A Way to Learn: Conversations With the Experts

IESE Business School
University of Navarra

Index

IESE: A Way to Learn

A few years ago, at IESE Business School we set out on a journey. A journey to reimagine our practice – the practice of teaching and learning. We did so because of the recognition that teaching and learning, like countless other social practices, is being redefined.

Indeed, many transformative forces are profoundly impacting the world of management education. Perhaps the most obvious of these is digitalization, which is opening the door to opportunities to address needs in fundamentally new ways. It would be foolish to think that teaching and learning were immune to digitalization's disruptive force.

We embarked on this journey armed with the curiosity that defines us as researchers and the humility that underpins IESE's history of innovation. Our goal was to seek an answer to a simple question: can we leverage the opportunities that digitalization offers to better meet IESE's mission of developing leaders who aspire to have a deep, positive and lasting impact on people, firms and society? We made this question part of our brand's claim: "a way to learn."

This book is just one example of our quest for an answer. Over the past year, we have engaged thought leaders from around the world – including practitioners, academics, scientists and entrepreneurs – in candid one-on-one conversations, which we showcased on **awaytolearn.iese.edu.** We asked them to share their deep-seated beliefs about the future of teaching and learning. Their stories are encapsulated on the following pages.

These conversations have enriched our thinking in many ways and provided multiple insights. Among these, two common threads stand out. First, the answer about the future of teaching and learning is not a matter of "either-or," but of "and." We must build on the solid theoretical foundations of the past and the experiences accumulated to date to enrich – not substitute – them with the affordances of technologies of today and tomorrow.

Second, in a context of continuous change, with new solutions emerging almost daily, we must be comfortable with constant experimentation and willing to try out new paths. Only through experimentation, unconstrained by fear of failure and fixed mindsets, can we discover new approaches and perfect existing ones.

Not surprisingly, none of the thought leaders we spoke to had a definitive answer to our question. But all shared our sense of responsibility for exploring the future of our practice. And a feeling of anxiety, indicating that this exploration is very important to us all. Together, we will continue on our quest for teaching and learning excellence – for our sake as global educators, as well as for the learners we serve.

We hope you enjoy reading this book. And continue with us on this fascinating journey of redefining teaching and learning by asking questions that allow us to tap into creative thinking and channel the pursuit of new solutions.
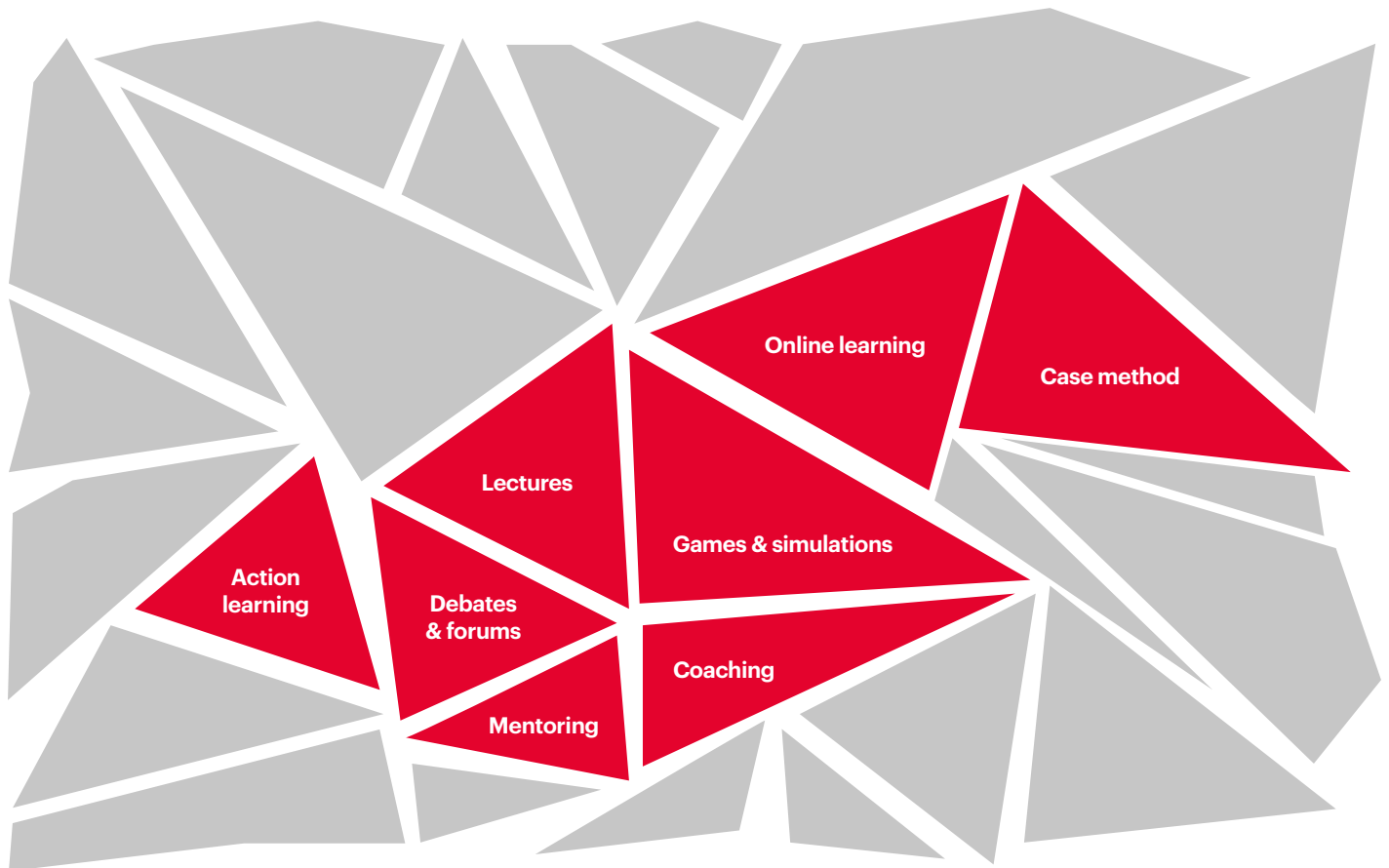
Prof. Evgeny Káganer
Department of Information Systems

Dr. Giuseppe Auricchio
Director of the Learning Innovation Unit

The IESE Learning Mosaic

Online learning

Case method

Lectures

Games & simulations

Action learning

Debates & forums

Coaching

Mentoring

Visit **awaytolearn.iese.edu** for an in-depth look at IESE's learning innovations

At IESE, we develop global managers by providing a platform for rich, engaging discussions. We use a broad range of methodologies - from cases studies and team projects to simulations and coaching - to spark these interactions.

Learning takes place both online and face-to-face, and at any point in time, with participants working individually, with a peer or in teams. This "mosaic" of methodologies, contexts and formats is what makes an IESE learning experience highly unique and deeply impactful.

In each of our programs, we address participants' explicit objectives and maximize their learning experience by strategically selecting methodologies and layering them with the "how" (format) and the "where" (context). Every piece counts in our mosaic. Taken together, they add up to far more than the sum of their parts.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING
Reading, reflecting and working individually to acquire knowledge, practice skills and implement insights

Online learning
Case method
Games & simulations

PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING
Comparing and contrasting viewpoints with peers to develop new skills and gain a stronger understanding of a common issue

Mentoring
Online learning
Coaching

TEAM LEARNING
Learning alongside peers in a collaborative, discussion-based forum

Action learning
Case method
Games & simulations

Action learning
Grouped into small teams, participants address real problems and determine a course of action

Case method
A dynamic and practical approach to analyzing complex business scenarios and potential outcomes through a process of debate and discussion

Coaching
One-on-one process with a certified coach to increase self-awareness, improve performance and achieve concrete goals

Debates & forums
Interactive discussions on core management topics to sharpen critical-thinking and analytical skills

Games & simulations
Interactive exercises that replicate real-life business challenges and situations, complete with complex scenarios and time constraints

Lectures
Faculty-led sessions to transfer knowledge and provide a forum to share ideas and insights

Mentoring
An exchange of knowledge and advice with someone whose experience and expertise differ from your own

Online learning
A self-directed learning experience supported by online academic content, evaluations, assignments and communication forums

Anant Agarwal

The future of education looks bright, says Anant Agarwal, CEO of edX and a professor of electrical engineering and computer science at MIT.

