

Contemporary Approaches to Business Education

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Abstract

Today every nation, especially a developing nation, faces many challenges in the global business environment. Business departments and schools update their curriculums more frequently and develop course materials and apply new education methods in order to have their potential graduates capable enough of facing the challenges of global competition. Within this general perspective, this present research reviews relevant academic literature dealing related aspects of contemporary business education in the context of challenges posed by global market trends, and proposes learning strategies that meet market requirements. It discusses alternative approaches to business education and training, and compares assumptions underlying traditional and action-oriented approaches. Also it reviews to explore the nature of cross-cultural capability and goes on to consider its implications for the student experience in undergraduate business education. It stresses the importance of a productive relationship between education and commerce, and also improving the understanding about university life and work. Research results were discussed and certain tentative conclusions were drawn.

Key words: Business education, business training, new education methods, action-oriented education
The world we have created today has problems which cannot be solved by thinking the way we thought when we created them (Albert Einstein).

Introduction

Emerging global trends, new economic challenges, the rapid increase in information technologies (IT) and the requirement of multi-lingual proficiencies are some of the challenges that developing nations have to face. The role of education, especially business education, in building a workforce and management capable enough to cope with these challenges, has placed business education in a much sharper focus than ever before. Business education has become an important part of the young, and upcoming executive's preparation for success in business. As the demand for management education increases, certain questions are being raised as to the appropriateness and relevance of this type of education for successful business executives and entrepreneurs alike (Van der Colff, 2000).

It is imperative for business educators to balance the needs of three role players, namely the student, the corporation he or she works for, and the Business School itself. "Business Schools, as pivotal role-players in developing managerial competence, cannot escape their responsibility to deliver appropriately educated business executives, who, through their intellectual skills and community sensitive values, may lead future transformation processes" (Bosch and Louw, 1998, p. 1).

Business education is often criticized for producing graduates long on technical know-how, but short on judgement and leadership ability. As a result, comprehensive studies of business school curricula have concluded by recommending that programmes place more emphasis on communication, decision making, leadership and other "soft" skills (Porter and McKibbin, 1988). Often the burden of enhancing these capabilities falls on corporate trainers or management consultants. Put simply, business graduates typically learn how to use the tools of the trade, but they are not well versed in knowing what to build or how to work with other artisans (Ford and Ogilvie, 1997).

Business education can be judged on four categories (Gill, and Lashine, 2003):

1. knowledge, which allows students to understand;
2. know-how, which enables students to put their knowledge to work;

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3. wisdom, which enables them to decide whether, where, or when to do it; and
4. character, which makes them decent human beings, fit to live nearby.

Looking at the recent publications, one can admit that most of the problems are transparent, however professionals are offering significantly different approximations and methods. As part of the business education reforms, Walker and Ainsworth (2001) suggest adopting a business-process approach to delivering the core business undergraduate curriculum, consistent with the trend toward process-managed organizations. In most undergraduate business programs students are taught business concepts through functional areas: accounting, management, marketing, finance, etc. and hence they may be inadequately prepared for cross-functional work (Porter and McKibbin, 1988). The attributes of the industrial TQM model (Chizmar, 1994) could successfully be utilized to manage the teaching and learning process. Tone (1995) considers a theoretical model for implementing total quality leadership in education. Vezzana *et al.* (1997) and mention four areas where continuous quality improvement concepts could be applied in higher education (Gill and Lashine, 2003):

1. curriculum;
2. non-academic functions;
3. administrative functions; and
4. the core learning process.

Youssef *et al.* (1998) discuss commonly cited barriers that face educators in implementing continuous quality improvement programs in higher education, three prominent ones being: the nature of academic work, the typical management structure of the colleges and universities, and the variety and role of customers served. Brewer *et al.* (2000) applies strategic planning techniques for continuous improvement in a college of business.

