

The Current Role and Advantages of Self-Education

Róbert Magda

Károly Róbert College, Hungary

It is possible for a man to educate himself without any help or support from others. In fact, when we learn the art of self-education (learning how to learn versus how to be taught) we will find, if not create, opportunity to find success beyond our wildest dreams. Self-educated people are not dependent on others for knowledge. If they need a specialized skill, they know how to acquire it without dependence on authority. Unknowingly, people are promoted by their ability to learn new skills fast. The role of self-education has increased rapidly in the last few years.

Keywords: self-education, logistics-education, project management.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are many ways to acquire a skill that has value to someone else. Everyone is unique and this uniqueness has value, but only an individual can explore and discover what that uniqueness is. People who do not depend on authority for guidance can start now. People who want someone to show them the way may never get started. Self-dependency to develop skills is a powerful skill in itself.

Today our youth live in homes where the only opportunity offered is on academic subjects. As a result most young people do not know what their natural talent is and cannot develop interest in a productive skill. The only way to discover natural talent is through opportunity. Project based education is a powerful tool that helps people discover themselves. Projects are fun and hide the education element.

2. THE ELEMENTS OF SELF-EDUCATION

2.1. DISCOVERY AND OPPORTUNITY

Self-education has two primary elements; *natural talent* and *opportunity* to discover it. In the entertainment industry and sports world top performers are the result of their natural talent. Formal education may or may not be a factor. As a rule these performers showed unusual talent at an

early age. Talent discovery is the result of opportunity and someone realizing the potential. With this knowledge a young person can be guided into a successful career. Most people do not have this opportunity and have to discover and develop it without outside support.

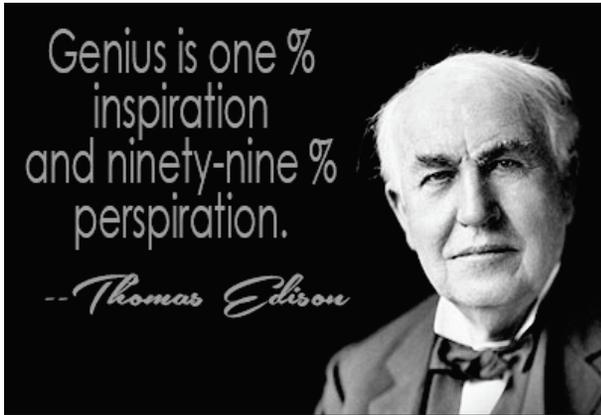
2.2. NATURAL TALENT

Our learning personality is built around a strong natural talent, intellectual, artistic, technical, or dexterous. Everyone has at least one strong talent, with other talents varying in intensity. Some fortunate people may have more than one. A person with strong intellectual talent usually has weak technical talent. A person with a strong technical talent usually has a weak intellectual talent. Our strong natural talent is the base from which we can build and become a super achiever. The problem is recognizing what that talent is. Most non-intellectuals do not discover their natural talent until they stumble onto opportunity by accident and many never find it. Society offers help for intellectuals only.

2.3. OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity is the only way anyone can discover their natural talent and personal interest. Project based education increases opportunity for self-discovery. Opportunity is a powerful

motivating tool. Motivated people will find ways to acquire knowledge without dependency on instructors. For example, Thomas Edison, the Wright Brothers', and Henry Ford were people who invented products that changed the way we live.



They were also in conflict with the education system, but had the support of their parents. Their parents created the opportunity for them to learn on their own. As a result, these inventors developed a burning desire to learn and it was not on academic subjects. Society creates opportunity for the intellectual learning personality. They are coached all the way through school to their first job. Their talent, interest, and ability are in harmony with the system. There is little or no coaching for artistic, technical and dexterous talents. Their talent is out of harmony with the system.

2.4. MOTIVATED AND LOVE TO LEARN

People who have discovered their natural talent are motivated and want to learn with or without the support of formal education. They have an attitude that radiates energy and people like to be around them. As a result they are offered opportunity. This is in harmony with the forces of nature. They are considered highly intelligent or talented.

What are the characteristics of Self Educated People?

- They have a love to learn that continues for a lifetime. Continuous learning increases the value of their services as they age.
- They are dependent on self for knowledge, not others. Through self-education they find ways to acquire additional skills, which increases career choices and competitiveness. They have learned how to learn versus how to be taught.

- They have discovered their natural talent and work hard at developing it with self-motivated projects. They develop the habit of finishing what they start.
- They seek change, because it offers new opportunities.
- They have a vision of the person and lifestyle they want.