Thanks to new technologies, opportunities to learn are growing exponentially for people all over the world. Modular learning experiences are helping people gain new skills and make valuable contributions to their companies.

What has been the biggest change in education in recent years?

I think three things are happening: first, top universities are offering programs online to students all over the world and giving them credentials; second, schools are starting to offer fully online courses for students who are studying on campus; and third, corporations are increasingly enrolling their students online to take programs rather than send them to residential programs.

How do you see education evolving in the future?

It will evolve much like businesses have. Just a few years ago, people had to go to physical stores to buy things. Then, they began shopping online. We thought everyone would stop shopping in person, but what happened not long ago? Amazon acquired Whole Foods, a quintessential in-person shop.

Education will evolve similarly. The future will be omnichannel, with people looking for both in-person and online experiences. This means that some students will do some online education before university, some while on campus and some after they graduate through alumni education programs. No force on Earth will keep education from being hybrid and blended in the future.

IESE primarily uses the case method. Do you think this approach can work well online?

Technology can do all kinds of things. At edX, we are able to support the case method online by going through

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Reimagining Education Online
Interviewed by Solon Moreira
Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship
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"**Online education provides a real opportunity because we can have thousands of students in a class. We're going to create a world with many more options for students, universities and corporations.**"

various steps. First, you show students a real-world problem, either through a reading, video or animation. Second, you provide a discussion forum, where students have the chance to reflect. Third, the professor asks individual students questions, which we do through a timed pop-up question – so it's like being called on in class.

And while only a few students are called upon in a real class, every student is called on with edX, so it's democratic. Finally, peers can review and provide feedback on three or four other students' responses. They can then review them and reformulate their answer.

How do you facilitate student interaction?

As professors, we often think students learn from us, but if you ask students, they will tell you that they value peer learning just as much. So we capture this through learning forums, with oversight by a professor. In every course, we have students interacting and learning from each other.

How can traditional university contexts benefit from online learning?

On many campuses today, it's becoming a challenge to physically fit all students into introductory courses due to lack of space. Online education provides a real opportunity because we can have thousands of students in a class. Have we perfected it? No. But we have mechanisms so it scales beautifully, thanks to the cloud infrastructure.

At edX, we have 13 million students who have taken 15 million courses. The challenge is creating the small group experience, so we've built mechanisms to do this, through cohorts and teams.

How do you see the future?

I think in 10 years, students will be able to get a quality degree from top institutions completely online and at a lower cost than today. I also think the blended model will happen, and I think there are serious questions about degrees.

In 20 years, will people still want a university degree? Or will companies be comfortable hiring people with experience, but with modular credentials? I will go out on a limb and predict that in the future, the degree will be very challenged. We are going to create a world where there many more options for students, universities and corporations.

Micro-learning – gaining knowledge through videos, blogs and quickly accessible sources – has become ubiquitous in today's global workforce.

According to Josh Bersin, founder of Bersin by Deloitte, firms that can harness the power of micro-learning, while effectively structuring their learning activities, will be well positioned to retain top talent in the future.

Industry Analyst, Speaker and Author

Josh Bersin

How has technology changed learning development in the workplace?

It's almost as if everything has changed, but learning is just catching up. Back in the early days of the internet, we took classroom programs and tried to mimic them online. That was called e-learning. It was relatively slow and went step by step. Now, we're online all the time, often working nights and weekends. And when we want to learn something, we want to learn it now. We don't want to spend three hours doing a course. The idea of "learning when you need it" really hit companies by surprise.

Do you think it changes the way people learn?

The core way people learn is still through experiences. A few years ago, the corporate university was actually expected to die. They are back because people need to spend time together, meeting face to face, getting to know each other to build personal relationships. And then all the electronic stuff works great, but it doesn't work great until you really get to know people.

So will the demand for online learning keep growing?

I think so. As professionals, we know that everything we do becomes obsolete every month, every year, every quarter. So the demand for learning is even more intense inside companies because people can go to the consumer internet and find things on YouTube or Lynda.com. Yet when they go to the Corporate Training Department, they can't find anything. This has created more pressure than ever.

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Is Your Company Smart Enough to Embrace Intelligent Learning?
Interviewed by Sebastian Reiche
Professor of Managing People in Organizations
IESE Business School

In this changing environment, how should companies structure their learning activities?

There are dozens of ways to organize it but the simplest way is to think about "micro" and "macro" learning. Micro-learning is small bits of information that you need immediately that might come from a blog, article, video or podcast. You're not going to learn a whole discipline in a few minutes, but you can learn something that you need.

How can micro-learning complement traditional learning approaches?

Research shows the human brain does not retain large amounts of information when it is consumed at once. It's sort of like our stomachs – you can't eat too much of something all at one time. But you do absorb and remember things if you get them periodically, on a regular basis with space in between, and people ask you questions about what you learned. Macro-learning takes more time and is more like what we've been doing in the past. We need to do both things.

When you decentralize learning, how do you monitor whether people actually do it?

If you start to decentralize everything, anarchy ensues. This happens often in large companies because departments can't wait for corporate training programs to teach them something. So they hire their own trainers, build their own content and do their own thing. This leads to a lot of wasted money.

> **"All human beings crave learning. This means companies have to make time for learning and nurture a culture of listening, talking about mistakes and giving their people the opportunity to develop."**

Our studies have found that some companies are spending four to 10 times more on learning than they think they are. Companies can also adopt a "federated" structure by making very well thought-out decisions about what's going to be centralized and what isn't. And then you track what people do.

Are any special skills required to leverage this new learning landscape?

All human beings crave learning. It's part of our desire to grow and develop. We are drawn to things that are interesting and entertaining because they help us grow in the direction we personally want to go, wherever that may be. This means companies have to make time for learning and nurture a culture of listening, talking about mistakes and giving people the opportunity to develop. They value learning at the CEO level.

Spying an opportunity in the educational marketplace, David Blake founded Degreed, an education technology company built around the belief that university degrees mark the beginning – rather than the end – of adult learning.

Blake launched the venture after reflecting on his own educational experience and the realization that learning is a lifelong journey.

David Blake

How is Degreed reframing the discussion about education?

We're trying to change what's at the heart of education – that is, what it means to be educated and giving everyone a chance to transact on that. If you ask someone, "tell me about your education," they will tell you where they went to university and what degree they earned. But that's an absurd answer. That was a Herculean effort achieved five, 10, maybe 15 years ago that doesn't have much consequence at this moment in time.

We created a way to answer for all of people's ongoing skills by providing a lifelong learning transcript that is able to track all of your academics, all of your professional training and your formal learning. All of that data comes back so you are able to see your progress, goals and measure yourself.

Why is Degreed relevant now?

Increasingly our education is a journey across a diverse set of institutions, platforms, providers and modalities. It used to be that most of what you needed to know

"**We are in a world where we are learning all the time. Our rate of data accumulation and learning is accelerating, and we are learning both online and offline across myriad platforms.**"

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Making a Lifelong Habit of Learning
Interviewed by Marc Sosna
Associate Director of the Learning Innovation Unit
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was provided by four or five institutions. Now we are in a world where we are learning all the time. Our rate of data accumulation and learning is accelerating. The web has given us access to new ways of learning, so we are now learning both online and offline across myriad platforms.

