MANAGEMENT EDUCATION FOR
INTEGRITY: ETHICALLY
EDUCATING TOMORROW’S
BUSINESS LEADERS

EDITED BY

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Returning to a Holistic Management Education and the Tradition of Liberal Education

Mary Grace Neville and Lindsey Godwin

Abstract

Purpose – This chapter advances the growing call from scholars who contend that business education needs to incorporate a whole-systems philosophy guided by the traditional liberal education model. We focus on traditional undergraduate students in our discussion because their stages in cognitive, ethical, and psychological development suggest they have different developmental needs compared to conventional MBA students.

Methodology/approach – Insights from both a literature review and qualitative data gathered from a three-year action research process that engaged four business education stakeholder groups (teacher-scholars, administrators, students, and business practitioners) in virtual and face-to-face dialogues inform our emergent model for a liberal undergraduate business education.

Findings – We detail the competencies involved in, pedagogical approaches needed for, and philosophical tensions that emerge when working toward the creation of a liberal education model for undergraduate business education.

Research limitations/implications – The action-research project informing the current chapter was conducted with a limited sample size only in the United States. Future research could seek to expand on our findings with a larger, more internationally diverse sample.

Social implications – A liberal-based education helps students connect the siloed realms of information they are exposed to in school and helps them begin to view themselves as citizens of a larger society, encouraging them act with integrity toward others in business and beyond.

Originality/value of paper – The chapter offers a model to begin re-conceptualizing undergraduate management education grounded in the historical tradition of liberal education.
When you have broken the reality into concepts you never can reconstruct it in its wholeness.  

William James

Old habits are hard to break. This statement rings true not only for individuals but also for industries. A glance through the history of modern business reveals the deep-seated pattern of breaking down whole systems into measurable, isolated, component parts to help increase efficiency and effectiveness. With industrialization, Frederick Taylor’s extreme focus on optimizing task-oriented work and establishing time-motion rewards accelerated the perception of organizations as being comprised of various parts, like a machine, work began to be reduced to smaller and smaller elements to be efficient. This mechanistic metaphor has become so pervasive in business we no longer even recognize it as an optional way to approach creating effectiveness, but rather we treat it as a given (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Morgan, 1996).

Yet, as the recent ethical and financial crises remind us, organizations are not machines; they are intricate and integrated elements in the fabric of our society. From single companies like Enron to entire industries like mortgage lending, we have learned that a myopic focus on one area of business—such as short-term financial profits—can lead to blindness regarding business’ long-term, holistic societal impact. Similarly, when individuals only focus on meeting their individual performance metrics without consideration for how they fit into a broader business and social reality, we increasingly see the unethical and unsustainable behaviors that have added corporate culture. We are coming to realize that the success of business has become fundamentally interconnected with the successes of our society, and vice versa. Therefore, management education has an intensified responsibility for cultivating holistic thinkers who can navigate the complexity of our business world and balance both business and society’s needs, a process we will argue best happens through the tradition called “liberal education.”

In this chapter, we advocate for the long-standing tradition of liberal education, which historically integrates lessons and thinking across many disciplines that are segmented in today’s curricula. After first detailing the rationale for changing toward a more integrated model of business education, we define what a liberal education entails. We trace the history of undergraduate education, highlighting the increasing call for a return to more integrated education. Specifically, we offer a model for conceptualizing graduate management education grounded in the historical tradition of liberal education. While we believe that such a model is also applicable at the MBA level, we focus specifically in this chapter on the traditional undergraduate student population (i.e., students under 23 years old) who comprise 69.7% of all undergraduate students nationwide (NCES, 2006). We purposely concentrate on this group because their stages in cognitive, ethical, and psychological development suggest they have different developmental needs compared to conventional MBA students. We ground our proposed educational model in data gathered during a three-year, multi-stakeholder action research agenda seeking to identify best practices, imagine new possibilities, and experiment with training new leaders for the future. We conclude with a discussion of the challenges and tensions inherent in any paradigmatic shift, especially one as long standing as business and management education.