Educators want to believe that personal success is the result of classroom achievement. Super achievers are not dependent on formal education for skills or knowledge. President Abraham Lincoln never went to school, he found other ways to educate himself to be the person he became. Today, many professions like lawyers and doctors must have a degree and pass a state exam. These super achievers keep up with fast changing trends through self-education. New information is needed NOW, not when it is available in a classroom. For successful people, education is a life-long process. Many blue-collar skills, such as auto mechanics, do not require a high school diploma. Through self-education, they become achievers. If they maintain a love to learn, in time, they will earn very high wages.

Achievers have dreams, a vision of the person they want to be. They learn with projects that are in harmony with their natural talent. Self-education is a powerful motivating force. The sequence is as follows:

- The first step is to discover your learning personality, which is a combination of natural talent and how you learn. (visual, hands-on or lectures)
- Next, develop a dream that motivates or create a vision of the person you want to be. This must be in harmony with your natural talent.
- Develop a list of mini projects that will help achieve the grand goal. Develop the habit of finishing what you start. Starting and not finishing small projects leads to nowhere. One must learn to complete mini projects so-as-to have what it takes to complete large projects.
- Research and use methods that work for you. If the classroom is a turnoff, then use other methods, self-education and team education for example.
- When resources are available, experiment, trying and failing are learning tools. No one has ever become an achiever without first experiencing failure.

- Develop the ability to bounce back from failure. Thomas Edison had a thousand failures while inventing the light bulb. What if he quit at 900? That is not likely, because one is motivated to keep pushing when on the right track, even if it is failure number 900. Direction is changed when it is obvious they are headed in the wrong direction.
- Ability to be persistent. The winners are the ones who endure when everything goes wrong.

3. PROJECTS AND PROJECT BASED EDUCATION

How does a person discover their natural talent? Through projects, better yet, self-motivated projects. People want to be associated with projects that relate to their interest. Projects are a form of education where the education part is hidden. Interest to selected projects is a clue to natural talent. A stronger clue is through self-motivated projects that inspire us, because we focus on personal interest and personal interest is related to natural talent. Projects are in two categorizers, short and long term interest. We have secondary talent and primary talent. With secondary talent our interest has a short life span compared to the primary one which usually lasts for years if not a lifetime. Secondary interests are building blocks to expanding knowledge. Self-motivated projects develop a love to learn, which means we are in a lifelong learning process indicating that we are continually expanding our skills. With expanded skills comes more opportunity. Formal education is only an introduction to life. Project based education is the most efficient way to discover natural talent. Home schooled students are most successful at this because their parents focus on what works, which is customizing education. All of us have different interests and different ways of learning. If society wants everyone to have a high quality education, they must find ways to customize education for everyone.

Not everyone can learn through lectures. Those that cannot do that receive the failure label. These same students would become achievers with project-based education. Hands-on projects are inspiring and motivating. Academics would be a by-product. The argument is that students must learn academics and communication skills first. It is obvious that dropouts, who found success, did not go that route. They first focused on what motivated them and then picked up other skills as

needed. Because their learning personality was out of harmony with the system, they depended on themselves to acquire the knowledge they needed. Project based education is customized to the students' learning personality that has powerful benefits. They learn the art of processing knowledge and understand need for skills through experience. Project based learning is man's natural learning method and it is in harmony with the forces of nature. People who love to learn are not depended on others for knowledge - they develop a learning style that is in harmony with their learning personality. They develop learning tools that work for them. Learning by doing leads to above the average opportunity and wages.

There are two types of projects, self-motivated and team motivated. Both produce powerful learning environments. With team motivated projects there is a support group that makes it easier to subsist when some things go wrong. Teams learn more when they share knowledge and there is an element of failure. If they only follow orders and there is no element of failure, they learn nothing. Self-motivated projects are training sessions. Each small project leads to a larger one, which in turn leads to yet another larger one. Confidence and abilities grow with each completed project. No super achiever has ever achieved their goal without first succeeding at small, seemingly insignificant projects. With self-motivated projects, we are under no obligation to anyone except ourselves. This is what makes it difficult - no one cares. If no one cares, why should we continue? Some projects bring opposition. We are told it is a stupid idea. If others think it is stupid, why should we continue? Most projects have no outside support. If people do not support us, why should we continue? We continue because this is the only way to achieve our dream. In the beginning, we have to go it alone. No one is interested in our ideas until we succeed. Then everyone wants to be a part of it. As we develop the habit of finishing what we start, unknowingly, we rise above the crowd of quitters. Project finishers are in demand, and this demand increases as our abilities expand. This ability is recognized by people who need assistance in reaching their goal. When they discover someone who can get things done, they latch onto them and offer opportunity, qualified or not. When sudden opportunity is offered, what do we do? Our first reaction is caused by barriers of risk, fear and failure. We ask ourselves various questions. "Do I really want to become involved?" "Not being prepared is risky. Am I willing to look

like a fool?" "What will my reputation be if I fail?"
 "What will my reputation be if I do not try?"

