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Charting a New Course for the Scholarship of Management Teaching and Learning

Future Directions, Powerful Opportunities, a Hopeful Future

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The scholarship of management education is in transition. The diverse interests and passions of the more than 70 educators who gathered at a recent symposium¹ to explore new directions for the field and to forge strategies and alliances for bringing the vision to fruition attest to its health and vitality. After slowly gaining traction and legitimacy within the academy over the past 35 years, the scholarship of teaching and learning in the management sciences is anchored and alive—and at a time when its contributions are most needed. Management education is at a crossroad, shaken at its core by the economic, environmental, technological, and social transformations that are changing the work world and the way the world works. Management education scholars have a unique opportunity to shape and frame the larger dialogue about the purpose of management education in light of these shifts, about the appropriate forms and content of management schools and programs for a new generation of learners in a technology-rich environment, and about how best to educate and train organizational citizens and leaders for a rapidly changing global world. The capacity to deliver on these aspirations, however, requires a different way to think about the role and responsibilities of the field; deeper appreciation for its possibilities; and more intentional, rigorous, and interdisciplinary approaches to the work. Bottom-line, the time is right to chart a new course for the scholarship of management teaching and learning. There is much important work to be done.

Historically, the field has largely meant public sharing of pedagogical activities, practices, and exercises that facilitate knowledge transfer from

teacher to student. Articles, instructor guides, and books have offered an array of suggestions for how to teach about topics, issues, and dynamics. The *Journal of Management Education* began with this humble purpose in 1974, and its efforts launched a scholarly movement. At its founding, the scholarship of management education was instructional in orientation, centered in the organizational sciences, and teacher-focused: How do we as instructors do our jobs better? More easily? More creatively? It is no surprise then that the largest body of scholarly work consists of experiential activities and classroom exercises focused on organizational behavior, and that the major metacontribution of the field to date has been to legitimize experiential learning in management teaching and training through the publication of instructional best practices.

The 1990s marked a shift in focus from improving instruction to increasing student learning—and the subsequent attention of major accrediting bodies to the measurement of learning outcomes and of future employers to the relevance of academic programming for workforce preparation. Ernest Boyer's (1990) seminal work, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, and his efforts through the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching rocked the Ivy Towers by identifying the limited nature of academic scholarship and by elevating university teaching from craft to scholarly enterprise. The impact of his work repositioned management education scholarship within a larger context that encouraged exploration of larger learning and curricular issues. A host of college teaching journals joined *JME*—there are 88 at last count (Whetten, 2008), and each has carved out its own take on the broader topic: from discipline-specific learning and teaching needs in publications such as the *Journal of Accounting Education* to the larger educational policies and perspectives needed to keep management teaching and learning vibrant in journals such as the *Academy of Management Learning and Education*.

This expansion of interest and effort is positive and satisfying; the impact, however, less so. The current state of the field—as symposium participants and attendees confirmed—falls short of the full legitimacy, contribution, and leverage needed to significantly affect academia or the larger organizational landscape. Current limitations include a field that is

1. scattered in focus and quality;
2. still largely devoted to its historic emphasis on teaching practices and on the transmission of cognitive knowledge;
3. lacking in deep research on student differences and learning styles and on changing student audiences and populations resulting from increasing workplace diversity, globalization, technology, and generational shifts;
4. in need of interdisciplinary research to integrate learning and theory from education, the cognitive and neurosciences, and other relevant disciplines;

5. lacking additive research to ground understandings of teaching and of learning;
6. limited in its futuring: heavily focused on the *here and now* of the classroom to the detriment of work to identify organizational and student needs and skill sets for 5 to 10 years out and beyond;
7. still largely unsupported by institutional and professional reward systems; and
8. poised for growth and opportunity to bring itself to maturity but with little agreement as to what that means or requires.

This portrait paints a field that is less than perfect. An appreciation of its full meaning, however, offers hope. Progress and the important contributions of many have brought the field to a place of solid ground and its current readiness to plan and launch a next phase of development. Implicit in the field's flat sides are also the seeds for its future growth.

Standards and assessment. A field that varies in focus and quality, for example, begs for discussion about and development of shared standards, models of assessment, and clarity about what rigor means. It also points to work with important gatekeepers and thought leaders such as journal editors, review boards, program chairs, and conference coordinators to raise standards and to define quality products—and to educate and train others so that they can produce at a level consistent with the high expectations. Boyer (1990) distinguished among four forms of scholarship—the scholarships of discovery, integration, application, and teaching. Others developed models to assess the different scholarly contributions (e.g., Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997). This kind of differentiated approach to product evaluation is a good starting place in forging new assessment models and instruments for management education scholarship; disseminating the new standards and processes raises both awareness of the field's contributions and its credibility within the larger academy. One caveat: Let us not equate bringing quality and credibility with the exclusive use of quantitative methods and instruments, although there is a clear place for those contributions. The field has much to gain from ethnographic and field-based studies, from design techniques and arts-based assessment practices, and from other qualitative methods that foster deep understanding of the meaning of pedagogical practices, choices, needs, impact, audiences, and contributions.