Is a business school graduate an able technical adviser or an intuitive, visionary, action-oriented leader? The point of this analogy is not to deride the importance of analytic rigour or quantitative analysis. Rather, it is to suggest that training in business analysis must be tempered with training in business judgement. Joining these alternate rationales for action can help business school graduates to improve their decision making and personal development (Ford and ogilvie, 1997).

In this paper, it is argued that the primary reason that quantitative approaches to justifying action dominate traditional business school curricula is that they are based on seldom-questioned assumptions which have dominated the social sciences for decades. However, these assumptions have been widely questioned and, to some extent, discredited when applied to the ambiguous circumstances faced by managers. It is argued here that we need to base management education and training on more tenable assumptions. The assumptions embraced lead to proposals for an “action-oriented” approach that should influence revisions in business school curricula and management training content.

To trace the roots of these alternative approaches, this paper focuses on the different assumptions each makes regarding the character of information. Based on this starting point, the different premises for making decisions and taking action seen as legitimate within each perspective are derived. Then, examples are provided from practice which illustrate the key distinctions between the two perspectives. The goal of this comparison is to provoke business educators, trainers and practitioners to seek a more balanced integration between quantitative and qualitative approaches to justifying action (Ford and ogilvie, 1997).

Challenges facing Georgian business education

Management education faces at least five different forces that are changing the environment within which business schools operate, namely:

1. global, technological and market changes;
2. increased competition; and
3. a new higher education system introduced by the government;
4. lack of business qualified business educators;
5. lack of desired level of employment for graduates;

To ensure that management education is able to deal with global, technological and market changes, it is imperative for business schools to use appropriate curricula, course materials and teaching models that are not only up-to-date but also internationally competitive. In such a way, business schools need not only keep track of areas of specialisation that are in demand, but also be able to adapt these to the local environment without losing the global perspective.

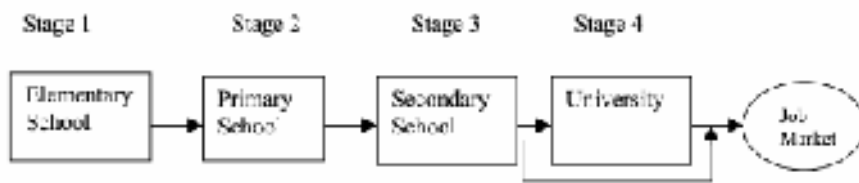
Second, the business education environment in Georgia is seen to be highly competitive, not only from local business schools, but also increased competition from foreign universities operating from outside Georgia or in partnership with Georgian institutions. In reaction to both foreign and local competition, business schools must stay ahead of their competitors by innovating their product offering. Also, private education is becoming a booming business and force to reckon with.

The government started a reform process on higher education that is aimed at fundamentally changing the higher education system in Georgia. These changes have also had a significant impact on the growth and development of management education.

Educational system model

The educational system can be represented as a multi-stage input-output system, as shown in Figure 1. Business education, at the university level, is the last stage in this educational system. The input to the university stage is the pre-university educational system, while the output is the job market. The further (e.g. top-down) decomposition of the main system elements is possible (Gill, and Lashine, 2003).

Figure 1 A multiple-stage educational system



Source: Gill, A., Lashine, S, 2003, “Business education: a strategic market-oriented focus”, *International Journal of Educational Management*, 17, 5, 188-194.

In order to satisfy the job market, we first need to identify its requirements and compare them with our educational system’s capabilities of meeting those requirements. Most of the basic skills are built at the pre-university stages. Concentrating on learning improvements at the university level, business education only, will not give the desired results to face global challenges. To build effective educational strategies that are capable of facing business challenges, the impacts of these strategies need to be considered in the whole educational system (Gill, and Lashine, 2003).

The required content knowledge that business practice is seeking in business graduates

Business education must continue to provide general management education, which would give students a solid grounding in traditional management functions such as marketing, finance and human resources (BREADTH). An equilibrium needs to be found between traditional content knowledge and business skills.

