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THE FUTURE OF SOF EDUCATION: A VISION FOR GLOBAL SPECIAL FORCES EDUCATION

By: COL Imre Porkoláb, Hungarian Army

It gave a tremendous level of self-confidence, that through exploration and learning one could understand seemingly very complex things in one's environment.
—Steve Jobs

In early March 2013, Dr. Sugata Mitra, one of the pioneers in online learning (also known as e-learning), was awarded the TED Prize, which comes with a \$1 million check and the commitment of millions of TED community followers to help fulfill a wish of the winner.¹ Dr. Mitra's vision forms the first step toward what is being called in the education community "Online Learning 2.0." Dr. Mitra's ideas are clearly pushing toward the day when access to education will become far easier and considerably less expensive than it is now, ideas that are very much in line with NATO's current force education efforts as well. Programs like Smart Defence and the Connected Forces Initiative (CFI) offer NATO member states innovative solutions in many areas of the defense industry, particularly in the areas of training and education.²

AN EDUCATION REVOLUTION

Whether we realize it or not, education systems as we know them are changing at lightning speed. Critics declare that the time-honored liberal arts model of a broad classical education may be an expensive anachronism, while others observe that the lives of entrepreneurial heroes such as Steve Jobs suggest that accomplished and creative high school students may be better off avoiding formal post-secondary studies altogether. In a thought-provoking piece for The Awl, however, Maria Bustillos argues that the rise of so-called massive open online courses (MOOCs) may not bode well for the quality of higher education.³ She and others question the wisdom of moving scarce public funding away from public education, where it is desperately needed, to for-profit MOOCs. Rather than leveling the educational playing field for those who can't afford to attend a four-year college, these critics warn that it will create a twotier education system in which the well-off continue to get the full benefit of a traditional Socratic education while everyone else makes do with videotapes of varying quality, and occasional email chats.⁴

Proponents of online education have long branded it as a way to bring free knowledge to the masses. In a world trying to recover from an economic crisis, where every organization is looking for smart solutions, it is not surprising that one of the main drivers behind the debate on education is cost related. Early adopters of the new educational model imagine that in the near future, all students will enroll online and create a personalized plan of study from courses that cover a vast array of subjects, delivered by the world's best lecturers. Mitra's vision sees even beyond this; among several of his bold assertions about online education, three in particular deserve further exploration.

Schools are obsolete and outdated. Mitra understands that great teachers can inspire students and help them find their passion, and foster a culture of high expectations that pushes students to excel. His declaration that schools are obsolete assumes that the more students who can be exposed to these outstanding teachers through online lectures, the better. What he fails to take into account are the value of the interpersonal relationships that teachers and their students develop in the classroom, and the mentoring and collaboration that often last well beyond graduation.

Give students a problem and then let them go figure it out for themselves. This idea reflects the age-old dilemma of giving someone a fish versus teaching that person how to fish. It also attempts to put to rest the concern that online learning is no more than a videotaped lecture. Many people believe that online courses are an essentially authoritarian structure, a one-way process in which the student is a passive recipient of bestowed learning, but digital communications offer many means for online interaction between teachers and students. It is important to make a distinction in this regard between certain skill sets that need to be taught and practiced over and over again to inculcate them, for which online education is well-suited, and the kind of knowledge that requires association and extrapolation.

Knowledge is obsolete. This might be one of the boldest of Mitra's statements. His point is that students can look anything up on the internet, so the value of memorizing facts is low. This, combined with the fact that students have different abilities and learning styles, makes it easy to understand why Mitra champions the kind of personalized study plan that online learning makes possible.

Two MOOC providers, Udacity and Coursera, have gained most of the attention recently.⁵ In January 2013, the very large, financially troubled California State University system swung open the digital gates by piloting a few online courses for credit, at the remarkably low cost of \$150 per course. Many might be tempted by this news to predict that Udacity has the potential to expand radically and replace most of the physical college classroom experience. Just three weeks after the California State University's announcement,⁶ the American Council on Education, a consortium of roughly 1,800 accredited universities, announced it was also piloting inexpensive online science courses at three more universities, including Duke and the University of Pennsylvania. Perhaps most disruptive of all, the University of Wisconsin is offering a fully accredited bachelor's degree without any in-class time required.⁷ As long as students can pass the class exams (and pay the associated fees), they can learn from anywhere in the world.

