Opening on-line education: The institutional model of a "Global Degree"

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It is commonly accepted today that the education landscape is changing and there are more types of learning than ever before: conventional, part-time, full-time, distance and online.

This paper endeavors to present the formulation and development of a new educational structure and mode, the proposed: "Global Degree"

"Global Degree" is a concise and innovative proposal that will revolutionise international higher education and at the same time blend conventional learning with distance learning without abolishing any of the existing structures.
Its mission statement: “one world, one degree, limitless capabilities”.

This new educational norm based on the methodology of the “International Academic Credit” (IAC).

It will work on a parallel route with conventional degrees offered by Universities around the globe and it should not aim to substitute the existing higher education structures.

The institutions that will participate in the “Global Degree Project” will sign an “International Academic Treaty” and adopt the “International Academic Credit” (IAC) as a parallel system to those that they already use.
What is proposed is an “extensive hybrid” higher education methodology, where each student will build his/her own Undergraduate or Postgraduate Degree regardless the mode of attendance (full time, part time, distance learning), the method of studying (conventionally, via e-learning, virtual learning, Second Life etc), the location of the University, or even the language of tuition.

2000

- United States: 17%
- China: 17%
- Russia: 12%
- Japan: 10%
- India: 10%
- Spain: 3%
- France: 3%
- Mexico: 3%
- Korea: 4%
- United Kingdom: 3%
- Canada: 2%
- Turkey: 1%
- Other: 10%

Total: 91 million 25-34 year-olds with tertiary education

2010

- United States: 14%
- China: 18%
- Russia: 11%
- Japan: 7%
- India: 11%
- Spain: 2%
- France: 3%
- Mexico: 3%
- Korea: 4%
- Turkey: 2%
- Brazil: 3%
- Canada: 2%
- United Kingdom: 3%
- Indonesia: 4%

Total: 129 million 25-34 year-olds with tertiary education

2020

- United States: 11%
- China: 29%
- Russia: 7%
- Japan: 4%
- India: 12%
- Indonesia: 6%
- Spain: 1%
- France: 2%
- Mexico: 3%
- Korea: 3%
- Turkey: 2%
- Brazil: 3%
- Canada: 2%
- United Kingdom: 4%

Total: 204 million 25-34 year-olds with tertiary education
E-institutions Initiatives

**e-institutions**
A look at some of the major online education efforts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Founded</th>
<th>Enrollees</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coursera</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1.5 million</td>
<td>for profit</td>
<td>Backed by $22 million from VCs and colleges. Nearly 200 courses available, over a wide range of subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>edX</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>155,000*</td>
<td>nonprofit</td>
<td>MIT and Harvard have each pledged $30 million. Seven courses available. Will offer certificates to people who complete the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udacity</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>739,000</td>
<td>for profit</td>
<td>Got $5 million in seed funding. Offers 14 courses, focused on computer science, ranging from beginner to intermediate to advanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Learning Initiative</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>51,000</td>
<td>nonprofit</td>
<td>Carnegie Mellon project offers Web classes and researches online teaching methods. Has 15 courses, including sciences and French.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Phoenix</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>346,000</td>
<td>for profit</td>
<td>Has physical campuses for undergrads and grad students but also offers individual courses online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Open University</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>264,000</td>
<td>nonprofit</td>
<td>Based in the U.K. Combines Web curriculum with physical study centers. Offers hundreds of free online courses in a range of fields.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Edit figure is for Spring 2012 class only.
METHODOLOGY

The core methodological instrument for the accreditation of the “Global Degree” is the International Academic Credit (IAC), which measures and represents the academic workload, which is required for studying.

To earn 1 International Academic Credit, a student must carry out 25 hours of activity. These could be broken in:

- attending or viewing lectures
- individual study
- activities or practical / lab exercises

The didactic model focuses on the following learning dynamics:

★ use of new technologies in higher education
★ need for continuing education and life-long learning
★ active participation of students and self-learning process
SWOT ANALYSIS

**Strengths**
- Universal accessibility
- Global perspective
- Global sharing of knowledge
- Sustainability and environmental protection
- Affordable tuition fees
- Flexibility
- Continuous and life long learning
- Multicultural experience
- Degree building opportunity

**Weaknesses**
- Poor knowledge of technology
- Digital literacy
- Lack of faculty expertise
- Gradual and slow adaptation to change
- Start-up expenses
- Legal and bureaucratic constraints

**Opportunities**
- Increased student enrolment
- Continuous improvement process
- Space for constant development and expansion
- Use of new technologies
- Collaborative learning

**Threats**
- Traditional universities' skepticism
- Lack of cash flow
- No marketing and management experience
- Professional and regulatory issues
- Administration and decision-making
- Political obstacles
- Online safety / awareness
IMPLEMENTATION

- Establishment of an international steering committee
- Creation of an **International Consortium** in the form of a not for profit Organization under the name of “Global Degree”
- Institutionalization of the “**International Academic Credit (IAC)**”
- Development of a liaison network with Universities, International Organizations and Private and Public Entities
- Signing of the relevant “**International Academic Treaty**” which will put the “**Global Degree**” into effect
"This is the information revolution. It's crazy that every other field is getting revolutionised except education”.

Salman Khan