The amount of knowledge is growing exponentially. How do we decide what we should be learning?

First, you have to decide if you are trying to fundamentally upskill yourself or stay abreast of your field with the latest innovations and updates. If you are upskilling, you need to lay a foundation. You can do this by yourself by doing online courses, watching videos of experts in the field. But then you need the opportunity to interact with others, so they can help you when you get stuck.

You've been working with Tesla and Google and other large corporations. What can you tell us about recent changes in the corporate world?

For a long time, companies led their corporate training programs in person, augmented them with e-learning and then managed it all through Learning Management Systems (LMS). Those were the fundamental building blocks. Now, people no longer have the expectation that their employer will equip them with the knowledge they need. If you need to learn something, you go to Google, you go to the web. People needed a bridge to leverage all this informal self-correcting learning they were receiving and that's how Degreed has been able to help.

How do you get people passionate about learning in a corporate context?

To gain passion, it has to come from within. Whatever it is you care about, don't be afraid to jump in. You can also draw an analogy with fitness. There's a lot of research that shows that exercise can be contagious. If people around you exercise, you are more likely to do it. The same is true of learning. That's why social networks can be a real motivating force for learning.

How do you envision the future?

I'm optimistic. I'm not one of those people who thinks that automation is going to wipe out entire portions of the labor force, people will become irreversibly unemployed and the world will descend into chaos. I believe that learning is the answer going forward and that human productivity will increase. As long as the world has problems to solve, and as long as we are good at orienting people to problems and equipping them with knowledge and skills, we will see a continuing up leveling of the human workforce.

Technology has unleashed new possibilities for learning – but are university educators fully leveraging its potential? Not yet, argues Richard Culatta, who served under President Barack Obama as the Director of the Office of Educational Technology for the U.S. Department of Education.

According to Culatta, faculty members should be using technology to revolutionize how students learn.

CEO of the International Society for Technology

Richard Culatta

How is technology changing higher education?

In some ways, it's changing, but in other ways, it's not. We've seen greater access over the last few years through connectivity, which is very positive. But higher education has not taken full advantage of technology in terms of changing the actual learning experience. When you go to universities and walk down the halls, you still see students listening to lectures. So it's not making a significant impact yet.

In higher education, are we mainly using technology to replicate the analog world?

To some extent, yes. In primary and secondary education in the United States, technology is being used much more extensively to create new learning experiences, rather than just present content on a screen. It's increasingly being used as a tool to build and problem solve. But we haven't seen this catch-up in higher education yet.

What about learning management systems, which are widely used by universities?

If you look at what a lot of LMSs do, they systematically replicate the classroom experience online. It's very locked down, with the professor controlling everything. We don't need to do that anymore. We don't need such rigid roles between student and teacher. Over the next few years, it will be interesting to see how education breaks out of these traditional systems and takes advantage of the flexibility that technology can provide.

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Books and Bytes: Technology in Higher Education
Interviewed by Javier Zamora
Senior Lecturer of Information Systems
IESE Business School

"We talk a lot about big data, but you don't need much data to personalize learning experiences. You can use technology to identify students' interests and offer them choices based on these."

What's holding higher education back? Is it cultural resistance?

Some of it is cultural, but it's largely because we don't spend a lot of time designing instruction in higher education. Instead, we focus on choosing the right topics and looking at the research. But we should be studying how to design an optimal learning experience. Often we just don't see what the possibilities are. Think about companies like Amazon and Netflix. In other industries, technology has made much a bigger impact on the user experience.

What should higher ed do to better leverage technology for personalization?

We talk a lot about big data, but you don't need much data to personalize learning experiences. For example, you can use technology to identify what students' individual interests are and then give them choices in the activities they participate in based on these. You can also use it to measure competencies before a course begins to avoid wasting time on topics students already understand.

How can you break down resistance among faculty to using new technologies?

We need to spend a lot more time thinking about this. Age often has nothing to do with how resistant people are to technology. I've seen some awesome uses of technology by older faculty members, and I've seen some terrible uses by younger members. Being comfortable using technology is not the same as using it effectively for learning. To break down resistance, universities should do three things: organize competitions for best use of technology, provide funding and spotlight faculty members who are doing interesting things.

What about countries at risk of lagging behind?

That's a serious concern. When I worked for President Obama, only 20 percent of elementary and secondary schools had internet connection in the United States. You could go into any café and they would have internet, yet our schools didn't have access. So part of what we had to do was make a political case for why it was so important. We argued that it was economically viable to get the right infrastructure because of the return on learning and job preparation that would be generated. To build a strong case, it takes a certain amount of creativity.

Academic and Author

Edward Hess

Edward Hess spent three decades in the corporate world before devoting his energies to teaching and writing about successful companies and the people who lead them.

A prolific writer, he examines growth, innovation and learning cultures and the core elements to attaining breakthrough performance on both individual and organizational levels.

You published a book in 2013 titled _Learn or Die_, which is a big statement. Why is learning imperative for organizations to survive in today's environment?

Technology is driving connectivity globally, driving real-time decision making and giving consumers lots of power. All of this, combined with artificial intelligence, is putting added pressure on businesses to become more responsive, adaptive, agile and innovative.

When you look at what underlies agility, adaptability, innovation and operational excellence, you realize that fundamentally it is the ability to learn. I believe we're in an era where every company is going to become a technology-driven company that's in the business of learning. The speed and quality of your individual and organizational learning will become a strategic differentiator.

As the foundation for competitive advantage, learning will enable firms to develop new capabilities on an on-going basis rather than offering one specific capability. Is this right?

Yes, that's exactly right. Learning becomes a strategic imperative. It is not a "nice-to-have", it is a "got-to-have." This will transform companies internally to adopt a learning culture and also transform human resources into human development organizations.

What companies have successfully made this transition to a learning culture?

From an innovation viewpoint, the exemplar is Google. In terms of creativity, the exemplar is Pixar Animation Studios. In terms

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Taking Corporate Learning to the Next Level
Interviewed by Evgeny Káganer
Associate Professor of Information Systems
IESE Business School

"Leaders can't control and command people to be innovative and creative or to think better, but they can enable it. Human development will become an integral element of the organization of the future."

of analytical or critical thinking, Bridgewater Associates, which is the largest hedge fund in the world. From an operations standpoint, I went outside the business world and looked at the United States Navy SEALs, which is superb at what they do in their learning organization with a learning culture.

In your view, what are the levers to building a learning culture?

The right people in the right environment with the right processes – and it takes all three, two out of three won't cut it. Whether it's Bridgewater, Google or the Navy SEALs, these organizations are highly selective in the people that they hire to ensure that they have a learning mindset. They share a common culture characterized by candor, permission to speak freely, idea meritocracy, permission to experiment and fail within financial parameters and a very humanistic, people-centric culture.

They also work to mitigate the two learning inhibitors – fear and ego – and rigorously use learning processes daily because they know that otherwise, we human beings will revert to our natural reflexive, cognitive and emotional ways.

Learning ultimately boils down to the individual. How do you view the learning requirements and opportunities in this new paradigm?

Organizations can't learn unless their people learn. We are suboptimal learners, thinkers, relators and collaborators. On a cognitive level, we basically only process information that confirms what we already believe. We create these big stories and mental models on how the world works based on very little data and we generalize.

How can we overcome or at least mitigate these obstacles?

First, we need to have a quiet ego and redefine what "smart" means, which should be based on thinking, listening and collaborating skills. Second, we need to learn how to manage our thinking and emotions to be able to connect with others, which is why I believe human resources will transform into human development because we can't overcome our confirmation biases by ourselves.