As the world is becoming an increasingly “global village”, it is imperative for management educators to incorporate a global perspective in all aspects of their curriculum. The move away from hierarchical authority has led to a renewed interest in the concepts of culture and employee commitment and should be taught as part of people skill development. Although management education curricula in general cover all the functional skills, there is a lack of integration of these functional entities. The skill of critical analysis can only be developed through cross-functional integration. Further attention needs to be paid to the external environment within which the organisation functions. This would include areas such as governmental relations and international developments (Van der Colff, 2000).

For management educators and scholars to teach students to become effective managers, the following content knowledge shown in Table 1 should be focused on.

Table 1 The relative importance of core courses

Most important content knowledge according to students	
1	Strategy
2	Change management
3	Innovation
4	Finance
5	Marketing
6	Information systems
7	Operations
8	Globalisation
9	Coping with diversity
10	Project management

Source: Van der Colff, L. (2000), "A new paradigm for business education; The role of the business educator and business school", *Management Decision*, 42, 3/4, 499-507.

These issues can be seen to be essential to successful job performance. A holistic outcome can only be managed by teaching a variety of subject disciplines, ensuring an overall integration of the taught material. These critical skills are necessary for the new wave of managers and leaders alike to deal with change and innovation within the information society.

In the new business environment, not only is the business world highly competitive, but it is also without boundaries. The latest issue facing corporations is thus breaking the corporate mould through the development of new skills for the new economy. The impact of globalisation and the advent of the "global village" means that companies should assess what is occurring globally, but implement locally (Van der Colff, 2000).

It is important to understand that leaders must not only be able to see the work environment in a structured, rational and analytical way, but also develop the capacity to see it as a dynamic and complex system that is ever evolving. This would ask leaders to employ a creative and innovative model of thinking. Leaders must first and foremost be change agents that are able to bring about change to all aspects of the organisation. Therefore, leaders must create conditions within the organisation that will enable productive change to happen. Leaders should therefore develop a passion for change. Management educators, as teachers of future leaders, need to adopt this perspective in their teaching methodology (Van der Colff, 2000).

The required skills that business practice is seeking in graduates

It has been said that the coming business decade will be one of diversity with the evolution of management moving into the phase of the leader. Likely challenges facing leaders will include issues relating to employment equity and employee advancement, productivity and issues relating to skills shortages. The implication for management educators is clear. They have to ensure developing the skills necessary for future leaders and managers to ensure organisational success.

Since the 1990s, business has been undergoing fundamental changes internationally and locally and management education has to adapt and respond accordingly. In terms of the business environment, the time has come, especially in Georgia, for a new generation of entrepreneurial, innovative and visionary leaders (Table 2).

Table 2 The relative importance of each skill

Most important skills according to students	
1	Strategic insight
2	Leadership skills
3	Decision making skills
4	Critical analysis
5	Entrepreneurial skills
6	Innovation

7	Problem analysis
8	Planning and organisation
9	Performance management
10	Team playing

Source: Van der Colff, L. (2000), "A new paradigm for business education; The role of the business educator and business school", *Management Decision*, 42, 3/4, 499-507.

A market-oriented strategic focus

In this section, we will discuss some of the needs, requirements and expectations from an educational system. It may be noted that this is not an exhaustive list of the job market requirements. Certain skill sets are specific to the nature of the job. To develop market-oriented strategies, it is imperative to first identify the need for market-oriented learning, and the skill sets required by global markets (Van der Colff, 2000).

Need for market-oriented learning

School, college and university education is a part of an individual's life, which provides them with an opportunity to learn and acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes. What is to be learned and how it is to be learned, is usually pre-determined based on the curriculum. In the absence of a market-oriented focus, it may become a frustrating experience for both learners as well as knowledge providers because they fail to see the relevance between what is being taught and what the job market requires. Although students can choose a specialized field of study, the knowledge gained is only used to pass the examinations, unless they can relate it to their daily work environment. Also, there is a tendency to forget it afterwards. This tendency hinders their internal learning power. Once these students enter the workforce, they not only find it hard to apply what they learned at universities, but they also have to rediscover their learning power which has already been blocked by their tendencies to forget the knowledge. One way to deal with this problem is to design learning strategies that are relevant to the work environment in which they have to work in future. This calls for a need to revisit our business education system from a market-oriented perspective (Gill, and Lashine, 2003).

