

De Tao Masters Academy

2015 Workshop Series: Redesigning Higher Education

Workshop # 1 – March 12-13, 2015

Education Reform: What role for University-Business-Industry collaboration?

High rates of unemployment among young people – and even university graduates – are a worldwide problem. In some countries, including China, the challenge is less the **un**employment of graduates than their **under**employment. Graduates often have to take lower level jobs that do not use the knowledge and skills they acquired at university. Yet, at the same time, many employers claim that they cannot find graduates with the skills that they need.

Countries and universities are responding to these challenges by trying to intensify the links between universities, industry and business. Such links for the purpose of **research** have long been strong in many countries. The focus on university-industry-business collaboration in the **teaching** function of higher education is much newer. This will be the focus of the workshop.

Three areas of collaboration will be explored with examples of good practice from around the world.

1. **Work-integrated learning**

Students benefit greatly when relevant work experience is integrated into their studies. How can this be made more general? What must universities and employers do to maximise the benefits of these internships? What are the different types of internships? How closely should the students' work in internships be related to the subjects of their studies? Examples from China and other countries will be presented.

2. **Importing courses**

Some universities are beginning to import courses (often online courses) into their curricula that have been developed by business or industry – or sometimes by other universities. These courses usually focus on giving students specific employment-related skills and knowledge. They are usually shorter than conventional university courses. What is the record of success in such collaboration? What are the pitfalls? What works best?

3. **New qualifications and credentials** Should universities and employers work together more to develop new qualifications – as in the examples of Digital Open Badges; Nanodegrees; and IT Certificates (e.g. CISCO, Microsoft) – that certify learner competencies in areas of particular relevance to business and industry and often for shorter courses than full degrees? Some now distinguish between

qualifications (e.g. degrees) that certify knowledge, and credentials, which apply to soft skills (e.g. teamwork). Will these new qualifications be accepted by themselves or only as enrichment to traditional degrees and diplomas? Will employers recognize them?

Two DeTao Education Masters, Ms Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić and Sir John Daniel, will conduct the workshop with the assistance of invited speakers from universities and business.

2015-01-25