(posted on 04.12.2020)



**“More data beats clever algorithms,
but better data beats more data.”**

Peter Norvig, Director of Research at Google

References:

GLEN, The 7 Rules For Reinventing Your Luxury
Business Model Post Pandemic. (28.04.2020),
Bloomberg (press releases)

Illustration after “Fat Car” sculpture by Erwin Wurm, 2005

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My Data is bigger than yours...

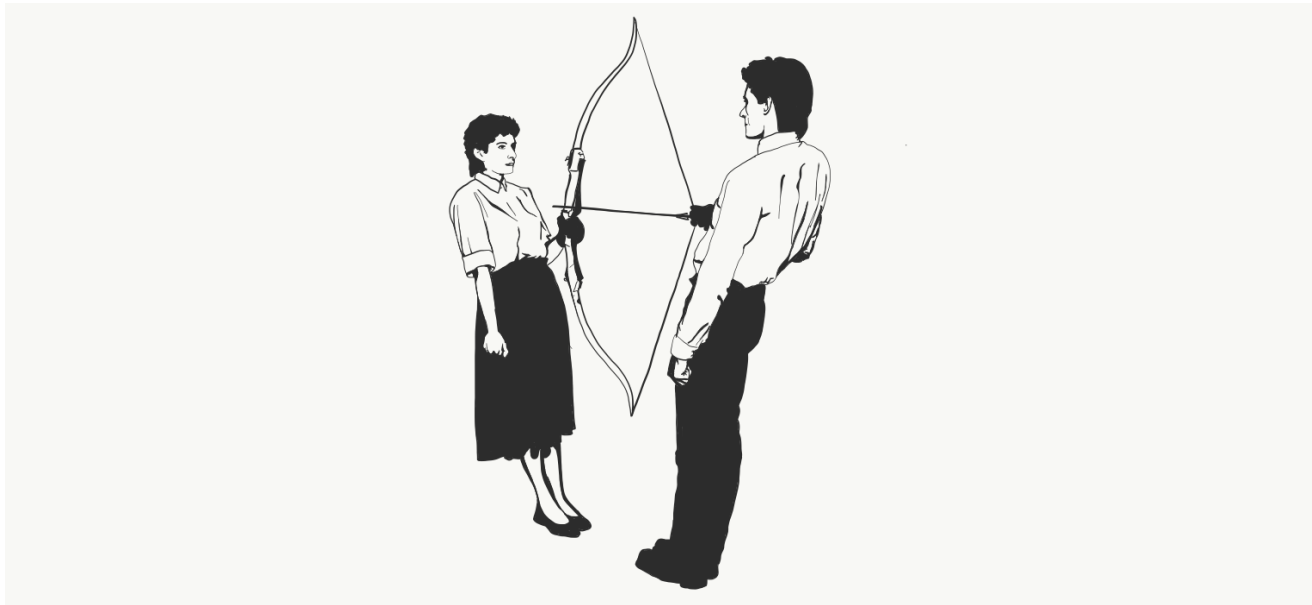
Big Data is another word in everybody's mouth. The concept has mainly worked to satisfaction for data generated by non-human entities such as the weather, plane engines, farming equipment, and inanimate sources et cetera. However, for the consumer- or luxury-goods-brands, as well as for providers of education, Big Data is a failure. For business models that are nearly exclusively based on building humanistic, individual and long-term relationships, Big Data does not seem to make a huge difference, often quite the contrary. Research proves the assumption that relevant customer data at most companies is either missing, dirty, incomplete, obsolete or all of it at once. The opportunity is therefore not Big Data, but Relevant, Rich and Real-time Data (*Luxury Institute's 3Rs of personal data*).

Education is not about Data, but Trust

Similar to the business sector of Luxury goods, Higher Education is not really run by data, but undeniably by trust, multilayered trust with a multitude of stakeholders. “Trust with verification is what inspires and empowers the willingness of prospects, students and alumni to share their personal relevant, rich and real-time data with the school (*GLEN, 2020*) “. I am convinced that the decision and action to enroll into an program of Higher Education (certifying or not) at a known university involves high value, high risk, high investment and high emotion, therefore giving schools the unique opportunity to bypass digital platforms. They should engage their students directly and as personally as possible in an open and honest dialogue regarding “data sharing, and, with consent, test and learn their way to demonstrating the value they can generate with Advanced Personalization. Without a new individual prospect-student-alumni-controlled and led direct data sharing process, provider of Higher Education will never have the opportunity to empower individual customer-data and generate an enormous amount of mutual value (*GLEN, 2020*) “.