9.1. The Call to Transform Management Education

Today’s complex global world has fundamentally challenged the traditional, siloed business thinking that has predominated business practices during the twentieth century. The current call to create institutions that foster continuous innovation requires vibrant and imaginative thinking (Segal, 2010). The increasingly cross-cultural and multi-generational workforce requires insightful and inclusive leadership strategies, adaptive thinking, and critical reflection skills (Thomas, Thomas, Ely, & Meyerson, 2002; Zemke, Rames & Filipczak, 2000). The rapid evolution of social technology tools is revolutionizing the possibilities for corporate interaction more than ever before (Solis, 2011). Furthermore, decreasing natural resources, radical transparency in the marketplace, and increasing expectations for sound social and environmental performance from stakeholders are but a few of the many obstacles we as integrative, systems-thinking facing current business leaders (Laslo & Zhemchubayeva, 2011). Systemic thinking approaches are necessary today if value chains are to be maintained in a sustainable manner for both business and wider society (Atwater, Kanman, & Stephens, 2008; Thurston, 2000). However, a recent Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) study indicated that while 76% of business school deans believe an integrated curriculum is necessary (Atwater, Davis, & Myring, 2008), fewer than 5% have a comprehensive program (DeMottawie, Aurand, & Gordon, 2000).

Just as managing and leading in this environment requires new approaches, so too do our approaches for educating and developing the young minds who will be the future leaders in this world. After all, at its very core, the primary role of management education is to prepare students to become effective leaders of tomorrow, equipping them with the tools, skills, and mindsets to face the daunting challenges, ethical dilemmas, and enormous opportunities they will inevitably experience during their careers. The call for management education, therefore, is to develop the effective curricular models and pedagogical strategies that will cultivate future managers who can lead with integrity and manage the “whole” in a competitive landscape that does not always cultivate such behaviors.

From the Latin integritatem, integrity means “wholeness” and requires a willingness to see and experience the world as a collective whole rather than as an optimized set of competitive parts. Unfortunately, the majority of management education today reflects—and perpetuates—a siloed view of knowledge, with a bias toward functional and technical skill sets (Khurana, 2007). Such an approach has inadvertently truncated management education’s attention on developing the
human and caring dimensions critical for ethical behavior (i.e., Bennet & O'Toole, 2005; Donaldson, 2002; Ghoshal, 2005; Mintzberg 2004; Navarro, 2008). Yet, if we want students to act with integrity, we must model it at every level of the educational system. To this end, this chapter advances the growing call from scholars who contend that management education needs to incorporate a whole-systems philosophy if we are to facilitate students' ability to act with integrity in an increasingly fragmented world (i.e., Atwater et al., 2008; Giacalone, 2004; Khurana, 2007; Mintzberg, 2004).

9.2. Liberal Education: Rediscovering and Returning to Our Roots

We define a “liberal” approach to education as one that provides students with integrated coursework that spans across the major disciplines of the university (i.e., “hard” sciences, social sciences, humanities, and fine arts) in a coherent program that actively helps students blend and apply the knowledge across their courses as well as focuses on the holistic development of the student as a person (i.e., ethically, intellectually, spiritually, socially, and professionally). Key to this definition is its emphasis on coherence across disciplines and among students’ ways of being in the world. Coherence applies not only to general education requirements but also to business courses. Our definition is built on Schneider (2009) who explained that liberal learning includes, “forms of education that develop analytical and ethical judgment, expand cultural and imaginative horizons, prepare students for socially useful work, and foster both social responsibility and civic engagement in a wider world” (p. 2). Schneider further posits five broad areas of liberal learning:

1. essential skills, such as writing or quantitative reasoning or a second language;
2. cultural, societal, and scientific knowledge important in making sense of the world we inherit;
3. developed inquiry capacities and knowledge sufficient to analyze unscripted problems and complex issues;
4. integrative learning, or the ability to bring disparate kinds of knowledge and understanding to bear on complex problems; and,
5. grounded values, including the willingness to see the world through others' eyes and a commitment to the value of learning itself. (Ibid, p. 2)

On the basis of this definition, one can see that a liberal education seeks to integrate paradigms, cultivate individual and systemic capacity, and foster critical thinking (Senchuck, 2007). This type of education aims at giving students a broad grounding in various disciplines that better prepares them for the myriad of organizational roles they will face in their professional, civic, and social lives (AAC&U, 2007). In practice, however, today's colleges - even with their increased focus on cross-disciplinary general education requirements - often fall into the old rut of knowledge segmentation, where each course is treated as a unique entity, rather than as a complement to other courses in the curriculum.

