Vocational Training in Higher Education

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Higher-Education 'Educulture'

Higher-education narratives are reflected in the World Health Organization description of a Plumber. Especially the more abstract objectives 2 & 3.

"The three roles a competent Plumber must assume are:
1) To design, install and maintain drinking water supply and waste removal systems;
2) To manage the health and financial risks associated with plumbing;
3) To help conserve limited supplies of safe drinking water."

Training ‘Educulture’

Vocational training cultures are reflected in the less-complex Ontario College of Trades (OCOT) description of a Plumber:

"A Plumber installs repairs and maintains piping systems, fixtures and other plumbing equipment used for water distribution, drainage and disposal."

Project Argument - Higher Learning

Simply Stated: Is it possible that an Academic-school-based (Higher) Education can equal or better the learning of real-world Apprenticeship (Vocational) Training experiences?

OCOT Apprenticeship Training programs are delivered in stages (Fig.1). The OCOT assumption might be: After a total of 104 weeks of on-the-job training, 16 weeks of in-school training is enough to fill in any learning gaps.

On the other hand, a successful 56 week Technician Education (MAESD) program would present and replace both 16 weeks of in-school OCOT training in a manner that mimics 104 weeks of on-the-job training (the assumption).

The goal, then, is to identify challenge-opportunities (gaps) that will help develop a 56 week plumbing education program (MAESD) that is comparable to the OCOT on-the-job and in-school training (Fig.1).

A Learner Centred Approach to ‘Higher Learning’

The more daunting task is to investigate how the tensions between ‘educultures’ impacts learning and teaching. The teaching and learning model used for this study is largely based on the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. What Benjamin Bloom and others referred to as Cognitive / Affective / Psycho-Motor Domains.

The Taxonomy has been (re)modeled to reflect the learning experiences of an Apprentice while sharing and negotiating mutual well-being across Ontario’s diverse cultures and work environments. These –epistemological-experiences lead to the division of the Cognitive Domain into 2 subections: 1) Understand a participative behavior and 2) Know a directed behavior.

Figures:

1. OCOT Basic and Intermediate Training Stages
2. Bloom, Tudor, House, Ward, McCarthy and Others
3. In-School Training vs. Employment Education Objectives

Project Structure – Employability Skills

The Taxonomy has been ‘married’ to MAESD’s 7 Essential Employability Skills to create 4 deployable skill categories. I believe that this confluence of skills is resistant to gig-economies, automation, social and personal bias. Added to employability skills is the Psycho-Motor Domain or manual labour (Number 4).

1) Directed Cognitive Academic Structures
   a) Communication
   b) Numeracy
   c) Information Management
2) Participative Meta-Cognition
   a) Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
   b) Personal
3) Affective Social Relationships and Emotional Intelligences
   a) Interpersonal
4) Achieving a Psycho-Motor Role play
   a) Physical Literacy

These Employable Skills form the verb-filter used to deconstruct OCOT’s 125 in-school Curriculum expectations. The essential questions are:

How do the OCOT outcomes relate to Employability Skills?
What opportunity-challenges (gaps) lay in wait for the Creative Campus?