Global market required skills

With the increase in globalization trends, it becomes necessary for a business graduate to survive in an international environment. Therefore, he has to constantly improve his current skills and acquire new ones. The twenty-first century skills require the acquisition and evaluation of data; the organization and maintenance of files; and the interpretation, communication and use of computerized information. An understanding of social, organizational, and technological systems; monitoring and correcting performance; and designing or improving systems are the skills that vitalize an evolving workforce. Technology has become unavoidable so that selecting equipment and tools, applying technology to specific tasks, and maintaining and troubleshooting technological devices are necessary skills for an average employee (Gill, and Lashine, 2003).

Gill, and Lashine (2003) classify the skills that a business graduate must be equipped to survive in the global market, under the following categories listed in Table 4.

Table 4 The skills that a business graduate must be equipped to survive in the global market

1	Technical skills
2	Analytical skills
3	Communication skills
4	Multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary skills
5	Knowledge of global issues
6	Personal qualities

Source: Gill, A., Lashine, S, 2003, "Business education: a strategic market-oriented focus", *International Journal of Educational Management*, 17, 5, 188-194

A new employee entering a workforce is expected to possess the basic computer as well as other technology skills required at the workplace. Knowledge of basic technology not only makes them creative at the workplace but also helps them to adapt to the new work environment faster. Analytical

ability is another basic skill that an employee should possess. This includes the ability of a person to ask the right questions so as to collect accurate and complete information, the ability to recognize the importance of information and implications of the information, and the ability to apply logic or reasoning to clarify the relationships between different objects, events, individuals or methodologies. Therefore, a graduate should have the ability to collect the right information, analyse the business problems using logical reasoning and apply the problem-solving methodologies to real world business problems. The ability to communicate effectively, both in writing as well as verbally, is becoming increasingly more important with the globalization of businesses. Hence, the ability to communicate in common global languages, negotiation skills, working in team environments using new communication technologies (e-mail, chatting, video conference, etc.) has become a necessity (Gill, and Lashine, 2003).

In addition to the in-depth knowledge in a specialized area, global market trends also require an employee to have a wider spectrum of knowledge in multi-disciplinary areas. For example, a graduate in accounting should have knowledge in finance, IT, economics and marketing if he has to effectively work in multi-disciplinary teams. A business graduate should be knowledgeable about international issues such as: legal, ethical, and standards or information sources. A basic knowledge of local and international financial regulations such as import/export regulations, custom dues, and immigration laws is necessary. Personal qualities such as individual responsibility, self-motivation, self-esteem, sociability, self-management and integrity also support competency requirements. Interpersonal skills facilitate working on teams, training others, serving customers, leading, negotiating and working with people from culturally diverse backgrounds (Gill, and Lashine, 2003).

Contrasting approaches to management education

Is information “hard” or “soft”?

Traditional, quantitative approaches to management education are based on the assumption that knowledge is hard, real and objective (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). In other words, information is assumed to have inherent meaning and value, no matter who is looking at it. As such, information can be used like currency - information can be spent to reduce the uncertainty associated with particular courses of action. Based on this perspective, management educators are charged with training students to confront uncertain situations by gathering and analysing information as a means of reducing uncertainty. This assumes that more information is better and the tools of this trade lie at the heart of most MBA programmes. On the other hand, the action-oriented alternative offered here is based on an assumption that knowledge is soft, subjective and, therefore, subject to multiple interpretations. Individuals are seen as actively constructing and imposing interpretations on the world. Not surprisingly, conflicts in interpretations are common, but since information is subjective, multiple interpretations are legitimate. Because information is “socially constructed” (i.e. through conversations among people) (Berger and Luckman, 1967), it is subject to negotiation and change. In situations where no means exist for assessing the relative validity of different interpretations, quantitative analyses should be viewed with considerable scepticism. Accordingly, management educators should stress creating shared interpretations through conversation and action (e.g. through effective presentations, diverse communication media, etc.) rather than reducing uncertainty through analysis. Traditional and action-oriented assumptions regarding the general character of information logically suggest different processes underlying organizational decision making and action. These key dissimilarities involve decision goal(s), decision premises, sanctioned actions and feedback (Ford, and Ogilvie, 1997). The following sections describe extreme contrasts between the two approaches aimed at highlighting the key distinctions presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Alternative approaches to management education and training