*People who avoid risky adventures are in the
 habit of watching things happen.
 People who accept the challenge make things
 happen.*

There is a catch to learning with projects - one must learn to finish what they start. No one learns anything with unfinished projects or try and quit. The learning process is in trying and failing, learning from mistakes, bouncing back, and trying again until success comes. Thomas Edison took on the ridiculous project of finding a way to burn a steel wire white hot without burning up. Everyone knows everything always burns up - what a stupid idea. He tried and failed a thousand times. But his persistence paid off - the common light bulb is the result.

Benefits of project-based education:

- Project based education is empowering students to learn, where the instructor is a coach, a facilitator.
- Projects make it possible to discover one's natural talent and personal interest.
- Projects make it possible to discover one's learning personality.
- Projects have a goal that is based on man's desire to be a winner. Self-satisfaction is a powerful motivator.
- Projects are learning tools that is motivated by curiosity.
- Projects work with the forces of nature and nature is the instructor.
- Projects give students opportunity to learn with objects. Not everyone is a literary intellectual.
- Successful projects are the results of failure and learning to bounce back from it.
- Projects require a plan, which includes ways to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills.
- Projects have all the motor skills that it takes to start and run a business or become a valuable employee, skilled or unskilled.

3.1. FAILURE, BOUNCING BACK AND PERSISTENCE

There is a problem with projects; they may not work as planned. Failure and success is a by-product, this is a learning tool. If we do not have the required skills for what we want to achieve or have a unique idea, there will be failure. Learning

from failures is bouncing back and trying again. In time we will get it right. Persistence is the secret.

Every year the percent of teenagers rejecting formal education is growing. In South Carolina, the high school dropout rate is 49%. The one-system-for-all education system is outdated. The system is based on the early 20th century production line introduced by Henry Ford. Every student is expected to achieve assigned proficiency in each grade. This is cost effective for teaching large groups of people. The problem is production lines have rejects. Today a high percentage of young people are rejecting the system for some of the following reasons.

3.2. SELF-RESPECT IN THE CLASSROOM

Students that excel develop positive self-respect. Students at the bottom of the class develop negative self-respect. The effects of self-respect will grow, positive or negative, with years spent in the classroom. Students developing negative self-respect develop an inferiority complex that prevents them from holding a job, should they get one. A diploma with negative self-respect has no value.

3.3. COMPETITIVENESS IN THE CLASSROOM

Competitive education compares every student with every other student in the class and school. Competitiveness produces winners and losers. The losers become rejects by teachers and classmates. As a result, the education system no longer has influence over them. On the street they seek acceptance and search for opportunity. Very often, criminal activity is the result.

3.4. TEENAGERS DESIRE TO LEARN

Every 14-year old wants to learn and be an achiever. They seek opportunity where they are socially accepted. Classroom rejects look to the street for opportunity. What they learn and the goals they set are influenced by their peers. Very often, the outcome is self-destructive.

3.5. THE FAILURE/REJECT LABEL

Natural talent - We all have unique talents, academic, mechanical, artistic, music, dexterous, that can be developed. The formal education system is based on academics. Students that do not meet academic standards are considered failures and rejected. Because they do not meet academic

standards, they are NOT offered opportunity to discover and develop their unique natural talent. This is missed opportunity for creating productive citizens.

4. HOW WE LEARN

Everyone can learn, but we all have a unique learning skill that is based on visual (demonstrations), sound (lectures) or by doing (hands-on). The formal education is based on lectures. If the student does not adapt to learning by lectures, they receive the failure/reject label. Many of these students could excel if offered hands-on learning opportunity.

4.1. REJECTS ARE NOT WANTED

It is almost impossible for anyone to excel in an environment where they are not wanted. Teachers and successful students do not want rejects in the classroom. There develops a downward spiral of conflicts between the two groups. Social prejudice determines their fate in the classroom.

4.2. RISK AND BELIEVING IN YOUR DREAM

Seeking opportunity requires risk, but nothing will happen if we do not try.

Let us see some elements of risk taking:

1. I developed skills I never had before.
2. I strengthen my ability to sustain when everything goes wrong.
3. By dressing down, I entered a social class that was totally foreign to me. I experienced, first hand, how lower class people are exploited.
4. I became aware of leadership styles. I worked most of my life for a company that treated its employees like royalty. The pay was at the top of the scale. Then I worked for a company that abused its employees badly. The pay was at the bottom of the scale.
5. Man has the ability to educate himself. In this case, I was forced to learn on my own by making every mistake possible.
6. Low paying companies do not spend money on training programs. Employees must find ways to educate themselves to complete the assigned tasks. This is opportunity for limited experienced people. Once experience is achieved, they move on to a higher wage company. This makes room for the next entry-level employee.