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Stanford professors Daphne Koller and Andrew Ng launched Coursera last year to give anyone and everyone access to courses from top-tier universities for free, online. At launch, the start-up offered courses from a mere three institutions, but Coursera's platform now hosts over 200 courses from 33 top international and domestic schools, and reaches over 2 million students around the globe.⁸ But Coursera and Udacity are not the only two choices for distance learners.⁹ In fact, the number of options has grown considerably. Last May, for example, Harvard and MIT teamed up to launch edX—their own, high-profile response to the online wave transforming higher education—and MIT's Open- CourseWare project quickly expanded to 1,700 courses over three years.¹⁰

Educators knew the online revolution would eventually envelop the physical classroom, but this torrent of near-revolutionary developments in 2013 is proving that change is coming quicker than anyone imagined. In the course of one month, the largest school system in the U.S. began offering credit for online courses, a major university began awarding degrees without any class time required, and scores of public universities began moving their courses online.¹¹ Clay Christensen, who is considered to be an expert on disruption, talks about where the disruption to traditional education fueled by the web is going to strike next.¹² When it comes to education, Christensen suggested that the availability of fairly high-quality online learning would be the disruptive force because "it will take root in [the education system's] simplest applications, then just get better and better."¹³

NATO SOF EDUCATION INITIATIVES

NATO Allied Command Transformation (ACT) leads continuous NATO military transformation experiments to enhance effectiveness in current and future operations through the innovative development and delivery of training, education, capabilities, doctrine, and concepts. NATO forces are facing many challenges in the field of training and education, as the Alliance completes its International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in 2014 and prepares to shift over the coming years from a campaign to a contingency posture requiring ready, flexible, robust, and interoperable NATO forces. One of the key elements of this transformational effort is the CFI. The CFI was developed to maintain the allied forces' cohesion, and ensure that the needed military capability will be available to support political decisions. Its main priority is to support the readiness and interoperability of NATO forces, in close collaboration with Allied Command Operations, by leveraging ACT's reinforced and consolidated responsibilities in education and training, including exercises.

Because the operational tempo for NATO members will most likely slow down post-Afghanistan, working together will mean "educate, train, and exercise together" to retain interoperability and readiness. ACT's new training concept also promotes a more integrated, coherent, and global approach across the Alliance. As part of this effort, ACT Joint Force Trainer has been promoting the Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) network as the main tool for NATO forces' future education. NATO, like other institutions, appears to be on the brink of an educational evolution, and changes are inevitable if the Alliance is going to be able to fulfil the requirements of the post-Afghanistan era.

Just like NATO forces in general, over the last decade the SOF of NATO member nations have been engaged almost continuously in out-of-area, expeditionary operations in geographic areas of economic and political interest to their parent nations, including the Balkans, Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. These SOF units have successfully performed a wide variety of missions, unilaterally or in combination with the SOF of other participating nations, under circumstances not envisioned when most of these SOF units were organized, trained, and equipped as national strategic assets during the Cold War.

Addressing this situation in 2006, the North Atlantic Council approved the NATO SOF Transformation Initiative (NSTI) to increase the ability of NATO SOF to train and operate together.¹⁴ NSTI could be viewed as an initial experiment for the CFI.

The Alliance also highlighted the importance of a collaborative network with a recent communiqué on "The Connected Forces Initiative—Recommendations to Enhance SOF."¹⁵ With this initiative, the NATO Special Operations Headquarters (NSHQ) is planning to establish a SOF-specific mid-level professional military education course titled "Catalyst for Change—SOF Adaptability to 21st-century Operations."¹⁶ It is also working to improve SOF-specific medical interoperability, capability, and survivability across the Alliance with the NATO SOF Medicine Development Initiative, which consists of SOF medical courses and workshops, along with the creation of a NATO SOF medical education center. The NATO SOF air warfare initiative will help facilitate and hasten the development of interoperable SOF-specific aviation through the NSHQ's future Air Warfare Centre. Also in the works is a better defined potential role for SOF in support of broader NATO operational capabilities in environments degraded by chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons.

The center of gravity of the NSHQ is the human network, comprising SOF commanders, staffs, and special operators from member nations, as well as the conventional force expertise that provides invaluable knowledge and experience at the NSHQ, in Afghanistan, and across the force. The relationships among members of the NATO Allied and Partner SOF Collaborative Network in turn are the center of gravity for the international SOF community, and modern education is vital for these personnel to successfully execute joint future operations.