	Traditional View	Action-Based View
Nature of Information	Uncertainty	Ambiguity
Primary Goal	Uncertainty Reduction	Meaning Creation
Basic Premises	Outcomes of Actions are Knowable Within Confidence Intervals Future Reflects Past	Outcomes of Actions are "Unknowable" Past is a Poor Indicator of Future Events
Sanctioned Actions	Information Collection Data Analysis Correcting Deviations From Plans	Sensemaking/Sensegiving Creative Action Exploit Successes, Reclaim Failures
Favored Feedback	Information Related to Deviations From Current Plans	Information That Creates General Task or Environmental Knowledge

Source: Ford, C. M and ogilvie, d., 1997, "An action-oriented approach to business education", Career Development International, 2,2,80-84.

The nature of information

Many organizational practices are based on the assumptions that information is objective and that interpretation of that information is not problematic. For example, in traditional economic theory the concept of uncertainty explains and predicts market transactions. As discussed previously, information has value because it can reduce uncertainty. Information and uncertainty, therefore, are commodities that can be traded off against one another. In contrast, the action-based view stresses the importance of making sense of the environment (sensemaking)(Gioia, and Poole, 1984) and the processes people use to take action in the face of inherently ambiguous environments. Ambiguity cannot be clarified by collecting additional information. The underlying assumption is that information is "meaning-less" until people impose meaning on it.

The primary goal of decision making and premisses on which action is based

The primary goal of traditional methods is to reduce uncertainty, because traditional approaches view uncertainty as the major problem. Through data collection and analysis the decision makers can eliminate uncertainty. An action-oriented approach, in contrast, sees information as inherently ambiguous. People base their actions on their interpretations, and their subsequent interpretations are influenced by their actions. The primary goal here is to create and communicate shared interpretations or common understandings that can serve as the bases of subsequent action(Gioia, and Chittipeddi, 1991). The two approaches also differ on the extent to which they advocate using historical information. Traditional quantitative methods are often based on projecting the results of past actions into the future. On the other hand, an action-oriented approach assumes that the outcomes of one's actions are inherently "unknowable" because future contingencies may be quite different from those in the past. Therefore, one should hesitate to extrapolate from the results of past actions to predict the consequences of current or future alternatives. In this case, imagination is required to envision possible alternative future paths suggested by current actions(Ford, and ogilvie, 1997).

Sanctioned organizational actions and the role of feedback

Information collection is used to overcome ignorance and data analysis is used to structure this information. Once action is taken, information is collected to verify that its consequences are within an acceptable, expected range. Alternatively, an action-oriented approach assumes that creative actions can provide variations necessary to enact shifting aspects of the environment effectively. This allows the organizations to develop capabilities to exploit successful actions quickly and decisively and reclaim tangible resources from failed actions (Ford, and Ogilvie, 1997). In the traditional view, a subtle and insidious result is that feedback is sought only as a control mechanism to ensure that corrective actions can be taken should results deviate from some a priori standard. An action-oriented approach argues that actions should be valued both for their immediate consequences and for their longer-term impact on organizational learning. Information should be sought that identifies and magnifies deviations and presents long-term lessons in order to enhance future sensemaking processes (Gioia, and Poole, 1984; Ford, and Ogilvie, 1997).