So the shift revolves around developing learning as a meta-capability: rather than helping individuals acquire specific skills and knowledge, you help them develop the ability to continuously learn new skills.

Yes. Leaders can't control and command people to be innovative and creative or to think better, but they can enable it. Human development becomes integral in the organization of the future because its success will depend on its ability to unite the highest level of human capabilities with smart technology. Smart technology will be a commodity so what will make the difference? You're the difference!

Ana Maiques

We don't want to live longer, we want to live better, says Ana Maiques, who is on a mission to reinvent the way we interact with and treat the human brain.

The recipient of numerous accolades for innovation and entrepreneurship, she leads a company that develops pathbreaking technologies to monitor and stimulate the brain to help patients in need.

How can new technologies help us better understand and stimulate the brain?

Humans have managed to survive a lot of diseases that used to be fatal. The challenge today is understanding why some people develop diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. New technologies can provide a window on the brain to detect whether patients will develop a disease even before the symptoms appear, as well as be used to improve health.

Drug treatments are effective for some patients depending on the disease – as an example, a third of epilepsy patients are refractory to medication – so there are great opportunities in the brain tech space and the health sector in general because, in the end, we don't want to live longer, we want to live better.

Can neural stimulation make us smarter?

Yes, several scientific studies show that applying stimulation can improve specific functions of the brain. When we learn about the brain, we are taught about the occipital region, the visual cortex, the rational motor cortex and so on. In my view, this is the wrong approach because these areas aren't isolated.

The brain is a network and everything is connected. So the question becomes, "When I enhance one cognitive function of the brain, are any others affected?" The same applies to learning. We need to better understand how these areas are connected and how learning is acquired. One experiment could use EEGs

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Can You Make Your Brain Learn More?
Interviewed by Pilar de Castro Manglano
Lecturer of Managing People in Organizations
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(electroencephalograms) in a classroom setting to record brainwaves and find out which students are more attentive.

Can these new technologies be used on people with normal development to stimulate the learning process?

DARPA *(U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency)* is working on cognitive enhancement projects to track improvement in healthy subjects. Their experiments show how specific visual skills can be enhanced using stimulation. They observed some improvement in visual detection, but we don't know how applicable these results are to the overall population since the study included a limited number of subjects. Current research is trying to discern the possible side effects of enhancing a healthy brain.

Your company has also been working in brain-to-brain communication. How can this technology be used in teaching and peer learning? Will we be able to learn brain to brain in the future?

Learning is going to be a very interesting field as this technology is developed. In the short term, we can use very simple technologies like brain monitoring to understand the impact of learning, and brain stimulation to improve learning.

In the medium to long term, we might look at other ways to enhance the learning experience collectively. Imagine a teacher asking her class to solve a math problem. What if all of the students' brains were synchronized to solve

> **"Learning is going to be a very interesting field as brain-to-brain technology is developed. It sounds like science fiction, but in my view, will happen sooner than we think."**

the problem collectively? Could brain implants allow a mathematical concept to be transmitted without having to explain it in words? It sounds like science fiction but I believe it will happen sooner than we think.

Let's talk about digital distractions and information overload. Could your technology help in this regard?

The book *The Distracted Mind* examines how technology is impeding our ability to focus. But technology shouldn't solve this issue – it's up to humans to learn how to regulate distraction. Technology and constant stimuli make focusing very difficult. Techniques such as taking breaks and meditation can help, although we have to make a conscious effort.

Annie McKee

The average person spends up to 90,000 hours at work over a lifetime, yet Annie McKee thinks far too many of us aren't as happy as we could be.

The author of *How to Be Happy at Work: The Power of Purpose, Hope and Friendships*, she offers insights on how business leaders can boost happiness levels in the workplace and the vital role of emotional intelligence.

What is "happiness at work" and what does it look like?

Research shows that people need to be happy in order to be effective at work. When I talk about happiness at work, it means that employees have a sense of fulfillment, a sense that their work is meaningful and connected with their values and beliefs. They also have an optimistic vision of their own personal future that's tied to their work but that's bigger than their work, and good, strong and friendly relationships in the workplace. Add it all up and you will have a happy employee!

Why should business leaders concern themselves with the happiness of their employees?

My research and that of many other positive psychologists have shown a direct link between happiness and success. As a leader, your number one job is to create an environment where people feel fulfilled and optimistic, and where relationships are positive and strong. When you create that kind of environment, your employees can be individually successful and collectively, your organization will be more successful, so there's a business case for happiness at work.

You speak about the importance of finding meaning. How do you define "meaning"? Where does it come from and how we can create it?

People have written about meaning for hundreds if not thousands of years. In my research, I went beyond the philosophers and examined what meaning looked like at work. First, we need to be able to live our values at work,

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Learning to Be Happy at Work
Interviewed by Mireia Las Heras
Associate Professor of Managing People in Organizations
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so our personal values are actually how we engage with others, part of what we do and part of our day-to-day experience in the workplace. Second, it's about feeling that we have a positive impact on people, on a cause or on something that's important to us, whether that relates to results, the organization's mission or our team. We need to feel that we're making a difference.

Your work also stresses the importance of emotional intelligence. What is it and how can it be developed?

Emotional intelligence tells us who is going to be an outstanding manager and who is going to be just average. Competencies that make the difference include self-awareness, understanding your emotions and how they impact your thinking, and how your thoughts impact your behavior. Also, the ability to manage negative emotions so they don't get the best of us, as well as managing positive emotions so we're capable of inspiring others.

We've heard a lot lately about the need to be "authentic" and freely express our emotions. How does authenticity relate to effectively managing our emotions?

Being emotionally intelligent does not mean being nice all the time and being authentic in the workplace does not mean that we say everything that crosses through our mind or do whatever we want to do. Truly emotionally intelligent managers read the people around them and the environment, and then they make choices about how to be authentic in that situation in a way that benefits everyone.

You have worked with business leaders from around the world. Besides the competencies mentioned earlier, what else distinguishes outstanding leaders?

Another crucial competency is what I call pattern recognition. Our world is changing so fast, so successful leaders need to be able to look at the landscape of their business environment, their industry and the world economy, and make sense of what looks like chaos.

In terms of emotional intelligence competencies, aren't they also developed in the family and social domains?

In order to develop emotional intelligence, we need to focus on a vision of the future that is bigger than just work and involves our families, friends and communities. These competencies help us in our relationships so much that, in addition to becoming better managers, we become better people.

"**As a leader, your number one job is to create an environment where people feel fulfilled and optimistic, and where relationships are positive and strong.**"

Ben Nelson

The former president of Snapfish, Ben Nelson left a successful corporate career to embark on an educational adventure that challenged every assumption about how people should be educated.

Established in 2012, The Minerva Project is a merit-based program that prepares students to thrive in a globalized world. How? By stressing critical thinking, creativity and effective communication and sending them to study in seven global cities.

What sparked your passion for education?

When I was a university student, I realized that the structure of traditional universities is less than ideal. Universities are supposed to prepare individuals to participate in a dynamic world, not train them for a particular career, which is what vocational schools are for. Once I was in the working world, I realized that you could actually solve fundamental problems in society, not by asking existing institutions to change, but by creating new institutions and showing how they can take a better path. That was my a-ha moment.

How did you find faculty interested in joining the project?

For the first year and a half, it was just me. Most people I talked to thought I was out of my mind. It sounded crazy to people when I said I was going to create an institution that would effectively fly above Harvard or the Ivy League. But then I met Larry Summers, former president of Harvard University. It was Larry's backing that enabled me to go out, raise the initial funding and find our first faculty and dean. We were then able to gather this extraordinary group of faculty who understood how academia works, what was fundamentally broken and what had to be reformed.

What happened when you began recruiting students?