U.S. SOF Education Initiatives

General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote in a 2012 white paper titled Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020 that U.S. forces need to evolve regarding the field of education.¹⁷ As he pointed out: "We must review our joint education objectives and institutions to ensure that we are developing agile and adaptive leaders with the requisite values, strategic vision and critical thinking skills necessary to keep pace with the changing strategic environment."¹⁸ The white paper also stresses the military's need for agility and flexibility as the United States faces unclear and unknown threats in the future.¹⁹ At the heart of Capstone Concept for Joint Operations is an idea called globally integrated operations, which will be used to build and organize Joint Force 2020. This vision is similar to NATO's CFI concept.

Based upon this guidance, USSOCOM Commander Admiral William McRaven has also emphasized SOF education as a major part of the future USSOCOM strategy.²⁰ According to McRaven, USSOCOM must become more intellectually agile and better prepared to operate in a complex environment. His strategic guidance focuses on building an educated force for all ranks of the U.S. SOF community; to carry out this guidance, he established the

Force Management and Development program within USSOCOM. McRaven's vision includes accreditation for the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) and its new Center for Special Operations Studies and Research, as well as SOF education teams for Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) education.²¹

These steps would enable U.S. SOF to become the best educated force within the U.S. Department of Defense. JSOU is currently planning a new facility to enable it to fulfill this expanded role as the hub of future U.S. SOF education, and is also planning to develop a SOF-focused think tank that will provide instruction, research, and publication opportunities in national security, military strategy, and regional studies. To implement Admiral McRaven's concept, it also will be necessary to unite the current U.S. SOF-related educational institutions toward this common goal.²² Apart from the more prominent service educational institutions, there are a number of training establishments out there with an abundance of knowledge on Special Forces.²³ This U.S. SOF education concept provides opportunities for USSOCOM personnel attending intermediate- and senior-level military colleges to advance their knowledge, skills, and value well beyond what is currently available. It also offers academic certification programs that enhance regional, cultural, and geopolitical understanding, and places a special emphasis on foreign language education.²⁴

Connecting the Dots

The first question we need to answer when talking about the future of SOF education is, why is it necessary to revolutionize SOF education? It is easy to see that both the NATO and U.S. visions for SOF are emphasizing the ability to better understand the security environment and to deal with surprise and uncertainty. Developing the ability to recognize change as it unfolds and lead logical, measured transitions and transformation is a main goal of these concepts. Adaptation to prepare for future challenges is a major driver of study and research in high-profile organizations, and education is an integral part of this adaptation process.

Nevertheless, the U.S. and NATO SOF visions for education are somewhat limited because they do not recognize the full potential for global SOF education, and they underestimate the advances of the online educational revolution. More and more SOF deployments are international gatherings of allied SOF personnel from around the world (the recent deployment in Afghanistan is an excellent example), and a widely supported and internationally agreed program for SOF education would support the NATO requirement of interoperability. Interoperability for SOF is not only a buzzword, but a bottom-line requirement.

Most of the time, SOF training includes known scenarios, and some of the more sensitive aspects of this training will always be a national, rather than group, responsibility. Through this training, SOF personnel learn the science of war. But in the context of new complex challenges, we also need to educate our SOF personnel at all levels in the art of war. This kind of *thinking interoperability* is not just about absorbing more tactics, techniques, and procedures, but rather is a common way to think and learn from each other, and education is the best tool to achieve this. International allies have a much better opportunity to define common ground within the field of SOF education than through training alone. International education also has the possibility to create a myriad of other opportunities, such as offering a common platform for concept development to support a worldwide, networked SOF community. For all of these reasons, I advocate the development of *global SOF education*.

The second question we need to answer when talking about the future of SOF education is *how* to develop this vision of global SOF education. The international approach toward such a plan must support international participation through SOF schools and the TSOCs. The NSHQ and JSOU have the potential to serve as the hubs for this online education activity, and to coordinate online education throughout the global SOF enterprise. This approach also makes it possible to access the accredited online portion of the education portfolio anywhere on the globe. With a well-planned access and crediting system, SOF personnel could join any of the international educational institutions and collect credit points toward their required educational goals.