History of action learning

Action learning was originally developed during the 1940s by Revans, then director of education to the National Coal Board, to enable senior executives to steer the coal-mining industry through a period of tumultuous change in post-war Britain. The colliery managers of Revans' original project worked collaboratively, meeting regularly. At the end of three years, it was found that annual output per person in the mines of these managers had increased by over 30 per cent compared with a national average too small to detect. Similarly impressive results were obtained in subsequent projects in the health service during the 1960s (Revans, 1984). Thus action learning established its value unambiguously as a powerful management tool (O'Hara, *et al.*, 1996).

Purpose of action learning in management education

The purpose and role of action learning in management education is perhaps best defined by the expectations of the various stakeholders. The manager who enrolls for a course expects both a qualification and learning which will be useful beyond the life of the course. The sponsoring organization expects increased managerial capability of a type which can be applied directly to organizational issues, a good return on its investment. The Business School has the expectation of achieving its purpose. Typically, this encompasses creating new and better ways of developing managers, contributing to business success, awarding qualifications and guarding standards of education (O'Hara, *et al.*, 1996).

Action learning approach/learning to learn orientation in a higher education framework

This involves using processes which encourage participants in learning how to learn. The action learning set gives protection and safety for learners in their exploration of the learning process. The bounded set environment is a much more forgiving environment for learning than is usually encountered within higher education. In an atmosphere of confidentiality, trust and mutual support there is mutual valuing of individuals and their experience. In addition, there is a sense of purpose and vision, shared goals and commitment and the pooling of intellectual and emotional energy. The action learning approach, when partnered with the traditional nature of higher education (the stock of knowledge, research and methodologies, creativity, conceptual presentation, assessment processes) allows for a potentially much more fulfilling and successful experience for the learner. This is especially so for adults coming from a work context into the relatively alien territory of academia. Action learning can be a particularly successful way to engage with mainstream academic study for experienced managers with high levels of responsibility but long absence from higher education (O'Hara, *et al.*, 1996).

Business education Strategies

Positioning strategies

The main idea under business education positioning strategy should be to identify some major potential areas where the graduates are going to work so that we can position our business education in

a way to impart the relevant skills for those areas. These areas can be classified under industrial, sectoral, functional or hierarchical categories(Gill, and Lashine, 2003):

- ! *Industrial.* An industrial-based categorization will indicate whether the graduates are likely to serve petroleum, consumer products, electronics and electrical or aerospace industry etc.
- ! *Sectoral.* A sectoral categorization will indicate whether the graduates are likely to work in manufacturing or service sector.
- ! *Functional.* The potential areas can be identified based on the functions performed, e.g. whether the graduates are likely to work in production, materials, quality assurance, project management and maintenance, etc.
- ! *Hierarchical.* This categorization will tell whether the graduates are likely to work as professionals, supervisors, middle management and top management.

Usually, the larger the variation within the functional, hierarchical sector and industrial skills required, the larger the variation will be in the electives offered to relatively fewer graduates. For a lesser variation in the required skills under these categories, the fewer will be the elective competencies and the more will be the core competencies required from graduates. Therefore, business education will position itself to offer more core and major skills to relatively more students.

Curriculum design strategies

Developing a curriculum map to focus on a target audience is a challenging task. It provides a systematic and well-organized framework to manage the knowledge to be imparted by avoiding gaps and overlaps in the courses. The following strategies listed by Gill and Lashine (2003) will be useful for a business education curriculum development:

- ! The curriculum for a business school should be flexible enough to provide a major and a minor program, with the major program providing a focused in-depth training in a specialized area; and the minor providing a training in multi-disciplinary areas. The flexibility and granulation of the modules is of central importance.
- ! Owing to a rapid change in technology, it is imperative to update the curriculum to keep pace with the advancements. An effective strategy would be to develop a change-driven curriculum where the curriculum design and learning paths should be periodically reviewed depending on the market needs.
- ! Elective courses should be directed towards international business issues.
- ! Emphasize on case studies to simulate the real life problem environment and develop skills and approaches to solve business problems.
- ! The internship program should not be treated as a mere training program but as an opportunity to contribute towards the business by working on the real problems facing a business.
- ! To enhance the client-focus of business education, the business community should have a representation in the curriculum design committees.
- ! Design courses in negotiation skills, conflict management and crisis resolution.