PART V: FROM TRANSACTIONS TO FIDUCIARY RELATIONSHIPS

(posted on 11.12.2020)



Heureka, it's zoom

Student retention has always been a hot topic for education providers, as it is profoundly linked with a school's foreseeable turnover for private education and with certain subsidies for public education. I am convinced that in today's world students have much vaster possibilities to choose the city, school and program they want to attend and get their degree in. They do not feel to be bound to a classic linear timeline, nor do they feel any need to finish their study in the same institution where it began. Following this mindset, they want and need to be the sole owner of the deciding power. The recent violent, forced and very sudden sanitary-linked changes to enrollment practices and pedagogic delivery methods have furthermore challenged student-retention deeply and to never known degrees. Never have gap-years been as "intriguing" as during this pandemic. "In fact, the coronavirus is forcing people to take a hard look at that \$51,000 tuition they're spending. Even wealthy people just can't swallow the jagged pill of tuition if it doesn't involve getting to send their kids away for four years. It's like, "Wait, my kid's going to be home most of the year? Staring at a computer screen?" There's this horrific awakening being delivered via Zoom of just how substandard and overpriced education is at every level (*Galloway, 2020*)".

the real value proposition

I'd not claim the private HE's business model to be completely transactional, but the problems it faces could somehow be compared. As with the luxury fashion brands' transactional business models, education increasingly fails to achieve or assert high levels of longterm loyalty. Schools need to take advantage of their real value proposition and should not discount aggressively, even if best practices and the competition's pricing strategies could entice such reactions. The real value (and margin) of a school is not directly driven by education, but by credentialing. The most value-added part of a contemporary university isn't the academic staff, but the admissions department. "They have done a fantastic job creating the most thorough and arduous job-interview process in modern history, between the testing, the anxiety, the review of your life up until that point, the references you need et cetera (*Galloway, 2020*)". So in tough times (as now) the better universities are fine in the short term. They just fill empty spots or missing students with candidates from their waiting lists: Business as usual, ok, but value as usual?

PART V: FROM TRANSACTIONS TO FIDUCIARY RELATIONSHIPS

not just talking, but walking, proving, doing

For the long run on the other hand, even the best schools will need to become and act as the fiduciaries they actually and realistically are. Provider of Higher Education need to rise above their current offer of learning experiences and services to protect, enhance and promote the best interests of their paying students, and so in an often radical manner.

Today's University must demonstrate, and not just talk, that it is executing and innovating sustainability best practices to protect its students, tutors and other stakeholders. It must clearly prove that all data is protected with military grade cybersecurity and general services need to be readily available and custom-made for students, tutors and other stakeholders involved. The trust a school is receiving is actually a fiduciary duty. Students place complete confidence, faith, and reliance in the school for their own benefit. As a start, schools should therefore never reap any direct financial gain from any of the decisions they make or the actions they take "on behalf" of their students. Everybody will need to become smarter than that.

References:

Walsh, J.D., The Coming Disruption. (11.05.2020), New York Magazine
GLEN, The 7 Rules For Reinventing Your Luxury Business Model Post Pandemic. (28.04.2020), Bloomberg (press releases)
Illustration after a picture from the "Rest Energy" performance by Marina Abramovic and Ulay, 1981

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PART VI: FROM OMNI-CHANNEL TO OMNI-PERSONAL

(posted on 06.01.2021)



A bespoke student-Alpha

I wrote that the students alone want to (and should) decide what best suits them. I also meant that despite the decision being taken by the student and the tuition fees often being paid by loving parents, the responsibility for the quality and the success of education remains that of the institution. Students want, need and deserve very personal solutions, a bespoke learning experience for a contemporary multinational, omnichannel-communicating and inclusive citizen of the world. Because of the pipeline processes and metaphors under which most executives (even in private Higher Education) and their marketing staff or agencies have developed, their mental models of the world, have been focused first on products (programmes), and, then, the traditional distribution, marketing and selling channels (*GLEN, 2020*). Despite their acclaimed student-centricity, most of the academic programs delivered by schools are developed for clearly targeted entities, known segments of prospect or returning students. Schools, at least in private education, far too often act as luxury brands focusing on “*student alpha*”, from whom they capture data, to whom they endlessly target ads, programs, invitations to open in-house-events, and with whom they hopefully close a transaction, an enrollment. All this needs to happen in the most cost effective manner possible.

A new generation and Galileo

I have never believed this “classic” approach to be effective for Higher Education, especially so for the long run. Educational institutions need to “first focus on how they could really engage with human beings in order to develop and deliver custom solutions and experiences within a mutually beneficial long-term relationship where they can exchange high value continuously (*GLEN, 2020*)” : Real Life-long-Learning as a radical approach!

For the first time in history, universities will be exclusively collaborating with a demographic cohort with widespread access to smartphones. A digitally native generation, we know to be very concerned about academic performance and job prospects, but even more prone to mental illness. Gen Z is no longer willing to play nice in the linear, online/offline, “multi-channel” world that institutions are still trying to “sell” them. Today’s game is omni-personal and the only way to come close to omni-personal relationships is to completely and radically rethink what education really is and for whom and how it is delivered:

“In an omni-personal world the sun (the student) never revolves around the earth. The earth (the school) revolves around the sun (*GLEN, 2020*)”.

References:

GLEN, The 7 Rules For Reinventing Your Luxury Business Model Post Pandemic. (28.04.2020),
Bloomberg (press releases)

Illustration after Giusto Sustermans painting of Galileo Galilei in 1636

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ABOUT ME

“I have always considered myself as an educator, a designer, an academic, an entrepreneur, an accountant and most of the time at least three of them simultaneously. My professional experience covers multiple areas, looks at changing point of views and takes on several shapes.”



Born in Switzerland

Education in Milan and London

Professional experience in Milan, Paris and London

Living in Paris since 2007

Last missions:

Director of Education in the private Higher Education sector (Gallileo Global Education Group) and Consultant in the Design and Luxury industry.

My experience, your values.

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