We know that education can be so much more than graduation requirement checklists. At its roots, a liberal education is the coherent integration of multiple areas of knowledge and practice. This does not negate students' desire for professional readiness, but the educational experience is intended to be co-created between the student's initiative, faculty efforts, and an institution's intention behind curricular and extra-curricular designs. Thus, beyond simply seeing education as a sequence of courses in a degree plan or a job training exercise, liberal education is a process by which individuals come to understand themselves holistically (i.e., minds, bodies, and beings) with multiple forms of knowledge, skills, and abilities (e.g., disciplinary literacy, leadership capacity, critical thinking, and ethical reasoning abilities); and students begin to understand themselves and organizations as integrated and contributing members of larger systems and societies (Neville, Godwin, Senchuck, & Purks, 2007). From the liberal education perspective, students begin to make meaning from theory, critical thinking, and their lived experiences. Therefore, a liberal education model transcends particular courses and aims to transform students into responsible global citizens.

A liberal approach to education is not novel. At one time, this education standard epitomized societies like ancient Greece. When President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act in 1862 establishing the U.S. system of public colleges, the Act explicitly asserted that the purpose of these land-grant colleges was to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life (AAC&U, 2011). Similarly, the primary objective of the early baccalaureate degree was building foundational literacy in arts, natural science, and humanities and striving towards skills in moral reasoning and critical thinking abilities (Senchuck, 2007), so that students could "broaden (themselves) and prepare for life in general" (Kimball, 1996, p. 18). American colleges today, however, have philosophically and programmatically drifted farther and farther away from integrated education models toward a post-World War II consumer-oriented, job-training model (Obermuller, 1993). This shift reflects the broader shift in our society's focus toward specialization, rapid success, and efficient processes (Khurana, 2007). Sites of knowledge began to emerge with the professionalization of business and management, compartmentalizing subject matter into categories (Raelin, 2008). While sites of specialization offer depth of specialized learning (Campbell, Heriot, & Finney, 2006), we have drifted our educational attention away from the foundational cognitive and moral, psychosocial, and skills development processes that our younger students specifically need. Perhaps it is time for the pendulum to swing back.

Calls for a shift back to a more integrated educational model are echoing throughout the Academy and beyond (Athaveale et al., 2008; Bendheim, Waddock & Graves, 1999; Nesteruk, 2005). The Board of Directors for the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) issued a statement in 2002 saying, "Education serves democracy best when it prepares us for just the kinds of questions we face now: questions about a wider world, about our own values, and about difficult choices we must make both as human beings and citizens… The approach to higher learning that best serves individuals, our globally engaged democracy and an innovating economy is liberal education" (AAC&U, 2011). Building on this
assertion, the AAC&U has outlined how the contemporary approach to liberal education has shifted from a twentieth-century perception of being seen as non-vocational and only an option for a privileged few, to becoming an essential approach for all undergraduate education in the twenty-first century.

Academics such as Giacalone have similarly argued that to succeed in today’s increasingly complex market and society, every student “needs a balanced education that offers simple, basic humanistic knowledge to offset tactical reductionism” (2004, p. 418). Similarly, Jones (2005) states that, “higher education’s business, and public policy makers will need to turn their attention to efforts of aligning higher education curricula and outcomes with the escalating demands of the surrounding environment ... the value and benefits of a liberal education will be more respected and in greater demand as the world becomes increasingly complex” (p. 32). Even the AACSB has supported the movement of programs toward a more integrated approach. They now encourage undergraduate business programs to include broad skills in their curriculum such as communication abilities, ethical understanding and reasoning abilities, analytic skills, use of information technology, understanding of the dynamics of the global economy, multicultural and diversity understanding, and reflective thinking skills (AACSB, 2009, p. 71). Clearly, some management educators recognize the value of holistic designs, even if as an industry we do not integrate well.

AACSB’s evolving standards represent steps being taken within the field toward creating a more integrated, holistic undergraduate education experience for our students, but we still have a long way to go. For example, 90% of programs rely on a single capstone course to provide integrated business functions (DeMoranville et al., 2000). Furthermore, while some business faculty argue that integrating is the job of the broader university curriculum or general education requirements, these assumptions again illustrate fragmented thinking. Similarly, Chew and Mcleod-Bowers (2004) discuss an overarching problem with our attempts to integrate curricula, the reality that most attempts merely structure “bridges” between courses rather than genuinely “blending” approaches and perspectives. They claim that such an approach only serves to reinforce the idea that general education courses such as English, history or psychology (which help develop students’ cognitive, psychosocial, and skill levels) are separate, unrelated realms of knowledge that are merely “fillers” that lack relevance to students’ true work within the business major (ibid.).