Students typically forget 90 percent of what they have learned six months after taking a course at an Ivy League institution. That's a huge failure rate and a terrible

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Minerva Project: Reinventing Higher Education
Interviewed by Giuseppe Auricchio
Director of the Learning Innovation Unit
IESE Business School

outcome. Our initial group of students was very small, a pilot class of 20-some students. They came because they were drawn to our concept. Now, they're coming based on the data.

How do Minerva's results compare to traditional campus-based experiences?

The Collegiate Learning Assessment measures progress and critical thinking, problem solving, scientific reasoning and effective communication skills – all things universities claim they teach. Our results have been astonishing. The progress we make with our students on the CLA in eights months is higher than any university makes in four years.

One of your goals is to make Minerva affordable and accessible to all. Is this possible business-wise?

Absolutely. Tuition is about $15,000 compared to $50,000 of many top U.S. colleges – a huge difference.

> **"Once I joined the workforce, I realized that you could actually solve fundamental problems in society, not by asking existing institutions to change, but by creating new institutions and showing how they can take a better path."**

We also want others to emulate us. For that reason, we published a book, *Building the Intentional University*, which outlines how anybody can build their own Minerva. Universities can also embed Minerva technology and bring our concept into their institutions.

Is the model viable in the executive development space?

We have introduced a master's program in decision analysis, which takes the systematic thinking we provide to a master's level for executives. It's also a remarkable value and provides the framework that business leaders need to make decisions of consequence. What you won't see is Minerva offering weeklong modules, which are common in executive education. That's not enough time to change the way executives think.

What has surprised you since launching Minerva?

I thought it would take a decade before students and other educational institutions paid attention. Stunningly, universities started asking to partner with us before we had our first cohort.

And your greatest frustration?

Philanthropists have frustrated me. In a world that is increasingly global, it's hard to find truly broad-minded philanthropists who think of humanity as a whole, as opposed to their own region of the world. In my view, the world needs far more globally oriented philanthropists.

Nigel Paine

Where is L&D headed? Just ask Nigel Paine, one of the industry's most recognizable faces. A renowned specialist in corporate learning and former director of the BBC's training and development operation, he argues that learning will become even more critical in the future.

He left the BBC in 2006 to create his own firm, focused on fostering leadership, creativity, innovation and e-learning.

Has L&D finally earned a spot on the CEO agenda?

Yes, but it's not evenly distributed. I still get people asking me, "How do I get my CEO to listen? How do I get anyone in the C-Suite to take notice of all the work we are doing in L&D?" There are still organizations back where we were 10 to 20 years ago, but the direction of travel is absolutely clear. A CEO who doesn't see the value of engaging his or her workforce around learning is slightly crazy. And it's happening because the outside environment is so volatile that the only way to survive is to increase the volume and velocity of learning.

How should L&D be addressed today?

In the past, it was all about numbers, volume and standardization. Today, it's exactly the opposite. It's all about personalization, helping people do things for themselves and allowing them to move at their own speed. At the same time, you have to maintain pressure on them to keep a personal learning agenda. Before, it was all about control. Now it's about relinquishing control. CEOs need to see L&D as a facilitator for learning about what's happening throughout the entire organization.

How can organizations foster the drive for lifelong learning in the workforce?

If you're working with young people, it's the easiest thing in the world because that's what they want. The old "chestnut" was that people leave their bosses; they don't leave their jobs. New research shows the exact opposite

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The Learning Challenge
Interviewed by Giuseppe Auricchio
Director of the Learning Innovation Unit
IESE Business School

"Today, learning and development is all about personalization, helping people do things for themselves and allowing them to move at their own speed."

– people leave because of their jobs, not the people. Jobs often cease to be challenging, cease to help people grow, cease to help them learn. When that happens, they vote with their feet.

Let's talk about tech. Do you get the sense we're falling into a gadget trap?

One piece of tech is not going to solve every learning problem. We live in a world where most of the workforce walks into the office with a supercomputer in their pocket and sits in front of highly complex technology every day. So you should galvanize what exists. But this has to be driven by the user – they are the ones that are in control. The reality is we have the technology now to do very exciting and extraordinary things.

So why do CLOs still face so many challenges?

If you want to convince leadership that something is broken, they have to see it viscerally, with their own eyes. Then they have to trust people to find solutions themselves over time. Organizations typically want quick fixes. So it's easy to pay for an outside – and expensive –

leadership program. But that doesn't always work because you need to have context. Instead, leadership needs to understand the real problems and then get a coalition of people inside who will work to make things better.

What are your personal learning resources?

You've got to have a network. I have a whole network of people who I rely on to suggest things I should be talking, reading and thinking about. I find that incredibly powerful. I also like talking to people outside L&D about how they're trying to adjust to the current climate. I'm one of the messiest learners in the history of the universe. I don't learn systematically. I learn in bits and fragments.

Tell us about your next book.

The core idea is that learning is like a corporate gyroscope. Just like flying a plane without a gyroscope would be unthinkable, flying an organization without a learning gyroscope will also be unthinkable in the future. Learning will become more important, not less important, over the coming years. I'm absolutely certain of that.

MOOCs have reshaped the education sector, providing unprecedented access to courses at leading universities, including IESE Business School. Do MOOCs signal the end of university education as we know it or can they co-exist with traditional institutions?

The former associate provost for Education Innovation at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Deanna Raineri discusses the current state of online education from her vantage point as the chief academic strategist at Coursera.

Deanna Raineri

Coursera was founded in 2012. What have been its main achievements to date?

At Coursera, we've expanded access, with more than 31 million learners currently on the platform. And more than 83 percent of learners say they came for career benefits and received them. We've also demonstrated that there is significant demand for online learning opportunities. Graduates entering the workforce now may have 16 to 18 jobs over the course of their working lives, so they need to be constantly upskilling. We've also shown that it's possible to offer quality online education, including mastery-based learning with authentic assessments and live sessions. These are rich, engaging experiences.

What shortcomings does online learning still struggle with?

I never say we've failed – instead, I say we're still learning and have lots of work to do. We've shown the world we can deliver a high-quality online experience, but we know that it can be even better. Take personalized instruction: it seems like we've been talking about it for many years, particularly with Artificial Intelligence and machine learning. Another example is peer-to-peer grading – I've seen work well in some courses, but not in others. We have work to do in these areas.

How does Coursera leverage big data?

As you can imagine, we generate a lot of data. We use feedback from learners to improve content and the

learning experience. Even before we release content on the platform, we beta test a lot of it with volunteer learners. Then we go back and work with the partner or faculty member to improve the content. We also use search data to identify what kind of content learners are looking for, which informs the type of content we ask our partners for.

Are certain subjects more suitable than others for online learning?

A lot of platforms and tools development that we've seen in the online space have been to support STEM disciplines, which lend themselves very well to the online environment. That said, I've seen courses taught very successfully across all of the domain areas. Often these were subjects that people thought would be very difficult to teach online. So I think it's possible to teach almost everything effectively online. But it means being open to new ways of doing things.

In what areas will grow in online courses take place in the future?

We're going to see many more degrees online, including fully online bachelor's and master's programs to meet the demand. I also think we're going to see more blending of university and industry content. The two will come together, with universities covering a lot of the foundational content and industry bringing in many of the skills that learners need. We're also going to see students in residential programs start taking some of their courses fully online.

> **"We know that learning doesn't stop once students leave campus. Graduates who enter the workforce today may have 16 to 18 jobs over the course of their working lives, so they need to be constantly upskilling."**

What role will traditional universities play in this new environment?

They'll be leading the charge. None of this would be possible without universities. Everyone knows that learning doesn't stop when students leave campus. Now, it is a cycle of lifelong learning and universities will be a part of that. They will continue to help not only their own students and alumni, but students around the world to get the learning they need to be successful in their lives.