7. Risk comes with a battle scare - that is why it is called risk.

4.3. FORMAL EDUCATION

Most young people going to college have no idea what their interest is or what motivates them. The promoted goal is to get a college education so as to land a higher paying job. A career that is out of harmony with natural talent and does not motivate will not go very far, because they will be competing with people who have careers that are in harmony with their natural talent and are motivated. Public education is designed for people with academic natural talent. Honour students' talent in harmony with their learning opportunity. Academic talented people have support through their teen years and into the professional world. People with mechanical, artistic, or other natural talent do not have this support in public education. Very often they are labelled at-risk and self-fulfilling prophecy proves everyone right. For these people self-education and self-motivated projects are the passport to a productive lifestyle.

5. SUMMARY

Education may be feasible without reliance or support from others. Self-educated people do not depend on others for knowledge, what is more wide-ranging opportunities are created for them. Self-education comprises of a number of elements such as natural talent, discovery, opportunity, motivation and life-long fondness to learn, as a result of which self-educated people are more likely to be independent of others, find ways to acquire additional skills, finish what they start, and have a vision and all these factors increase career choices and competitiveness. Self- and team-motivated projects can boost the success of self-education as they have the potential to customize education for everyone. As formal education is not suitable in its present form to provide opportunities for a growing percentage of students, other means of education must be considered. Because of its advantages the role of self-education has increased rapidly in the last few years.

REFERENCES

- [1] J. Scott Armstrong (2012). "Natural Learning in Higher Education". Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning.
- [2] "Through the persecution of Galileo and other innovators of science for heresy, the public associated science with social rebellion. Moreover,

- the scientific world was interpreted by both the church and its detractors as a grave threat to the Christian cosmology". extract from: *Contested knowledge, social theory today* by Steven Seidman, Fourth Edition, 2008, Blackwell Publishing, ISBN 978-1405170017
- [3] Musson; Robinson (1969). *Science and Technology in the Industrial Revolution*. University of Toronto Press.
- [4] Robinson, Eric; McKie, Douglas. *Partners in Science: Letters of James Watt and Joseph Black*. Cambridge, Massachusetts. p. 4.
- [5] Jr, Quentin R. Skrabec (2012-05-04). *The 100 Most Significant Events in American Business: An Encyclopedia*. ABC-CLIO. ISBN 9780313398629. Retrieved 2013-02-04.
- [6] *Two Centuries of American Macroeconomic Growth From Exploration of Resource Abundance to Knowledge Driven Development*, pp 44
- [7] Iran-Nejad, Asghar; Brad Chissom (1992). "Contributions of Active and Dynamic Self-Regulation to Learning". *Innovative Higher Education* 17 (2): 125.
- [8] Ben-Zaken, Avner (2010). *Reading Hayy Ibn-Yaqzan: A Cross-Cultural History of Autodidacticism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. ISBN 978-0801897399.
- [9] *Architecture of Change, Sustainability and Humanity in the Built Environment*, Editors: Kristin Feireiss, Lukas Feireiss, ISBN 978-3-89955-211-9.
- [10] Hmelo-Silver, C.E.; R.G. Duncan, C.A Chinn (2007). "Scaffolding and achievement in problem-based and inquiry learning: A response to Kirschner, Sweller and Clark". *Educational Psychologist* 42 (2): 99.
- [11] Barab, S.A.; J.G. MaKinster, J.A. Moore, D.J. Cunningham (2001). "Designing and Building an online-community: The struggle to support sociability in the inquiry learning forum". *Educational Technology Research and Development* 49 (4): 71.
- [12] Marjanovic, M.J.; B. Scassellati, M.M. Williamson (1996). "Self-taught visually-guided pointing for a humanoid robot". *From Animals to Animats: Proceedings of.*: 35.
- [13] Brown, Resa Steindel. *The Call to Brilliance: A True Story to Inspire Parents and Educators*. ISBN 0-9778369-0-8
- [14] Hayes, Charles D. *Self-University: The Price of Tuition Is the Desire to Learn. Your Degree Is a Better Life*. ISBN 0-9621979-0-4
- [15] Hayes, Charles *The Rapture of Maturity: A Legacy of Lifelong Learning*. ISBN 0-9621979-4-7
- [16] Llewellyn, Grace. *The Teenage Liberation Handbook: How to Quit School and Get a Real Life and Education*. ISBN 0-9629591-7-0

Róbert Magda
Károly Róbert College, Hungary
rmagda@karolyrobert.hu