At a tactical level, some undergraduate business programs designate which courses fulfill both the general education requirements and their business major requirements to encourage “double counting” courses rather than to encourage diversification of interests. While students no doubt seek out courses that will fulfill multiple requirements simultaneously, it seems that we as faculty also compound the problem with a “jump-through-the-hoops” mentality of advising. As Wick and Phillips discuss, advisors often focus solely on major requirements at the marginalization of the general education core, resulting in students who “view general education as the ‘stuff to get out of the way’ via the path of least resistance” (2008, p. 24). These realities reduce the very intention behind diverse curriculum exposure in general education requirements.

Considering these various dynamics, it is arguably time to return to a holistic approach to management education. This is especially important at an undergraduate level, a population to which we now turn.

9.3. Traditional Undergraduates as a Unique Population

The average undergraduate business student is younger, less professionally experienced and in a different developmental stage than the traditional MBA student (Ruegger & King, 1992). This holds significant implications for developing integrity in various ways. First, age has implications on one’s generational perspective and life experiences, work experience holds implications for one’s ability to effectively grasp business theory, and a person’s developmental stage has implications for their cognitive, moral, and psychosocial abilities (Godwin & Neville, 2007). We briefly address each of these dimensions in turn and how each correlates with implications of a liberal educational model.

9.3.1. Age

While the average age of entering MBA class at the top business schools is 28 years old, with most first-year MBA students having worked an average of four to five years before attending business school (Schweitzer, 2008), the majority of undergraduate business students are in their late teens and early 20s and have little to no professional work experience. Given this age gap, the generational divide among student populations is one dimension that separates our younger students from older ones. Many have written about how the ubiquitous access to the internet and social technology has impacted younger students’ learning styles (Proserpio & Giovin, 2007). Others have pointed to an increased level of narcissism and over-developed sense of entitlement and self-esteem that this younger “generation me” has compared to older students (Bergman, Westerman, & Daly, 2010; babik, Chaffin, & Zappone, 2007; Twenge, 2016). Each of these factors impacts how current, traditional undergraduates approach the learning environment differently than their older, graduate counterparts, and has implications for us as educators who are trying to foster graduates who value integrity.

9.3.2. Work Experience and Skill Development

The average 28-year-old MBA student presumably has more work experience than the average undergraduate business major. Looking at the average work experience at each of the top five American MBA programs, as ranked by Business Week, those students average from 41 to 120 months work experience before entering their programs. This suggests a higher probability that MBA students have developed a broader set of skills and abilities than their undergraduate counterparts.
The implication for educators is that the graduate and undergraduate students differ significantly in the professional experience on which they can draw as they study concepts. A recent survey of chief information officers reinforces this idea by suggesting that college graduates (presumably mostly business majors) are not prepared for the real world of business, with young hires reportedly lacking skills in: project management (74%), business operations (71%), and interpersonal relationships (71%) (CIO Insight, 2004). Such findings imply that classroom objectives for typical undergraduates who lack significant professional experience need to focus on strengthening particular skills and abilities toward appropriate professional levels, compared to MBA classes, which instead need to build on the students' four to five years of professional experience.

Furthermore, looking at undergraduate students as a whole, employers report overall inadequate levels of undergraduate preparation on foundational abilities such as critical thinking and analytical reasoning, writing, information literacy, creativity and innovation, complex problem solving, and intercultural competencies (AAC&U, 2007). Similarly, Bok (2006) argues that college students are underperforming in crucial areas such as critical thinking, writing, and quantitative reasoning. He also finds that only 10% of today's college graduates are globally prepared. Even though findings such as these refer to undergraduates in general, we can infer these lack-of-skill issues exist for business graduates, given they comprise a majority of undergraduate majors who are entering the workforce today.

### 9.3.3. Developmental Stages

The majority of traditional undergraduates fall into an age group loosely classified as youth, which is a transition time between adolescence (14-19 years old) and adulthood (generally occurring by mid 20s) (Brooks, 2008). MBA students, on the contrary, traditionally fall into the adulthood category. The youth brain is continuing to develop physically, as are their social abilities and self-perception. A stream of educational research has suggested that adolescent and youth learners are indeed different from adult learners (i.e., Katswurm, 1980; Lankard, 1997).

For example, Lampe (1997) traces literature over 20 years detailing that decision-making capabilities in traditional undergraduate college students are subordinate to the ethical reasoning abilities in older, more mature, adult populations. Furthermore, psychosocial development theories suggest that important emotional intelligence and personal identity development occur during the traditional undergraduate years (Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; King & Kitchener, 1994; Perry, 1970), which further suggests that 18-23 year olds are likely to be at a more basic level of moral complexity than the moral reasoning capacities of their adult MBA counterparts.