Research variety and richness. The field's historical roots will inevitably encourage development of new class designs and activities; however, there is much room for research to advance learning theory and learning outcome

measures, to test instructional materials and strategies across populations and cultures, to shed light on student and organizational needs and differences, to identify ways to attract and to meet the needs of currently underserved populations, and to predict—and better anticipate—teaching and learning needs of the future. A host of research options and methods can be employed. In addition, the field is greatly in need of longitudinal studies to chart trends and issues over time; of cumulative research to systematically test and build incremental knowledge; and of inquiry informed by non-traditional perspectives like positive organizational scholarship (e.g., Cameron, Dutton, and Quinn, 2003), appreciative inquiry (e.g., Cooperrider and Sekerka, 2006), and positive psychology (e.g., Seligman, 2006) to extend and diversify the field's values base and findings.

Interdisciplinary exploration and multidisciplinary applications. In the same way that the organizational sciences grew from embracing core knowledge from multiple disciplines (Bolman & Deal, 2008), so can the scholarship of management teaching and learning. Education, psychology, social work, neuroscience, sociology, information technology, and gender and diversity studies have much to offer. So do the arts and humanities. Mirvis (2006) reminded us of research identifying the capacity of visionary artists to see and anticipate cultural changes well before they are expressed in accepted theory or make their way into professional fields of practice and of the long and well-established literature on the comparable nature of the creative process for artists and for new paradigm-discovering scientists. The arts are a natural partner for understanding and fostering the development of 21st management skills such as creativity and innovation (Gallos, in press; Pink, 2006); and literary and artistic criticism and performing arts scholarship offer field-expanding perspectives on the meaning of rigor and quality as well as nontraditional assessment forms, such as storytelling, video making, and performance art (Strati, 1992).

Embracing diversity in all its forms. The world is a dynamic global marketplace infused with technology and propelled by innovation and rapid change. Yet many current pedagogical understandings are based on experiences with different audiences, under different conditions, and at different times in social and economic history. Embracing diversity in all its forms suggests cross-cultural and multicultural research. It also pushes management education scholarship beyond the study of demographic differences and into complex issues such as spiritual maturity (Delbecq, 2008), affective growth (Clawson, 2008), and multilayered development (Torbert, 2006).

Appreciating possibilities, essential contributions. The scholarship of management teaching and learning began life as the poor stepchild of the academy, but a variety of trends are converging to make it more central and vital. Pressures for accountability from accrediting agencies and the larger society increasingly reveal the poverty and limits of conventional ideas about pedagogy, learning, and the purposes of management education. The relentless pace of change that renders any particular content knowledge obsolete almost as soon as it is taught makes it ever more important to understand how to produce deeper levels of learning in the form of complex thinking, sound judgment, and reflective action. A world in danger of overrunning its resources and poisoning its ecosystems demands a broader conception of the scope of issues for management education and its scholarship to address; it requires learning that engenders new levels of responsibility and creative problem-solving skills—and courageous educators willing to convene critical conversations about both. No one is better positioned to respond to the opportunities and pressures of our time than those who see the possibilities in—and importance of—the next generation of management education scholarship.

Note

1. The *Symposium on Future Directions for the Scholarship of Management Teaching* was held in June 2008 at the Organizational Behavior Teaching Conference, hosted by Babson College. As symposium chair, I thank participants Darlyne Bailey, Dean and Campbell Leadership Chair in Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota; Diana Bilimoria, Professor of Leadership, Case Western Reserve University and former editor, *Journal of Management Education (JME)*; Joseph Garcia, Professor and Director of the Center for Excellence in Management Education, University of Western Washington and former *JME* Associate Editor; and Roy Lewicki, Irving Abramowitz Memorial Professorship/Dean's Distinguished Professor of Management & Human Resources, Ohio State University and Founding Editor, *Academy of Management Learning and Education (AMLE)*. In preparing for the symposium, all shared perspectives on the current state and future needs of the field. James Bailey, Ave Tucker Professor of Leadership, George Washington University and current *AMLE* editor and James Clawson, Johnson & Higgins Professor of Business Administration, University of Virginia also participated in those conversations. This piece is informed by the wisdom and experience of all involved.

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