It must be said, though, that technological educational revolution is in some ways a double-edged sword. It is true that for most SOF personnel, there is no time to sit through an 18-month course at the Naval Postgraduate School, because current operational tempo requires them to be deployed most of the time. The temptation of online education is that its flexibility makes it possible for everyone to gain the required knowledge at their own pace and time, adjusted to current operational tempo. The implementation plan needs to clarify the ways in which the SOF network connects (e.g., VTC, JKO Portal, or Blackboard, or for NATO, ADL, and the Battlefield Information Collection and Exploitation System [BICES]), and the reasons and benefits for maximizing technology as an educational tool. These educational tools must be not only interconnected, but also based on a common platform, which can be an obstacle in itself.

At the same time, it must be emphasized that online solutions are not the holy grail of SOF education. Online education has its limits and cannot be seen as the only solution to the needs of SOF education. SOF personnel are quality people, and the quality of education entirely through online tools is still questionable. A personal relationship with professors at a physical educational institution has real value, and we need to make sure that we have the correct balance between online instruction and face-to-face education. Existing educational institutions can play a major role here, and this brings up our third question.

The third question we need to answer when talking about the future of SOF education is, who has the ability to contribute toward this vision of global SOF education? There is already an abundance of knowledge out there that needs to be compiled and distributed, and it would be very beneficial for all allied nations to ensure that their service personnel interact with other nations' representatives. For SOF this is not only a possibility but a must. The technology to achieve this kind of knowledge fusion is already out there, and it is logical that SOF educators should continue their tradition as innovators to become leading experts in the field of military education.

The U.S. SOF educational vision is very U.S.-centric; it should be extended to better leverage international educational institutions within the Alliance (and in some partner countries as well). The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany; the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany; and the NATO Defense College in Rome are excellent educational hubs with strong knowledge bases that should be made widely available. Moreover, the NATO Centres of Excellence (such as the Centre of Excellence—Defence Against Terrorism in Ankara, the Counter IED Centre of Excellence in Madrid, and the Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn) are among many others that could also contribute toward a global vision of SOF

education. The NSHQ facilities, for example, are custom-built to welcome and educate SOF personnel from all around the world.

What Does the Future Hold?

Ken Robinson, a specialist in education and creativity, gave a TED speech called "How to Escape Education's Death Valley," in which he made some interesting points that are applicable toward SOF education as well.²⁵ One of his main points was that many of those who attend school are disengaged from it and do not get any real benefit from being there. The reasons, says Robinson, are threefold.

First of all, human beings are naturally diverse and learn in different ways. This is true with the SOF community as well. If we are thinking of developing a vision for global SOF education, we need to take account of the fact that SOF personnel are a special breed of characters, as anyone who has interacted with us can tell. Add to this mix a wide array of cultural differences and we have a level of diversity that needs to be directly addressed in any planning for global SOF education.

The second principle that allows human life to flourish is curiosity, a fundamental quality that standard education too often ignores. The best educators focus on facilitating learning as a tool for discovery and less on testing students' memories. Education for a global audience must address this principle. SOF selection (in most places) makes sure that those who make the cut are not only physically and mentally tough, but are devoted to lifelong personal development and learning as well. Educators in the SOF education system must understand and leverage these qualities. It is not enough to pass on knowledge; educators also need to mentor, stimulate, provoke, and engage those who participate. This is one of the reasons why online education alone is not enough. The mentoring role of educators at all levels of SOF education is a vital component of the whole system.

The third principle is that humans are inherently creative. SOF operations in most cases are the most innovative and creative military operations. This creativity enables the SOF community as a whole to always stay one or two steps ahead of the conventional forces. By constantly venturing out of our zone of comfort, we can develop our personalities, and through a restless process of thinking out of the box, imagine new alternatives and possibilities. The role of education should be to foster this kind of attitude, and SOF education can go one step further by teaching SOF personnel the kind of unconventional leadership skills that can be used in asymmetric conflicts with great effect.²⁶ This kind of unconventional education will enable SOF to become a learning organization.

There are a lot of considerations related to designing a global SOF education system that can address all of the previously mentioned issues. First of all, individualizing education is difficult, but if we use the principle of slicing rather than simply layering knowledge onto students when designing the building blocks, we can achieve this goal.²⁷ The system must engage its participants to make sure that their individuality, curiosity, and creativity are fully activated. Therefore, the next hurdle is that these goals demand the very best teachers. Investing in "rock star educators" is vital for SOF, and selecting the teacher cadre is probably the most important decision that has to be made. The third consideration is incentives. Those who go through this specialized education system must be incentivized not only with career advancement, but also with the knowledge that much of what they learn through SOF education is applicable in their everyday professional work and other areas of life as well. Finally, SOF education needs to concentrate on developing leaders—not just the leaders we need today (command and control) but also the leaders we will need in the future (climate control). Unconventional leadership can enable SOF personnel to create a climate of possibility, and if we can provide that leadership, SOF forces will step up to the complex problems we have to face every day and fulfill missions that were unanticipated and appeared to be unachievable.