After holding senior roles in eBay, PayPal and Skype, Annemie Ress founded PurpleBeach, a consulting firm that helps global organizations navigate change and foster innovation.

Why purple? But it's the perfect mix of red right-brained creativity and blue left-brained analysis. And why a beach? Because the sand and sea offer a space to reflect and gain insight – despite shifting tides and changing weather patterns.

Founder of PurpleBeach

Annemie Ress

You have broad experience across multiple sectors and geographies. Have you found any common threads when it comes to driving innovation?

Having worked in a variety of Silicon Valley businesses, I was intrigued whether the solutions we found in that space as they related to people and innovation could be applied in other sectors. When I left eBay, people often said "Those things only work in California!" but what I quickly learned is that there is a lot a commonality in terms of the challenges that businesses face today, irrespective of sector. Fundamentally, the same approaches can apply because we all face very similar problems.

Which pressure points are common to most organizations?

Digital transformation is clearly a big bucket. We all recognize that businesses, both big and small, are struggling with digital change, but I think we need to move beyond that conversation since digital will ultimately simply become a new way of doing business. Business model innovation is another big bucket. I see a lot of business models anchored on platforms as opposed to hardware.

The third is my hobby horse: I see businesses expecting innovation from their people and leaders, yet *they* are not innovative with them. They still apply very traditional approaches, leadership mindsets, hierarchies and performance management systems with the people they expect to drive change and innovation. This can be a barrier to progress.

See the interview 🎥

Aha! Moments: Fostering Innovation in the Workplace
Interviewed by Sebastien Brion
Associate Professor of Managing People in Organizations
IESE Business School

What else would you underline?

Decision-making models have to significantly evolve in the future and mindsets need to change. I highlight mindset as opposed to culture change, which is extremely difficult to do. The quickest way to drive culture change is to focus on mindset. Businesses need to consider mindset when they recruit, as well as reward and recognize people in their organization. Mindset is a building block of culture: it's digital, it's business model innovation, it's people innovation, it's decision making.

What can corporations do to overcome this pressure?

Our team has been doing a lot of work on what we call exponential organizations, which are businesses that have been able to successfully change and exponentially grow and increase their impact. In our work, we've seen five key differences between exponential organizations and linear businesses. First, they leverage hierarchies across crowds, communities and networks rather than relying on internal hierarchies. Second, they define a massive transformative purpose or MTP and use data and insight to very rapidly check and calibrate whether their service supports it.

Third, they embrace experimentation and autonomy to taste and learn as they develop as opposed to following sequential thinking. Fourth, they look for innovation at the edges and search for sources of innovative inspiration in sectors that have nothing to do with them. And finally, they embrace an open-leadership mindset as opposed to a closed-leadership mindset.

As a leader, you need to be comfortable with failing and saying "I don't know what I don't know, so let's experiment!" This requires a very different leadership style.

You talk a lot about "people innovation" when describing your work. What exactly does that mean?

As HR practitioners, we should challenge ourselves to be innovative and not think of innovation and digital change as something that happens "out there." Every time we engage with an employee is an opportunity to innovate around people. When you do that, you have huge opportunities to drive engagement and attract talent.

There are so many issues facing global organizations today! It makes me fear for the future!

I'm excited about the future and it all goes back to mindset. There is a lot of talk in the media these days about robots coming to take our jobs, but it offers us the chance to see the future in a new way. Technology can potentially free us up to focus more on our happiness and psychological well-being. I have a strong passion that the future will be one of opportunity and abundance.

"As a leader, you need to be comfortable with failing and saying `I don't know what I don't know, so let's experiment!´"

For many companies, executive education programs offered in the past are unnecessarily costly and limited in scope, says Amin Saberi, co-founder of NovoEd.

The NovoEd platform was originally developed at Stanford to deliver courses to thousands of students. It currently offers corporate training, professional education and university programs to students all over the globe.

Co-founder of NovoEd and Academic

Amin Saberi

How did NovoEd get its start?

It evolved out of a project at Stanford, which grew so much we couldn't keep it within the university anymore. We also wanted to work with other entities, so NovoEd became an independent company. Now we work with numerous companies and universities, including IESE Business School.

How has your thinking about online learning evolved since you launched NovoEd?

We have a lot of data about online students' behavior today – we can see what part of videos they watch and how they approach assignments. Using that, we can improve the experience of the user day by day. This has led us to the point where we can create the right experience and accelerate learning for each individual learner. Considering how much time people spend in school, we believe we can make a significant contribution.

"You can now train people in different offices – in London, Barcelona and Rome – and by taking a course together, forming a team and working together on a project, they form a certain bond."

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The Changing Face of Online Learning
Interviewed by Robert Gregory
Assistant Professor of Information Systems
IESE Business School

What are the strengths and weaknesses of MOOCs today?

When MOOCs first came out there was a lot of enthusiasm, with some people expecting them to be a silver bullet for many of the challenges we face in education. It turns out they can't yet solve every problem. When the bubble burst, there was a backlash. Now we are in a time of adjusted expectations. Technology can be helpful in education, but it is not going to be the only way education is delivered in the future.

As high-speed internet expands globally, how do you foresee the growth of online learning?
Even in the most remote places of the world, high-speed internet access is often available and many people have smartphones. This gives us an opportunity to reach out to talent all over the world. Some of our most advanced courses in computer science are now reaching remote villages in Africa and Asia. Hopefully, we can continue to reach out to new people and make a difference.

What are the current limitations of online learning?

You cannot replicate face-to-face interactions with a professor. These are still very scarce and very expensive. We don't even claim that we can do this online. But, there are other experiences that even a top university can move online.

A major problem for many of online courses is that they're boring. It's very hard to watch somebody talking to you on a video for hours and some courses are exactly like that. To increase engagement, we make videos very short and change the pace by getting students to interact and work with each other so the experience becomes more interesting. Working with others also creates a sense of accountability, as opposed to working alone.

How can educators combine face-to-face and online learning to create an optimal blended experience?

We've been working on this and running a lot of experiments over the last few years. Depending on the resources, every institution does this differently and scaffolds this in a different way. There is no one formula and it can even vary from course to course – for example from finance, which is very heavy on content to entrepreneurship, which is very experiential.

How do you expect online learning to develop in the future? What changes will we see?

I see companies investing heavily in technology to train the next generation of leaders and employees. The interesting thing now is you can have people in different offices – in London, Barcelona and Rome – and by taking a course together, forming a team and working on a project together, a certain bond is created. This helps them in their careers and is extremely valuable, so I actually think the next round of innovation and level of growth is going to come from companies and corporate education.

Dona Sarkar

Dona Sarkar is the self-described "Chief Ninja Cat" of Microsoft's Windows Insider, a software testing program with millions of contributors around the world.

In her view, we humans can have nine lives just like cats – and she's on a mission to prove it. As an accomplished computer engineer, fiction writer, fashion designer and style blogger, she is well on her way.

Your background is in computer science but you have branched off in numerous other directions. How do you think your versatility has impacted your learning process?

I can't say enough for being an "and". As children, we would say "I want to be a politician *and* an artist *and* a writer *and* an astronaut" but then adults would advise us to go to school, choose a profession and do it until we retire. This is a very outdated way of looking at things. We can live for 100-plus years yet are expected to do the same thing we chose when we were 18!

I love software engineering – for me, it's one of the most creative professions in the world – but there is another part of me that also loves to create with the words. I took a creative writing course and began writing fiction, and quickly realized how applicable it is to the software industry. Whether it's to your upper management, customers or partners, it's important to be able to paint a compelling picture of your product. It's 100 percent storytelling.

What role did formal learning have in this process?

I studied computer science, creative writing and fashion all formally. I loved having a formal learning institution to be able to learn from experts as well as from other people. I didn't try to figure things out on my own. You can, of course, but it can actually be pretty lonely.