Business education delivery strategies; Facility strategies and Location strategies

Although a good education facility may not guarantee a good output from the education system, poor facilities certainly affect the quality of the output from an educational system. How well a business education facility is designed and equipped certainly sends a message to the market that would employ graduates. Benefits of centralized education at a university campus include: it provides an opportunity for graduates to work with students from diverse backgrounds, cultures and values, efficient use of instructors and training facilities, efficient use of high cost labs and simulation equipment, a better control over education quality. Disadvantages include: high cost of students' travel, not adaptable to suit the local geographical needs, capacity problems to handle student volume, etc. On the other hand, benefits of decentralized education through regional or branch campuses include: lower cost of travel, adaptable to local differences and manageable size. Disadvantages include: it makes students work with others from a similar background and hence less tolerant to other cultures, values

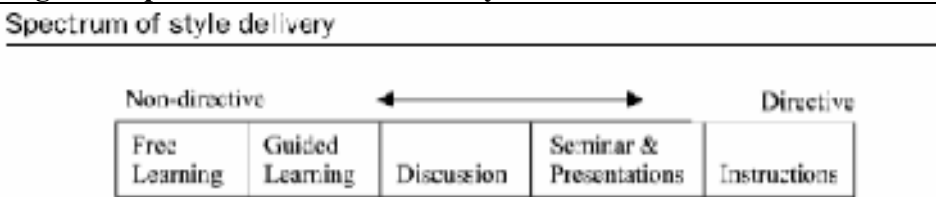
and backgrounds, under-utilization of instructional resources, facilities and capital intensive labs, and less quality control over education(Gill, and Lashine, 2003).

Different styles of knowledge delivery for business education grouped by Gill and Lashine (2003), such as:

- ! group learning vs individual learning;
- ! computer-based and/or multimedia-based learning; and
- ! directive vs non-directive delivery.

In Figure 3 the spectrum of course delivery (Bentley, 1991); shows the alternative ways to course instruction. Educators should adopt an alternative to serve the needs of students and fits the educational environment best.

Figure 3 Spectrum of course delivery



Source: Bentley, T. (1991), *The Business of Training*, McGraw Hill International Ltd, London, pp.66-7.

Staffing strategies

The quality, expertise and professionalism of the faculty and support staff can be a limiting factor for the quality and effectiveness of a business institution. The faculty must be capable of designing and delivering subjects, which reflects the real conditions in a business environment. It is easy to determine and recruit the “standard” staff, but unfortunately, it is hard to make personal decisions based on short- and/or long-term predictions about future trends. The most efficient strategy is the creation of a flexible organization consisting of professionals, who are able to follow the future trends, have a fast and flexible recruitment, and maintain a close relationship to research and industry, in order to get immediate and direct impressions about future tendencies. Gill and Lashine (2003) lists useful staffing strategies for a business school as follows:

- ! to encourage the faculty and business community work in a team environment for curriculum design;
- ! draw the faculty from businesses or industry to provide full-time or part-time instructional help;
- ! encourage the current faculty to work on industrial assignments during sabbaticals or educational leaves so as to update their skills on the current business trends.
- ! encourage applied research; and increase the effectiveness of internships, creating and standardizing the basics for students/faculty/industrial participants.

Developing cross-cultural capability and teaching methods

Landis and Brislin (1983) identify a number of fundamental cross cultural training methodologies, viz information or fact oriented training; attribution training, which focuses on explanations of behaviour from the perspective of the native; cultural awareness training; cognitive behavior modification; experiential learning; and interaction training. Stewart Black and Mendenhall (1991) develop this discussion by suggesting the methods that are most appropriate in given situations, and when learning is most effective. They position training methods in relation to training rigor (degree of cognitive involvement of learner) and modeling process (either symbolic or participative). These ideas can be adapted to suggest relevant teaching approaches with respect to the development of cross-cultural capability in undergraduate business education, in the context of the previous discussion of ordering and sequencing (see Table 5).