Considering these various dynamics simultaneously, we argue that undergraduate management students in particular are ripe for a liberal educational approach that will holistically nurture and develop their various skills and development levels, balancing their need for acquisition of content knowledge and personal development, while simultaneously fostering holistic understanding of the business world which will lead. Tomorrow depends on how we educate today. The question becomes, what does that liberal educational model look like in business and how is it delivered effectively?

### 9.4. Re-Thinking How to Teach for Integrity

We convened a three-year action research project that engaged multiple stakeholder groups in virtual and face-to-face dialogues to begin answering this very question (detailed in Neville et al., 2007). Using a strength-based, whole-systems approach (detailed in Godwin & Neville, 2008), we sought input from four management education stakeholder groups — teacher-scholars, administrators, business students, and business practitioners. After an initial discovery phase with 45 people to begin lifting up the specific capabilities and attributes that undergraduate business majors should have upon graduation, a two-day face-to-face summit was held with representatives from 20 different institutions across four stakeholder groups (i.e., students, faculty, administrators, alumni, and business leaders) to further articulate what a liberal educational model for business students needs to look like to prepare undergraduates specifically for today's rapidly changing business world.

Guided by the overarching question: "What should a liberal business graduate education look like?" participants developed a collective vision regarding what, how we should be teaching undergraduate business majors. Interestingly, there was much alignment on the fundamental elements that should comprise a liberal undergraduate business education. Despite this philosophical accord, in reality, it was quickly determined that no single university's program was already successfully implementing a true liberal education, although different elements were being introduced at different schools. Common obstacles to full programmatic implementation included cultural entrenchment in academic silos, institutional prioritization of research over teaching innovation, and faculty burn-out. We explore these obstacles further later in this chapter. First, though, we detail here the components, pedagogical approaches, and philosophical tensions that emerged from these discussions. On the basis of these insights, we then model a way to conceptualize these dynamics at play.

#### 9.4.1. Liberal Management Education Core Competencies

Our action research process revealed a wide array of competencies believed to be important specifically for undergraduate students to have upon completion of a business degree, and thus the outcome goals for a liberal education. Table 9.1 details these competencies broadly grouped into three categories: (a) **Measurable Knowledge & Skills**, competencies that can be specifically and objectively measured; (b) **Personal Traits or Qualities**, competencies that students develop within themselves which are more subjective and less measurable in nature; and (c) **Future Actions, Decisions & Behaviors**,
Table 9.1: Competencies important for undergraduate students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of competency</th>
<th>Specific competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Measurable knowledge &amp; skills</td>
<td>• Basic literacy in:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English writing skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading and analyzing text and data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication skills (writing, oral, and critical listening)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information literacy (including technology skills)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign language competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basic understanding of major disciplines (i.e., Humanities &amp; Arts, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Basic understanding of traditional business areas:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business law</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economics (micro and macro)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Finance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marketing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Global and cultural awareness of current issues and their historical context</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Personal traits or qualities</td>
<td>• Adaptability, such as:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Appreciation of non-linearity in the world</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Comfort with ambiguity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Appreciation and respect for the natural environment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Critical thinking and analytic reasoning ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical and active listening ability (beyond basic communication)</td>
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<td>Ethical behavior and moral imagination, such as:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Awareness of right and wrong (or ability to ponder this)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Willingness to act on “right”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Diverse opinions and ideas, such as:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ability to embrace multiple perspectives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Awareness “beyond the self” including other people and the environment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sensitivity to dimensions of diversity (i.e., gender, religious, cultural, physical, social, and economic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.1: (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of competency</th>
<th>Specific competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(c) Future actions, decisions, and behaviors</td>
<td>• Interpersonal competency such as:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to work collaboratively with others</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conflict resolution skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrated leadership within organizations and society</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engaged citizenship</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing critical inquiry and lifelong, self-directed learning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective decision making including abilities to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analyze situations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Seek out and use useful information</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Balance multiple perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognize impact of decisions on others/ environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Articulate and defend decisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

actions students demonstrate throughout their lives and careers (Neville et al., 2007, p. 41). As an industry, our focus tends to remain on the objective domain, “measurable knowledge and skills.” Yet all three competency areas need to flourish for the full benefit of a liberal undergraduate management education. Thus, it is important to recognize when we design curricula that aim at fostering measurable skills, business competencies, and basic literacy in English, math, and communications, we need to balance this with curricula that cultivate an understanding of the role of business in society in relationship with history, philosophy, literature, culture, and the natural environment.