That said, I think formal institutions need to diversify their curricula and expand the "crossover" dimension

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Lessons and Learnings From Nine Lives
Interviewed by Sandra Sieber
Director of Information Systems
IESE Business School

> "**It's critical to have a growth mindset. Nearly everything we do is learned behavior, so as adults, we have to realize that we're never done learning.**"

of their degrees. For instance, it really benefits business curricula to include some tech and vice versa because it fosters relationships outside of the norm and allows students to learn the language and gain respect for other fields.

Technology has traditionally been relegated to the technologists, but digital transformation has changed all of that. How much tech knowledge should non-technologists have?

Every single industry is transforming digitally so, at this point, every company is a tech company. Every company has a website, customer data and social media, so if they're not building and tracking these channels, they're not evolving to their full potential. In my view, business school students should have an understanding of three different areas.

First, HTML to be able to modify the corporate website if there are errors, which takes about 15 minutes to learn. Second, information security. Business leaders absolutely need to know how to keep their information secure. And third, customer data. If you don't measure it, you don't

know, and if you don't know, you can't improve – you're just guessing.

Creativity seems to be at the crux of much of your work, yet many business leaders are tempted to "leave creativity to the creatives." How can we get executives to lose their fear and learn about creativity?

It's important for executives to find their "inner creative" because it existed once and it didn't go away. From a tactical point of view, it's incredibly important for them to engage with people outside business – with designers or artists, for instance – and relate a problem that they're having and be open to the interpretation. Another thing that's extremely important is dedicating time to deep thinking and knowing that it won't happen at the office!

We're hearing a lot nowadays about the need to engage in deep thinking to spark creativity, yet it runs counter to the traditional structures and hierarchies in many companies. How can we break down these barriers?

Nearly everything we do – talking, walking, riding a bicycle, making our way to our jobs every day – is learned behavior. As adults, we have to realize that we're never done learning. The day you stop learning is the day you stop growing.

Always ready with a provocative idea, Nick Shackleton-Jones argues that L&D is no longer about building capabilities – it's about making it easier for people to do their jobs well.

In his view, learning in the corporate sphere may diminish rather than grow as a result of new technologies.

Director of Learning and Performance at PA Consulting

Nick Shackleton-Jones

Which is best – in-person courses or e-learning? How does the debate stand today?

Both classroom and e-learning are ineffective. The traditional classroom learning is liked, but it's costly and ineffective. On the other hand, e-learning is disliked, but effective and cheap. So we need to reframe our thinking. We should be looking at e-learning as an opportunity for improving experience design. Many people are doing that tacitly today. Digital should not simply be a way to dump knowledge. Instead, we should be thinking about the useful digital assets we can create.

What are some of the advantages of challenge-based learning?

Challenges are what drive learning, as opposed to the "sage on the stage." In some of our programs, for instance, people are given a challenge and then have to work on it together as a team. Next, they present their solution and get feedback. Often they come up with ideas that experts don't think of. It becomes a creative process.

You've applied your challenge-based framework in many companies. Any differences working with SMEs versus large companies?

Unfortunately, in many large companies, education has become focused on risk mitigation. L&D is often seen as a way to help people get through a crisis. At the same time, large companies want to be innovative and entrepreneurial, yet they are locked into a policy and

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procedure model. These two things work against each other. Also, large companies tend to hire risk-averse people who become even more risk-averse the higher up they go in the organization. These are challenges that smaller organizations don't have.

You've said that learning will become less important in the future due to advances in technology. Could you explain that?

Those of us who work in the L&D environment have fallen in love with learning and feel it will always be there. But what I see around me is really very different. We are systematically reducing the need to learn. Think about it: we no longer have to learn much to operate a computer or a car. We laugh at the fact that a 3-year-old can use an iPad. We're building a world where you have to learn less to operate. Why would we want to do that? Because organizations need to do things more efficiently, so they can survive.

An anxiety I often hear is "how will I build capabilities for the future?" Well, maybe you won't have to if we make

every job as easy as driving a car. We could just take a 12-year-old and say, "you are now an HR advisor." How could you do that?

You could program an automated assistant to sit next to them, something like Amazon's Alexa product, to advise them every step of the way. That would give you huge competitive advantage and we're already seeing organizations traveling down that path.

What digital technologies are the most promising for learning at work?

Gamification can improve learning and performance. However, sometimes you're improving performance through badge-and-point systems at the cost of learning. But it's a powerful technique. VR is another promising technology because of its ability to recreate experiences at a reduced cost.

Also, employees' smartphones and readily available software can be used in surprising ways. There's this shift from using company infrastructure to the technology that employees already have in their hands. This offers huge opportunities for organizations.

"**Both classroom and e-learning are ineffective, so we need to reframe our thinking. We should look at e-learning as an opportunity for improving experience design.**"

Julian Stodd wears many hats – writer, artist, consultant and explorer – and is profoundly interested in how things work: systems, societies and structures, both technical and human.

As the captain of a ship he calls Sea Salt Learning, he collaborates with global organizations to help them formulate strategy and shape projects around learning, leadership, technology and change.

Captain and Founder of Sea Salt Learning

Julian Stodd

What is the "social age" and how does it differ from the "digital age"?

We've barely started to feel the impact of technology in terms of automation, enablement, facilitation and disruption but I think we have already seen two of the transformative effects. This first is connectivity that is completely outside the oversight of any formal entity. The second key effect is the democratization of just about everything – storytelling, communication, creativity and effect at scale.

Today, we are capable of being effective outside any system because of the democratization of technology. We are perhaps still adapting to the digital age, but we are absolutely in the *social* age because what really counts is that technology enables us to come together, to think together, to make sense of things together and take action together. My work around learning, leadership, culture and change is within the notion of the social age and the new skills we need to develop to be effective in this space.

How do you define social leadership?

Formal leadership is power given by a system, so it sits within a hierarchy and allows you to impose formal consequence. Social leadership exists outside the system. It's a reputation-based authority granted to you by the community. It's contextual, consensual, highly fluid and dynamic. The formal system is about the buildings, employment contracts, machinery, and distribution networks. The social system is about the bonds of trust, respect, pride and tribal structures that sit alongside it.

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Organizational Learning in the Social Age
Interviewed by Giuseppe Auricchio
Director of the Learning Innovation Unit
IESE Business School

These systems sit in dynamic tension with each other and we need both of them.

What does the "social leader" do differently than your basic leader?

Social leaders are effective not just because of their formal power, but because of their social power and authority. I recently surveyed a military group in the U.S. and asked them how often they were effective purely by the exertion of their formal power. They said that 96 percent of the time, they were effective through the permission and the consensus of others and four percent of the time, they were effective because they told people what to do.

You mentioned that formal and social leadership systems sit in dynamic tension with each other. How has technology impacted their evolution?

In the wider world, formal systems are generally being depowered and eroded, and social leadership systems are being empowered and amplified. I just did a survey in a global tech company of 2,500 employees on leadership. They identified 69 different traits but the number-one trait they look for is authentic storytelling. This is interesting since authenticity is held within the action of the individual more so than in the organization. You are given your formal title and position within the hierarchy but you can choose and curate your social leadership space.

In this sense, we need to be expert storytellers to understand not just stories of consensus but engage in stories of difference and dissent. Ultimately, the endpoints of all of this is the ability to build reputation to achieve social leadership and engage in complex collaboration. Organizations fail because they continue to act in known ways in known spaces in a world that is taking them into unknown ecosystems and unknown challenges.

Given the implicit strength of social, leaders today should be jumping up and down at the opportunities triggered by digitalization and the social era but many seem reticent.

What we do in the social system is real. Organizations are substantially a fiction. We've spent the last 150 years building them and convincing ourselves that they are real and will last forever but the evidence contradicts this. They were built in a world that is largely gone.