The demands put on organizations now require learning to be delivered faster, cheaper, and more effectively. Some organizations conduct business with an "if it isn't broken, don't fix it" attitude, until one day they find that they have to make major changes in their organizations to continue to compete. A learning organization is one that continually expands its ability to shape its future. For a modern SOF to thrive, learning and education must be linked to the strategic goals of the organization, so that continual learning at all levels becomes a way of organizational life.

According to Peter Senge, a leading expert in the field of organizational management, systems thinking is the single most important learning discipline for any organization if it wants to adapt, change, and thrive.²⁸ In a learning organization, members understand that changes intended to improve performance in one part of the organization can affect other parts of the organization in surprising ways. It is also important for the organization as a whole to have a learning perspective. In the past, education ended when an individual received credentials. Now, education is becoming continuous, deliberate, and organization-wide. Developing organizational learning is an emergent process in the sense that its outcome is not predictable and it is more than the separate contributions of individuals. If individuals and teams are encouraged to be innovative and think creatively, some of those proposed alternative approaches will entail inherent risks, and not all of them will succeed. To achieve constant self-transformation, this is a painful and necessary aspect of the process that the members of the global SOF community must accept if they want to stay ahead of the game and transform SOF into a learning organizational system.

FINAL THOUGHTS: THE BALANCED APPROACH

The alarming aspect of recent technological advances and the online educational revolution is that we seem to be acting more quickly than we're thinking. It can take years, if not decades, to fully assess a single course, let alone an entire restructuring of the education system. Therefore, the accreditation process for JSOU and the fusing of the already existing SOF institutions will be a lengthy and frustrating process—an adaptive challenge in itself.²⁹ The best way forward is to establish a baseline and build upon the existing capabilities.

For example, the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School already has an established and accredited, internationally recognized graduate-level program for SOF personnel. Optimal utilization of this program, on the one hand, can be an important piece of the education puzzle. We should never underestimate the benefits of face-to-face discussion and collaboration that come with classroom attendance! In institutions such as this, the "traditional" means of instruction must be encouraged, including professor-student interactions, mentorship, and long hours spent in the campus library.

On the other hand, parts of the educational domain must be more "virtual": providing online courses (MOOCs) for SOF personnel all around the world, creating a SOF professional reading list with downloadable audio books that are

available for SOF personnel anywhere, and offering a common virtual place for the international SOF community to discuss new ideas, in the think tank model described earlier.

Between the physical classroom and the virtual one, a cadre of mobile education teams (METs) can be utilized as a means to export quality education to wherever students need it the most. This kind of activity must be linked to the TSOC concept. We also need to combine two bodies of theory to understand how this process might unfold and support a balanced approach. The current education market overall clearly seems to fit Clayton Christensen's disruption theory, but we need to complement this view with another body of theory that suggests that education is basically knowledge sharing.³⁰ In a much-cited article on education written a decade ago, the authors argued that different kinds of knowledge require different kinds of sharing approaches. If their analysis is right, then maybe just 10 percent of the executive education market is safe from the online onslaught, but my personal opinion is that a considerably bigger percentage of classroom time must be preserved and protected when we are planning global SOF education.

If the proposed goal of the new form of virtual education for SOF is actually to create a viable online education model (not just a poor man's alternative) and transform SOF into a learning organization, traditional SOF educational institutions (the brick-and-mortar hubs) need to produce some sort of a return on investment. Because traditional education is the most costly, it makes sense to have them focus on the most beneficial disciplines—those that foster creative thinking—and be the main source for degree credits. In turn, while MOOCs are great for distance learning and for those who are pursuing pure mental development, most such platforms should not be credit-bearing but should serve only informational purposes. In other words, online courses don't lead to diplomas, but help develop SOF personnel into better leaders.

To summarize, we have almost no idea how the educational revolution will affect the SOF educational ecosystem. What we do know is that the unknown is coming at us very, very quickly, and SOF has to be ahead of other services to build on these changes.

About the Author(s): COL Imre Porkoláb, PhD, is presently serving as the Hungarian national liaison representative at NATO Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, Virginia.