9.4.2. Important Pedagogies

In addition to articulating what abilities undergraduate business students should have, there were also many ideas shared regarding how educational programs should go about developing the competencies detailed above. Pedagogically, participants advocated for integration between practical experiences, reflection opportunities, conceptualization activities, and application opportunities—the four domains needed for effective learning according to Kolb’s (1986) seminal work on learning theory. Summarized in Table 9.2, data suggested that to maximize the educational environment, multiple pedagogical strategies need to be concurrently employed. For example, the traditional “lecture course” loses educational value until
Table 9.2: Curricular and pedagogical approaches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of pedagogical activity</th>
<th>Specific activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (a) Practical experiences    | - Professional internships  
- Volunteer and civic projects  
- Interacting with professionals (i.e., interviewing, shadowing)  
- Intercultural experiences (e.g., study abroad, multicultural teams)  
- Foreign language usage  
- Group and team project work with focus-related skills practice  
- Faculty role-modeling in the classroom: Promoting critical stances  
- Teaching from multiple perspectives  
- Reflecting  
- Asking |
| (b) Reflection opportunities | - Faculty mentoring  
- Self-analysis processes and tools (e.g., Myers Briggs assessment, learning styles indicators)  
- Activities that engage mind, heart, and soul  
- Activities that have no one right answer |
| (c) Conceptualization activities | - Case studies  
- Current affairs readings and real-life examples  
- Creative and artistic projects and exposure  
- Interdisciplinary collaboration by faculty (“beyond bridges”): Embedded and integrated ideas across courses  
- Challenging the artificial divide between business, liberal arts, and other disciplines  
- Making connections between classes  
- Lectures  
- Literature and arts in the classroom  
- Research projects  
- Socratic method  
- Writing papers |
| (d) Application opportunities | - Role playing  
- Individual-focused pedagogies including individual projects  
- Business decision-making opportunities  
- Public speaking through presentations and debate |

companioned with forms of application and experiential learning. Similarly, a civic engagement course needs solid theoretical grounding in order for students to adequately conceptualize the activities’ meaning. Although the teacher-scholars engaged in the inquiry process reported being facile at drawing on a wide variety of pedagogical approaches, they also reported little university-wide emphasis on building all faculty’s skills at or rewarding faculty for drawing on a wide variety of pedagogical approaches. In fact, participant experiences mirrored the Van Fleet and Peterson (2005) argument that good teaching is a second-class achievement in our research-driven field. Findings suggest that until we consistently and actively convert knowledge into actualized learning (Blood, 2006), our educational system remains inadequate.

Taking the insights from this process, we turn our attention now to modeling these differences and activities into a framework from which educators can construct whole-system dialogues about what and how to shape an effective liberal curriculum that aligns with their particular institution and students’ needs.

9.5. A Model for Integrated, Liberal Management Education Experiences

Given the diverse skills and capacities needed in our graduates, coupled with the developmental differences detailed above, we recognize the challenge educators face to design any curricula, let alone curricula with the lofty goal of fostering integrity. Furthermore, we recognize that no normative solutions exist about what educational design is “best.” What we can do, however, is to begin mapping the domains that need attention within the overall educational system if we are to create integrated, liberal education experiences for our students. Thus, our model is not designed to be a “one-size-fits-all” approach, but a guide for management educators to help outline the systemic picture of multiple interdependent variables and stakeholders they need to address as educators strive to create the ideal liberal educational model in their own university system (Figure 9.1).

First, we discuss the major elements in the model in order to clarify the intention of and relationship between each element. Then, we discuss the larger implications of the whole-system picture, major emergent dilemmas that all educational designers should be considering.

9.5.1. Curricular and Classroom Concerns

The inner-most circle of the model represents what is going on in our individual classrooms as elaborated in the core competencies and pedagogies sections earlier. The overarching question for educators to consider within this realm is: What balance of functional skills development and personal development best serves our students? As we quickly learned from our discussions and insights from the literature, there is no uniform agreement regarding what the “right” balance is for focusing on one competency versus another. The essential need when developing a curriculum,
coordinated attention and activity at multiple levels within the university environment. A systems perspective is needed to truly meet the developmental needs of all business students. Thus, our model suggests that in addition to looking at what is happening in the classroom, we must also look to cultivate actions at other levels within the university system — represented by the outer dotted circle in the model. The overarching question for educators to consider within this realm is: What are the forces and who are the stakeholders most influencing our curriculum decisions and design?