Table 5 Training methods in relation to training

Cognitive engagement	Nature of teaching methods	Example of teaching methods
<i>Level 1</i> Low	Factual	Lectures, books, videos, guest speakers, comparative exercises, research exercises
<i>Level 2</i> Medium	Analytical	Classroom language training, case studies, interactive CD-ROM, projects, e.g. international marketing
<i>Level 3</i> High	Experiential	Multicultural groups, self-diagnosis of cultural traits, role plays, simulations, international work experiences, visits, personal development portfolios

Source: Laughton, D. and Ottewill, R., 2000, "Developing cross-cultural capability in undergraduate business education: implications for the student experience", *Education + Training*, 42, 6, 378-386. (Adapted from Stewart Black and Mendenhall (1991))

This framework attempts to bring together the three dimensions of cross-cultural awareness, skills development and teaching/learning methodology within the context of the chronology of degree level undergraduate business education. It suggests the nature of the key components of the student experience relevant to the facilitation of cross-cultural capability, and indicates the influences on the evolving nature of "being" relevant to actors in international business. It raises crucial issues of assessment, particularly with respect to the less factual and more behavioural dimensions of cross-cultural capability. The framework also suggests that the "being" dimension of cross-cultural capability could be authenticated and evidenced towards the end of an academic programme, through the mechanism of a personal development portfolio, that would incorporate both formative and summative elements associated with this phenomenon (Laughton, and Ottewill, 2000).

Future directions for management education and training

In situations where information is relatively straightforward, shared interpretations exist and future events are likely to reflect the recent past, traditional quantitative approaches can provide indispensable guidance. However, in ambiguous circumstances where interpretations are evolving, more qualitative, action-oriented methodologies would be necessary. Current business school curricula clearly emphasize traditional, quantitative approaches at the expense of more behaviourally oriented, qualitative approaches. Business schools need to strike a better balance between traditional and action-oriented methods so that graduates can wed the rigours of quantitative analysis with the courage and wisdom derived from an action orientation. As things currently stand, employers often find that they must supplement their recently hired business school graduates' training with presentation skills, teamworking and creativity programmes (Ford, and Ogilvie, 1997).

Conclusion

The role played by business education in enhancing the knowledge-base of a country has been placed under a sharper focus by globalization and advancements in information technology. To cope with the new challenges posed by these emerging technologies, it is important to look at business education from a market-oriented perspective and take a strategic view to better align business education with the requirements of the global markets.

To ensure the validity of management education, a large practical component should be included in the course, thereby providing an opportunity for both experiential and action learning (Bosch and Louw, 1998).

An international trend with regards to skills development is the shifting world of work. The new economy requires a set of skills that is fundamentally different to that which was traditionally appropriate. Skills demanded by the new labour market include innovation, entrepreneurship and critical thinking as the cornerstone of the new global leader. There is also a general move towards a flatter and more flexible work organisation. This fundamentally changes the business principles that govern work organisations. Inherently, the competitiveness of firms depend on the capacity of the education and training sector to deliver individuals with the required skills and competencies.

Management education of the future need not only focus on content knowledge, but must significantly increase the skills of students to be able to deal with being future leaders in the information society. The implication is clear, these issues should be directly addressed as to develop the skills necessary to ensure organisational success. It is therefore critical that business schools should gauge the relative importance of subject disciplines and skills and competencies.

Management education should be positioned as a career-orientated, interdisciplinary qualifications teaching professional and appropriate skills and competencies to current and future managers alike. Management degrees should focus on the real problems of business in such a way as to develop graduates with special attributes and relevant management skills (Bosch and Louw, 1998).

Action learning is less straightforward and more demanding than providing a traditional taught programme, but it has the potential of achieving a much wider range of learning outcomes.

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