

# INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION IN BUSINESS – ‘PIGS MIGHT FLY’

(An approach for system review)

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## SUMMARY

‘If You Want Different Results, You Have to Try Different Approaches’ – Albert Einstein

**In this presentation I will attempt to emphasise the need for a different approach towards International Higher Education in business studies.**

Since now many systems have been implemented and various changes took place in order to reassure that Higher Education is Leading the development of business and society. But as society changes itself the question ‘what the role of a University is’ remains. Examples of attempts; ‘William von Humboldt did it in 1810, Cardinal Newman did it in 1852 and Lord Robbins did it in 1963. Now recent changes to UK higher education policy have led to a surge of interest in doing it again – with concern in some quarters that it is not being done enough – that is, defining what universities are for’ (source; <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/oct/10/higher-education-purpose>)

But nowadays we are facing a unique phenomenon; In some cases, Universities are leading the change but in many other cases – first - ‘Change itself’ takes place in the business world, making the **Universities ‘followers’**. There is a Hypothesis that our 21<sup>st</sup> century world requires a faster transformation of higher education.

**My objective is to raise awareness – at the maximum possible audience – upon the challenges that International Business Education faces under Globalisation, Digital revolution, new generation’s expectations and job market’s future demands.**

FACTS (from various sources)

- Classroom does not really differ from what it was 200 years ago (instead of blackboard we have whiteboard and instead of writing only, we also use projectors)
- We teach and test everyone as if they were the same (despite the fact that we recognize ‘Learning Styles’)
- At school you take the lesson first and the test after. But in real Life you take the test first and the lesson after (are we willing to change from pedagogy to andragogy, treating University Students as adults? Note; I am really surprised when I see Lecturing job vacancies requiring a ‘teaching qualification’ and NOT recognising a ‘training one’)
- Is the fashion of ‘distance learning’ the future of higher education? Film director Ridley Scott mentioned that ‘teaching is the most important of all professions’, indicating the importance of human interaction. From the company’s side telecommunications seem to move towards a more work-life balanced model. Let’s see some examples from education and business world;
  - France is not allowing mobile phones at school
  - It also develops a school ‘without teachers’ – actually teacher’s role is changing from ‘instructor’ to ‘facilitator’
  - French workers can ignore company emails outside of business hours
  - South Korea will shut down computers to force people to leave work on time (source; BBC Seoul Metropolitan Government)

From the above indicative examples, we can see that the role of ‘digitalisation’ is not yet ‘clear’. From one side it saves our time (through distance learning, tele-work, work from home options), but from the other side its use is ‘controlled’ to allow human contact, culture exchange and face to face interactions.

Before getting in more details, I would like to present a common view upon the role of ‘International higher education in business’.

The main objective of any Business Course is to prepare students for a successful career in the labour market (either as managers or as entrepreneurs).

One question is ‘what defines the labour market’? Of course – as any other free market – the law of Supply and Demand. I.e. If the market requires more Accountants then Universities need to adjust to this demand. But, nowadays the market changes quickly. After 5 years (I estimate the adjustment time of educational bodies and the study period till we have the first graduates of accounting) the job market may be completely different. Some other bodies come to fill the gap providing more up-to-date knowledge (additional to a degree) like ACCA and other ‘professional certification organisations’.

In order to organize the various specialty demands of the labour market we established the ‘European Qualifications Framework’ surrounded by a set of other relevant ‘certification bodies’.

So, if you want to teach ‘you have to obtain a teaching qualification’

If you want to achieve a high position within HR its better to be CIPD qualified

In other worlds we set up ‘**boxes**’ as we are still living in industrial Age.....forgetting the fact that **our business labour market is not anymore ‘specialty oriented’, but it is actually a ‘stock market of skills’!**

We all know that Higher Education is seen to play an essential role in society, by fostering innovation, increasing economic development and growth, and improving more generally the wellbeing of citizens.

‘In the coming years, many commentators predict that there will be increased demand for highly skilled people; indeed, skills gaps already exist in some EU Member States. Driven by digital technology, jobs are becoming more flexible and complex. This has resulted in a growing number of employers seeking staff with the necessary capacities to manage complex information, think autonomously, be creative, use resources in a smart and efficient manner, as well as communicate effectively. Indeed, Europe’s future prosperity depends, at least to some degree, on nurturing more dynamic, high-achievers who can develop innovative products and processes.