As each university explores this area for itself, they need to pay heed to the overarching culture of their specific university. Is it one that fosters and rewards teaching excellence? What are the faculty philosophies of education and how are they impacting curriculum design? Each institution will presumably have its own unique set of both strengths upon which to build and challenges they face. Looking beyond the campus is important as well, to consider both the existing and potential relationships that the school has with the business community. Whether through networking, recruiting, or co-curricular engagement or disengagement, members of the business community influence the educational experience. All these pieces become building blocks for creating a truly integrated liberal education for students.

9.5.3. Beyond the Classroom

As Paulo Freire, an educational reformer, writes, “No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed [i.e., the student] by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption” (1970, p. 54). This provocative statement, while revolutionary in tone, has implications for a holistic model of liberal education. As educational designers, we must not only attend to helping build students' capacity for critical inquiry, but we must also consider ways to encourage students to actively engage in shaping their own questions, their own decisions, and their own destinies. Thus, in our model, students are not without responsibility for their own development as well. The overarching question for educators to consider within this realm is: Who are our unique students and how can we support their role in creating an effective educational experience for themselves?

Thus, the overlapping oval in the model represents the role students must play in internalizing their own liberal education experience. Although a characteristic of youth-learners is that they do not always take active responsibility for their learning process, students must be held somewhat accountable for navigating their educational experience in a way that meets their developmental needs. Such responsibilities will help them succeed not only in our classrooms but also in the ever-changing world they will face after graduation. For example, a student choosing to simply follow instruction might develop basic literacy in the models and tactics business textbooks explain. However, a student who chooses to select among broad
disciplines of courses and actively seek conversations with faculty to compare and contrast the different underlying assumptions will intrinsically be maximizing her own educational opportunity. The curriculum can insist a student take general education requirements, but the students' experience moving through those courses varies widely. Through formal and informal advising, career services, and engaged student services staff, universities can build the infrastructure to help foster integrated learning experiences, yet students must choose to engage in these activities. Students who do are likely to experience their education as far more “whole” than those who do not.

An integrated, liberal, management education as modeled here involves a convergence of experiences and influences far more expansive than curriculum alone. It rests on the pivotal choices curricular designers must make to balance an institution's philosophy of education, strategic objectives, and organizational strengths. And these choices often involve changing the traditional way that our educational systems have been run. Just as Kurt Lewin (1951) suggested that any organization must consider external forces that are working to support or impede a desired change, so too must we consider the influences in our system working to perpetuate or change the status quo.

### 9.5.4. Transforming the Parts into a New Whole: Tensions and Dilemmas

We outline here three major tensions that emerged throughout our inquiry. These are critical areas where stakeholder communities must collaboratively discuss, reflect, and ultimately agree if a particular institution’s educational reform can be successful. Reconciliation — or at least attending to these issues — is crucial to the success of an integrated liberal education because the whole must function in concert rather than disparate parts working in discord.

First, balancing the degree of attention that any one competency area receives in the classroom begs the larger question, “what are we trying to accomplish?” For example, institutional decision makers recognize that parents and recruiters want education models that are “useful” and that prepare students for a particular job. However, the aspirational nature of the model itself calls on educators to shift the responsibility for “job-skilling” onto the student, who should be encouraged to seek out internships and work experiences to bolster their practical experience and begin building professional networks. As students increasingly take ownership of developing themselves outside the classroom, then educators can draw on these experiences in classroom activities, helping students integrate their conceptual and practical learning. A second example of balancing educational objectives appears when discussing the degree to which an education should instill intellectual knowledge and the degree to which the experience should develop the individual personhood. And with intellectual knowledge, how much should be disciplinary specific and how much should be grounded in broader areas of study? Again, the balance between how much of which is the “right” amount remains controversial even when all components are deemed important. Therefore, the tension is strong between, on the one hand, peoples' expectations of immediate usefulness of an education, and on the other hand, the long-term potential developmental inherent in having contextual awareness.

