**Learning, leading and letting go of control – Learner Led Approaches in Education**

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**Abstract**

The aim of the paper is to introduce a new term in teaching in Higher Education: Learner Led Approaches in Education: LED. The sources of inspiration are many as are the experiences we draw from. Problem-based project work (PBL) being one, various classical teacher centered methods, and last but not least a variety of methods aiming towards developing creativity, innovational skills and entrepreneurship. LED is inspired by collaboration between professors from Aalborg University, Cornwall College and University College of Northern Denmark.

Moravec (2008) claims that educational systems still operate in 1.0 or perhaps 2.0 mode while the surrounding cultures and societies operate in 3.0 mode. The amount of accessible knowledge is increasing rapidly and so are the platforms of learning and constructing knowledge. Moravec introduces the term ”knowmads” describing the 21st century knowledge worker. Knowmads are *valued for the personal knowledge that they possess, and this knowledge gives them a competitive advantage. Knowmads are responsible for designing their own futures. This represents a massive shift from agricultural, industrial, and information-based work in which our relationships and responsibilities were clearly defined by others* (Moravec 2013). This leaves the individual in a position to create his or her own unique pool of knowledge, and the formal educational system as merely one among a broad variety of legitimate learning contexts. The learner is ”in the control room” and driven by intrinsic motivation.

Learner Led Approaches (LED) are not *one* approach or dogma to replace existing dogmas, but a way of approaching learning and education that mirrors the rapid development of society. We base it on the assumption, that each student has her or his own unique approach to learning based on his or her experience, knowledge, learning style etc. and therefore has the potential to design learning processes that are meaningful for him or her. We thereby remove the focus from the teacher and the teaching to the learner and the learning, and build on the student’s motivation as a driving force, hence the term *learner led*. Rogers (1983) defines meaningful learning as a *quality of personal involvement – the whole person in both feeling and cognitive aspects being in the learning event* .

The methods applied in LED will be changing over time, as different learners in co-operation with their teachers co-create and design methods and approaches appropriate at that exact time, in this exact context and for this exact student or group of students. Thus the teacher becomes a facilitator of learning and a co-creator of specific methods in time and over time.

The paper addresses strengths as well as challenges of LED approaches in a HE context and draws on research and experiments in the authors’ institutions.

We take our point of departure in the Danish educational system but believe that the trends and suggestions may have a broader scope and be relevant for other educational systems.