NOTES:

1. Each year, the world's leading thinkers and doers gather for the invitation-only TED conference, an event many describe as the highlight of their year. Attendees have called it "the ultimate brain spa" and "a 4-day journey into the future, in the company of those creating it." See Adi Robinson, "Online Education Wins Big as TED Awards \$1 Million to Pioneer Sugata Mitra," *The Verge*, 27 February 2013: <http://www.theverge.com/2013/2/27/4035596/ted-awards-1-million-prize-to-onlineeducation-pioneer-sugata-mitra>. In what he called his "Hole in the Wall" experiment, Dr. Mitra provided very poor children in the slums of India with a computer and left them alone. Within a few hours they had figured out how to get online, browse, and learn. He replicated the experiment in several forms, and it forms the basis of his hypothesis that students learn just fine in a self-organized learning environment, with no adults around. Dr. Mitra's TED talk, "Build a School in the Cloud," filmed in February 2013, can be found at <http://on.ted.com/TEDPrize2013>
2. Smart Defence is a complex multinational defense cooperation project in which NATO member and partner nations cooperate to find solutions to common defense problems in capability development. The Connected Forces Initiative (CFI) was developed to maintain allied forces' cohesion, and provide the military capability required to support political decisions.
3. Maria Bustillos, "Venture Capital's Massive, Terrible Idea for the Future of College," *The Awl*, 31 January 2013: <http://www.theawl.com/2013/01/venture-capitals-massive-terrible-idea-for-the-future-of-college>; and Maria Bustillos, "Online Classes Can Be Enlightening, Edifying, and Engaging—but They're Not College," *The Verge*, 28 May 2013: <http://www.theverge.com/2013/5/28/4363450/online-classes-can-be-enlightening-but-moocs-arent-college>. Aaron Bady and Clay Shirky had an exchange recently on *Inside Higher Ed* that sheds light on the current thinking regarding massive open online courses (MOOCs) among academics. See Aaron Bady, "Questioning Clay Shirky," *Inside Higher Ed*, 6 December 2012: <http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2012/12/06/essay-critiques-ideas-clayshirky-and-others-advocating-higher-ed-disruption>. Shirky's November blog post drew attention to Robert Archibald and David Feldman's article "Why Does College Cost So Much?" which invokes Baumol's Cost Disease to explain the ever-rising cost of education. See *Economix* (a New York Times blog), "Why Does College Cost So Much?" blog entry by David Leonhardt, 18 February 2011: <http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/18/why-does-college-cost-so-much/>
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9. Erica St. Angel, "Massive List of MOOC Resources, Lit and Literati," *World of Webcast*, 25 June 2012: <http://www.worldofwebcast.com/post/massive-list-of-mooc-resources-lit-and-literati>