Second, assessment drives many curricular decisions. Standardized testing creates an ability to compare some quantified value across institutions. However, our current forms of standardized testing only assess certain competencies deemed significant. Furthermore, economies of scale associated with large lecture halls rather than individualized and small group learning tend to push curricular assessment further toward standardization. Another assessment issue is that our educational system divides evaluation of student performance into 12- and 16-week units of time. For many of the identified competencies, however, students have not yet behaviorally absorbed the experiences within the length of a semester. Therefore, because of our industry and modern social push for measuring immediate outcomes, a majority of our educational emphasis gets placed on the one measurable dimension, traditional skills and knowledge acquisitions. The contradiction between educating for a world of innovation and complexity, yet educating within academic systems that emphasize short-term focus on financial returns with a simultaneous long-term hope for innovative possibility. Over-emphasizing either jeopardizes the goal.

Third, a major tension that arose in our inquiry was the question of whose value system should be instilled into tomorrow’s leaders? The dominant Western capitalist paradigm is in flux. Even since the turn of this century, a rise in social entrepreneurship has begun to re-shape the business landscape. With emerging shifts in economic power from the United States to China and India, educators have reason to suspect that tomorrow’s leaders will be faced with a far more complex web of philosophical differences than were yesterday’s leaders. Our time horizon matters too — ancient wisdom traditions have been all but extinguished from the business arena with the rise of industrialization. This poses a dilemma for people seeking to integrate spirituality into business culture. Eastern philosophy into innovation processes, and sustainability into current economic priorities. Questioning the role of business in society quickly leads to questioning the role of the government in managing the landscape and questioning the degree of accountability that individuals have for organizations’ behaviors. Sorting out whose value system should be taught raises complex dilemmas for educators.

These tensions and dilemmas are not insurmountable; they actually fuel the potential for innovation at any particular institution. In fact, knowing the questions to ask is part of what we want our students to learn also.

### 9.6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Many questions obviously remain about how to best construct liberal education environments. While each individual institution must answer the questions we have
raised for themselves to create a curriculum that works for their unique students, there are various interventions that can be done to help facilitate transformation. For example, working within our spheres of influence as faculty at an institutional level, we can seek to involve our university presidents, provosts, and academic deans toward creating a whole-system, liberal educational model. We can also work to build bridges with social science, humanities, and natural science colleagues by hosting faculty discussion sessions, participating in cross-disciplinary development or writing groups, and informally discussing the potential social value of business; all such activities encourage bridge-building with non-business faculty. Such cross-disciplinary connections will help lead to an innovative environment that not only strengthens our curricula (Smith, Hornby, & Kite, 2000) but also advances students’ ethical development (Sims & Brinkman, 2003).

Within our own classrooms, we can shift the paradigm of how students perceive their experiences by incorporating context from other disciplines into our own course materials, draw on examples in class that maximize the ways in which students begin to make meaning from their own extracurricular activities, and integrate new pedagogical approaches at every turn. Even though most business faculty are not formally trained in natural sciences or the arts, we are each adequately aware of the world’s complexity and bring related ideas into our discussions.

We can also begin recognizing the unique developmental needs of our undergraduate management students, honoring that they need more than just a mini-MBA. Given the impressionable developmental stage at which our undergraduate students enter our classrooms, we must realize that they look to us with more deference as authority figures than do older, adult learners. Therefore, it is even more important that we strive to model not only skills, but also appropriate behaviors. If we intend to establish confidence and self-identity, a sense of personal integrity, and mature relationships, we must model civility in our behavior in all of our interactions, with both our students and our other institutional colleagues. Faculty can also role model ethical behaviors through a variety of classroom interactions—from managing discussions to grading papers with transparency and fairness. Role modeling does not end at the faculty level. We must also encourage our institutions to “walk the talk” when it comes to integrity. Authors like Boles (2004) have suggested that business schools especially need to be models of social responsibility and sustainability if we expect to create students who value such actions.

One by one, if collectively engaged, we can begin to shift the equilibrium point of how undergraduate management education occurs toward a liberal, integrated model. As we seek to make these shifts, we should keep in mind the AAC&U’s articulation of the purpose of undergraduate education.

In the final analysis, the challenge of college, for students and faculty members alike, is empowering individuals to know that the world is far more complex than it first appears, and that they must make interpretive arguments and decisions—judgments that entail real consequences for which they must take responsibility and from which they may not flee by disclaiming expertise. (1991, p. 16-17)

Our hope is that collectively, we as educators will live up to this lofty call to action and expand our capacity for enhancing the experience of and developmental opportunities for traditional undergraduate students so they can become effective, integrative leaders of tomorrow’s organizations. This chapter argues for doing so by returning to a holistic management education through the tradition of liberal education.

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