Today we need organizations that have a deep-seated capability to change, which will almost certainly lead us to new principles of organizational design. Future organizations will be lightweight, reconfigurable and hold a diversified strength.

"Social leadership exists outside formal systems. It's a reputation-based authority granted to you by the community that is contextual, consensual, highly fluid and dynamic."

Global Chief Learning Officer at McKinsey

Nick van Dam

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is redefining the way people work, says Nick van Dam, the head of learning and leadership development at McKinsey. It is also opening up new opportunities by creating jobs that didn't exist in the past.

Ironically, in this complex, new environment, turning to ancient philosophy may help organizations address moral problems that may seem new – but really aren't.

How is the Fourth Industrial Revolution affecting workplace learning?

We're at an exciting time in history. There is basically a revolution going on fueled by new technologies like robotization, cloud computing, machine learning and 3D printing. Over the next 15 years, this will cause major changes in how people work. These technologies will drive the need for very different skills and jobs. At the same time, people will be living longer, so they will have to become what I call "serial masters."

In this context, what makes a world-class learning organization?

Successful organizations will be those that turn the workplace into a learning place, where people do something new every day. People only learn if they work on new things. They have to get out of their comfort zone and into their learning zone. Humans will continue to play a central role in organizations, and creativity, ideation and collaboration will be vital. Authentic leaders in these organizations will be those who are inclusive and ensure that everyone is involved in decision making.

Why are topics related to well-being – nutrition, physical exercise, sleep and mindfulness, to name a few – becoming more important in leadership development today?

There is a strong connection between a leading healthy life and being successful at work. That's why we include topics related to well-being in our programs at McKinsey

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Does the Fourth Industrial Revolution Make Learning Obsolete?
Interviewed by Alberto Ribera
Professor of Managing People in Organizations
IESE Business School

> **"Humans will continue to play a central role in organizations and creativity, ideation and collaboration will be vital. Authentic leaders will ensure that everyone is involved in decision making."**

and our clients expect them. For instance, our research suggests that people who don't get sufficient sleep have difficulties memorizing, problem solving and relationship building. People who don't sleep enough have trouble being empathetic. Yet most people have never thought about this and some even brag about how little sleep they need.

If too much focus is placed on personal development, is the goal of creating a common culture at risk?

When we bring people together in a leadership development program, it's not just about individuals, it's also about the overall culture. We have to address both. We have to make sure that individual development is tied to the overall business strategy and development of the culture of an organization.

How can people manage information overload today?

The first step is to differentiate between "look-up" knowledge, which is knowledge we can find on

our smartphones and the internet, and "must-know knowledge," which we don't need to retain. By being conscious of the difference, we can avoid overload.

Should we fear automization and the rise of robots?

Just over a decade ago, the iPhone was launched. At that time, the job of app developer did not exist. Today, there are more than 13 million people working as app developers. So new technologies also create a lot of new jobs. The important thing is to step back and reflect on how automization will impact your job, so you can prepare yourself for a new or extended job.

In this scenario, critical judgment and moral sense are critical. How can these be developed?

It goes back to getting people exposed to cases, questions and problems that require a moral or ethical perspective. We can learn a lot from ancient philosophy. There are many problems today we can deal with by going back to classic philosophers, who addressed them a long time ago. We can learn tremendously from them and apply their thinking to existing organizations. This can be very insightful and powerful.

Franz Heukamp, Dean of IESE Business School

Reimagining Management Education – One Experiment at a Time

At IESE, excellence in our profession is one of the goals that most motivates us. Since 1958, we have pushed the limits of how we teach – making sure we offer rigorous and relevant learning opportunities for companies and leaders worldwide. We have done so because of our aspiration: we want to be recognized worldwide for our ability to educate leaders to whom we can confidently entrust the future of business and society.

What makes the goal of "teaching excellence" more challenging today than ever before is the fact that it is a moving target. Indeed, a rich discussion is occurring among practitioners about the evolution of how business schools teach and how their participants learn. This debate is being fueled by several influencing factors. Among these are discoveries in neuroscience that shed new light on how adults learn, the need for different skills given changes in the nature of jobs and an evolution in how work is structured – which implies changes to the way development opportunities are offered to employees.

Perhaps the most obvious driver of change is digitalization. As is well known, digitalization is having a profound impact on countless social practices and related management disciplines – from shopping to marketing, from traveling to operations management. Like these, the practices of teaching and learning are not immune to digitalization's disruptive force.

The transformational power of digitalization has to do with the opportunities it allows to address old needs in new ways. Unfortunately, we often focus not on the overall effect of digitalization, but on single technologies – and therefore interpret this message as a call to throw out proven models of the past and replace them with "a digital something else." This translation could not be further from the truth.

The reality is that schools, like many institutions, have grown up in a completely different era. We have refined our trade, i.e. teaching, in an analog world. We are now operating in a completely different environment – one that is challenging our assumptions. How do we learn to embrace this challenge, and evolve our way of teaching in a way that we continue to grow in the digital age – i.e. a context characterized by the successive waves of technologies?

At IESE, we believe that the discussion-based methodology that has guided us to this day must continue to be the core of our approach to teaching and learning – and with it, the case method. At the same time, to capture the potential offered by digitalization – in terms of the ability to meet old needs in new ways, we must be open to reassessing the way we teach, and hence how our students learn.

Reassessing entails reconnecting with what our learners are trying to achieve in a given circumstance and pinpointing what interactions are truly important to them. By doing so, you soon realize that some interactions – what we call "learning moments" – can be facilitated more effectively using a certain tool. In this process, what drives us, however, is not a focus on the particular tool. Rather, because the toolkit will change over time, we are inspired by a vision – which is to create an altogether more enriching learning journey, by continuously asking ourselves how technology can increase the impact of each and every learning moment.

Of course, to do this you need more than merely an understanding of the drivers of change, or an aspirational vision. You also need a sense of what is possible given the resources of today, which in turn allows you to consider alternatives to your current practice. The only way to acquire this appreciation,

and to do so with some rigor, is by experimentation, firsthand with new tools – those that you feel hold the potential to better resolve certain learner needs.

Interestingly, as you involve yourself in this experimentation what you soon discover is that the adoption of any technology cannot take place without a rethink of pedagogy. In other words, the innovation effort one needs to make has as much to do with familiarizing yourself with a new tool as it does with integrating it in a course or program design and thereby change the overall learning experience.

That is why, for an institution such as ours, experimentation is key. Its benefits are twofold. First, experimentation forces a conversation about pedagogy among faculty and staff, which is beneficial to developing a shared view of the future of our profession. Second, it allows IESE, as a leader in our industry, to participate in the collective effort to advance learning science – not through mere opinion about what works and what does not, but based on the data that only experience can generate.

For the past few years, at IESE we have embraced this challenge very seriously – by experimenting with new tools and using what we have learned to redesign the experiences we offer. Targeted experimentation has allowed us to add to IESE's teaching toolkit; examples include such things as the ability to scale a mentoring service to thousands of participants, expertise in the design of online courses, a platform to facilitate the collaboration of students on project work, innovative teaching spaces such as a virtual classroom, and many more.

We have also deployed this toolkit across several programs. This has resulted in the adoption of a blended learning model by which the learning goal is the true driver of all the choices made in terms of the context for the learning (online or face-to-face) and the methodology (case discussion, simulation, coaching, project work, etc.).

We recognize that our work is far from over. We must continue to identify those solutions that have the most promise, based on our learners' needs. And we must continue to integrate these solutions in the experiences we offer, to increase their impact. This process is not only ongoing – it likely will never cease! After all, in the uncertain era in which we find ourselves, if we felt that we were where we wanted to be in terms of teaching and learning excellence, we would be missing the point.

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