10. See the edX website: <https://www.edx.org/> ; also see Chris Velazco, "Harvard, MIT Will Bring Classes to the Masses with their 'edX' Online Learning Initiative," TechCrunch, 2 May 2012: <http://techcrunch.com/2012/05/02/harvard-mit-will-bringclasses- to-the-masses-with-their-edx-online-learning-initiative/>
11. Porter, "College Degree"; Steve Kolowich, "Universities Try MOOCs in Bid to Lure Successful Students to Online Programs," Chronicle of Higher Education, 23 January 2013: <https://chronicle.com/blogs/wiredcampus/universities-try-mooc2degree- courses-to-lure-successful-students-to-onlineprograms/41829>
12. Christensen recently co-wrote a study for Nieman Reports that focused on current disruption in print media. See Clayton M. Christensen, David Skok, and James Allworth, "Breaking News: Mastering the Art of Disruptive Innovation in Journalism," Nieman Reports, Fall 2012: <http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/article/102798/Breaking-News.aspx>. Also see Clayton M. Christensen, *The Innovator's Dilemma: The Revolutionary Book That Will Change the Way You Do Business* (New York: HarperBusiness, 2011): <http://www.amazon.com/Innovators-Dilemma-Revolutionary-Change-Business/dp/0062060244>. For more on the question of disruption in education, see the debate between media theorist and journalism professor Clay Shirky and Aaron Bady, a PhD student in African literature at UC Berkeley: Joshua Kim, "Shirky, Bady and For-Profit Higher Ed," Inside Higher Ed, 10 December 2012: <http://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/technology-and-learning/shirky-bady-and-profit-higher-ed>
13. Clayton Christensen also described some of his thinking about what has happened to the newspaper and traditional media business in an interview with Mathew Ingram. See Mathew Ingram, "Clay Christensen, Newspapers and the Cliff of Despair," Gigaom, 22 October 2012: <http://gigaom.com/2012/10/22/clay-christensen-newspapers-and-the-cliff-ofdespair/>. Also see Mathew Ingram, "Clay Christensen: First the Media Gets Disrupted, Then Comes the Education Industry," Gigaom, 13 February 2013: <http://gigaom.com/2013/02/13/clay-christensen-first-the-media-gets-disrupted-then-comes-theeducation- industry/>
14. NATO, "Riga Summit Declaration," news release, 29 November 2006: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2006/p06-150e.htm>
15. See the NATO website for more information on the Connected Forces Initiative (CFI): http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_98527.htm
16. The inaugural course was conducted from 27 May to 5 July 2013 at the NATO Special Operations School at Chièvres Airbase in Belgium.
17. General Martin E. Dempsey, Joint Education, white paper, 16 July 2012: <http://cole.fuqua.duke.edu/Joint%20Education%20White%20Paper.pdf>
18. Dempsey, Joint Education, 3.
19. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020 (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 10 September 2012): http://www.defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/resources/JV2020_Capstone.pdf
20. Posture Statement of Admiral William H. McRaven, USN Commander, United States Special Operations Command, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 113th Congress (2013): http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2013_hr/030513mcraven.pdf
21. Details on McRaven's vision on SOF education were shared by Dr. Amie W. Lonas, Dean of Academics, Joint Special Operations University, at the conference Special Operations Summit West, presented by the Institute for Defense and Government Advancement in San Diego, California, on 18–20 March 2013. A theater special operations command (TSOC), a sub-unified command, advises combatant commanders on the capabilities of SOF, provides SOF personnel for employment, and integrates SOF fully into theater plans by planning, coordinating, conducting, and supporting the geographical unified commander. See Gay M. McGillis, *Organizing NORTHCOM for Success: A Theater Special Operations Command*, monograph (Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.: School of Advanced Military Studies, 2003): <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA416189>
22. These include the Defense Analysis department of the Naval Postgraduate School and the Center for Sea, Air, and Land (SEAL) and Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman (SWCC) in California; the School of Advanced Military Studies and the Air War College in the Midwest and South; and the Joint Forces Staff College, the National Defense University, the Army War College, the Naval War College, and the Marine Corps University on the East Coast.
23. Some of these are the U.S. Army Special Operations Command located at Fort Bragg, the Naval Special Warfare Command at Coronado, the Air Force Special Operations Command at Hurlburt Field, the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command at Camp Lejeune, the Joint Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, and the Special Operations Command– Joint Capabilities headquartered at Norfolk Naval Base in Virginia.
24. The U.S. Defense Language Institute, for example, specializes in highly intensive language-immersion courses taught by native or native-level speakers.
25. Ken Robinson, "How to Escape Education's Death Valley," TED, April 2013: http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_how_to_escape_education_s_death_valley.html
26. See Imre Porkoláb, "When the Goldfish Meets the Anaconda," CTX 3, no. 3 (August 2013): <https://globalecco.org/when-the-goldfish-meets-the-anaconda-a-modern-fable-on-unconventionalleadership>
27. "Slicing" in this context means that an individual's current skill level is continuously monitored so that education can be tailored in a way that fits each person's needs and abilities. In this way, SOF personnel don't get a "cookie cutter" education, but rather a program that takes into account their other needs—operational, family, and so on.
28. Peter M. Senge et al., *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1994).
29. Adaptive challenges require new perspectives, expertise, and solutions. These types of challenges are the real innovator's dilemma, where we first need to diagnose the challenge and then create the right new tool to solve it. An

adaptive challenge creates a lot of friction within organizations.

30. This theory is described in detail in Morten T. Hansen's post. See Harvard Business Review Blog Network, "Executive Education Is Ripe for Online Disruption," blog entry by Morten T. Hansen,

31. January 2013: http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2013/01/executive_education_is_ripe_fo.html; also see Morten T. Hansen, Nitin Nohria, and Tom Tierney, "What's Your Strategy for Managing Knowledge?" Harvard Business Review, March 1999: <http://hbr.org/1999/03/whats-your-strategy-for-managing-knowledge/ar/1>

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