Across the EU-28, 32.2 % of all students in tertiary education were studying social sciences, journalism, information, **business administration** or law in 2015’ (source; [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Tertiary\\_education\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Tertiary_education_statistics))

In general, a large percentage of the world’s students that want to become either Managers in large companies or entrepreneurs follow a degree in Business /Management related orientation. ‘Degree programs also look at how and why organisations work, as well as **the global business environment**. Students can expect to gain knowledge of the different areas of a business and how they function together as well as strategy and management skills’. (source; [www.timeshighereducation.com/student/what-to-study/business-management](http://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/what-to-study/business-management))

If we take a look at most of business administration /management programmes we can easily observe many similarities among them; I hereby present indicative business course structures from 2 high-ranked Universities from each of the following countries; UK, Germany, Finland, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia and the US ([table will be shown during actual presentation](#)).

Now let’s have a look at ‘our boxes’

- Most modules require a 12-week class attendance (lecturers and tutorials, where it is supposed students learn through ‘ready-made’ case studies)
- Most of research is done through internet (so we are facing problems with ‘**plagiarism**’ as the ‘**science**’ is not to obtain critical ability but to paraphrase information)
- Most of business books look the same.
- University rules are also very similar
- Most of the work is done in class or library

And the question is; Are we really preparing our students for the future?

You can anticipate that we teach ‘best business practices’. But we forget (again) that business case studies come from research that analyses real business success stories. Results take time to be published and incorporated in the educational literature. But external conditions have already changed. Are Universities ‘leaders’ or followers’?

The guru of management Professor Minzberg says ‘you can’t teach Management in a class’.

Furthermore, the labour market is going to change dramatically. It is predicted that by 2030 around 80 % of the jobs have not yet been invented (this comes in accordance with some thoughts of Mr. Dieter Zetsche – head of Daimler Benz).

For the above reasons we have some to disagree with the idea of getting a business degree (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/8-reasons-not-to-get-a-business-degree/>).

That’s one of the bombshell conclusions of *Academically Adrift*, a new blockbuster bestseller that suggests that 45% of college students don’t learn much of anything in their first two years of college, while more than one out of three students graduate with no improvement in writing and analytical skills.

Among the students who learn the least in college are social work, education and **business majors**.

*‘You’re kidding yourself if you think a business degree gives you the skills to work in the corporate world’.*

An employer survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers indicates that workplaces most value these three skills that you are usually more likely to find with a liberal arts education:

Communication skills, Analytic skills and Teamwork skills.

## CONCLUSION

In the 20th century, urbanization and industrialization made a university education available to the mass populace.[ Rudy, Willis (1984), *The Universities of Europe, 1100–1914*, pp. 136–37] Throughout, the basic structure and research purposes of the **universities** have remained constant; per Clark Kerr, they “**are among the least changed of institutions**”.[Trow, Martin (1987) "The University at the End of the Twentieth Century and Trends Toward Continued Development", pages 323 to 337 in *Tradition and Reform of the University under an International Perspective*. edited by Hermann Röhrs. New York: Berlag Peter Lang.]

Last year I asked my final year students ‘what is the highest level of success’. One of my best students answered ‘Happiness’!! .....

Its time to understand that labour market is changing so fast, that the basic skill youngsters should learn is the ability to CHANGE. In order for the Universities to become again ‘leaders in business field’ we need to DEVELOP relevant education AS WE WANT – not only as the market indicates through past statistics. For example, it is predicted that by 2027 most of the US workers will become freelancers. Do we prepare our students with relevant skills (building personal brand and Selling)? Another fact is that millennials are moving close to nature. Are we ready to introduce ‘the real meaning of sustainability’ instead of teaching just a CSR lesson?

And the most important question; How can we restructure our ‘International business studies’, so as to achieve the best outputs in a future world? What is our vision for our graduates?

- We want creative thinking (not ‘cut and paste ideas’)
- We want ‘applied research’ and curiosity (not searching and paraphrasing)
- We want diversity and team spirit (can’t be done in class)
- We want real life practices (maybe through experiential learning)
- We want innovative ideas (can’t be produced in current ‘boxes’)
- We want environmental sensitivity
- We want self-confidence and compassion
- We want ‘global managerial skills and attitudes’ (maybe through on-the-job training)

Finally, we want Healthy, Caring, Creative, Cooperative and HAPPY graduates that will contribute to the betterment of our global village. Proposals are welcomed!!

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