Fostering skills for innovation in higher education

How can tertiary education institutions better prepare students for innovation? A new paper by Francesco Avvisati, Gwenaël Jacotin and Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin explores the characteristics of university programmes undertaken by innovative employees in Europe. The paper shows that:

- The development of skills for innovation, such as creativity or critical thinking, is not among the top strengths of higher education.

- Graduates from all disciplines contribute to the innovation process, and that their likelihood to participate in it is associated with the relative predominance of practical or theoretical forms of instruction, depending on the field of study.

But what do these specific teaching and learning practices look like? A new report by Sabine Hoidn and Kiira Kärkkäinen gives a first answer to this question by reviewing the evidence on the impact of problem-based learning as well as the effectiveness of different teaching behaviours in higher education on different kinds of skills. Some of the key findings include:

- Problem-based learning may be more effective than traditional teaching practices for fostering knowledge application and certain behavioural skills but not for test performance.

- A number of trainable teaching attributes such as organisation, expressiveness, enthusiasm and rapport/interaction appear to support the acquisition of certain skills for innovation.

Please send us your feedback

- Please share with us other examples of teaching and learning practices used by higher education institutions in your country to foster innovation skills.

Other news

- Find out about the first results and findings of the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) and the results of PISA 2012.

CERI's Innovation Strategy for Education and Training

The Innovation Strategy for Education and Training of the OECD Centre of Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) explores new approaches to equip people with innovation skills and to support radical innovation and continuous improvement in education systems. It includes two strands:

- Education and skills for innovation
- Innovation and improvement in education

The project has contributed to the OECD Innovation Strategy (2010), a major policy initiative offering a cross-government approach to help countries capture the economic and social benefits of innovation. It also feeds the OECD Skills Strategy (2012), a peer-learning initiative towards improving the supply of, anticipating the demand for, and optimising the use of skills in the workforce to promote economic growth and social inclusion.