

Using PBL to Localize Application of Global Knowledge

Using Problem-based Learning to Localize Application of Global Management Knowledge

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The Goal of Management Education in the 21st Century

- To develop managers with the capacity to use knowledge of global management practices ethically as a tool for solving problems in their own local organizational contexts
- To develop managers who have an awareness of the global context within which local organizational problems occur

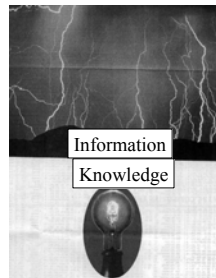
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Aims of Education

"Pedants sneer at an education which is useful. But if education is not useful, what is it?"

A.N. Whitehead, 1950



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Goal of Professional Education

“Education in the professions *should* prepare students for action.”

Charles Gragg, 1940
Harvard Business School



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My Argument: Five Parts

1. ICT revolution enables learners to access global management knowledge resources from anywhere in the world
2. The global knowledge base of management practice comes primarily from Western sources that seldom recognize and even less often emphasize contextual boundaries of this knowledge
3. Traditional teaching results in acquisition of “inert knowledge”
4. Knowledge acquisition must contextualize “global knowledge” of management practice
5. PBL enables learners to use “global knowledge” as a tool for solving the types of problems they will face in their work

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The ICT revolution enables learners to access global management knowledge resources from anywhere

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For the First Time, a Global Knowledge Base of Management is at our Fingertips

- Textbooks
- Journal Databases
- Internet
- E-books
- Amazon.Com
- Off-shore Programs



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The global knowledge base of management practice comes primarily from Western sources that seldom recognize and even less often emphasize the contextual boundaries of this knowledge base.

“Global Knowledge Base” is Distorted by Blank Spots and Blind Spots

- Most management theories and empirical studies have come from just a few Western cultures
- Few have been validated or even tested across cultures
- The knowledge base is full of:
 - “Blank Spots” where theories or findings are incomplete
 - “Blind Spots” where our current view of knowledge impedes us from seeing its limitations (R. Wagner, 1993)
- Cultural contextualization of knowledge is the most under-recognized but relevant Blind Spot in making sense of the Global Knowledge Base in management

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Blank Spots in the Application of Western Theories in Asia

Hofstede's Dimensions

- Collectivism
- Power Distance
- Time Orientation
- Masculinity
- Uncertainty

Impact on Application

- Values
- Ethics
- Motivation Theory
- Leadership Theory
- HR Practice

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Blind Spots in Management Practice: Indigenous Perspectives

Asian Concepts

- *Greng jai* (Thai)
- *Gumlung jai* (Thai)
- *Bergotong Royong* (Malay)



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Getzel Conceptualized Culture as a Fundamental Factor Impacting Social Behavior



J.W. Getzel, Conflict and Role Behavior in the Educational Setting, In W.W. Charters and N.L. Gage (Eds.), *Readings in the Social Psychology of Education*, Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1963, p. 312.

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Implications

- Managers learn and apply knowledge in social contexts
- Theories don't travel well across borders
- Leaving it to students to "figure it out" is irresponsible
- Until non-western cultures develop theories and extend empirical investigations more widely, Global Knowledge should be viewed critically



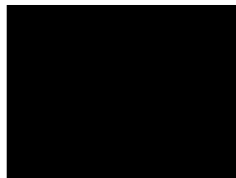
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Traditional teaching results in acquisition of "inert knowledge"

Passive Learning is Excellent at Producing Inert Knowledge

Inert knowledge is retained in the learner's long-term memory but is not accessed even in cases where it could assist in solving a problem.



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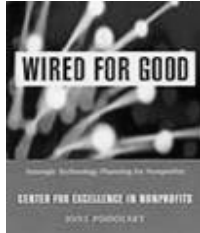
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Education has yet to realize the promise of ICT

“Information technology -- the Internet, for example -- only gives us access to *information*. To understand that information requires *knowledge*. Applying knowledge ethically requires *wisdom*.”

Lee Kuan Yew



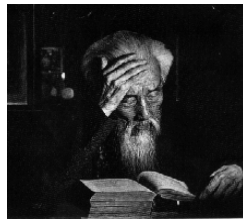
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“But Wisdom Cannot be Told”

“So he had grown rich at last, and thought to transmit to his only son all the cut-and-dried experience which he himself had purchased at the price of his lost illusions: a noble last illusion of age.”

Balzac



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Knowledge acquisition must contextualize
“global knowledge” of management
practice

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Three Necessary Conditions to Foster Knowledge Retention and Transfer

1. Prior knowledge is activated.
2. The context in which information is learned resembles the context in which it will later be applied.
3. Learners have an opportunity to elaborate on that information.

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PBL Contextualizes Learning

- PBL starts with a problem, not the content knowledge
- A problem is the stimulus for learning in teams
- Knowledge resources are organized around a problem
- Students process knowledge resources in terms of how they apply to the problem
- The teams then produce a solution to the problem
- The solution is expressed in a manner closest to how the problem would be solved in the workplace

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Defining Features Matrix: PBL vs. Case Method

Defining Features	PBL	Case
• Problem-centered	X	X
• Student-led teams	X	
• Teacher-led discussion		X
• Emphasis on analysis	X	X
• Emphasis on implementation	X	
• Class time is scheduled by students	X	
• Basic unit of instruction: project	X	
• Basic unit of instruction: case		X
• Problem is the starting point for learning	X	(X)
• Emphasis on life-long learning skills	(X)	
• Emphasis on problem-solving skills	X	(X)
• Emphasis on management skills	X	
• Concern for emotional aspects of leadership	X	
• Practice in getting results through others	X	
• Acquire skills in giving feedback	X	
• On-going formative evaluation	X	

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PBL enables learners to use “global knowledge” as a tool for solving the types of “local problems” they will face in their work.

Use of Local Problems Overcomes the “Walmart Syndrome”

- Gives richer clues about the real context
- Provides a setting learners can understand more easily
- Motivates students
- Reduces gap between context of school and the workplace



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Sample Problems

- Implement new ERP system in a Thai Bank
- How a Thai SME can market via the internet
- Conflict between Japanese manager and Thai staff in a manufacturing plant
- Inability of a Thai SME to compete due to organizational problems
- Managing as low performing staff member



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Example: Problem of Organizational Change

- Simulated implementation of an IT change at a co.
- We gathered knowledge of change from Western sources and conducted our own research
- We adapted knowledge base to suit the Thai context

- Changes included
- Context
 - People personalities
 - Staff responses to change
 - Authority rules
 - Social relations
 - Strategy actions to foster change

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Using Local Problems in PBL or Cases

Problem

- Localized context
- Students can “see” the context
- Similar to what they will encounter
- Stimuli for activation of knowledge in future situations

Knowledge Application

- Global Resources to help understand the problem
- Localize application of knowledge through
 - Local research findings
 - Critical perspective
 - Solution assessment of what will work in this context

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PBL Goes Beyond Cases in Solution and Product Design and Expression

Products

- Memo
- Interview Role Play
- Simulation
- Website
- Presentation
- Plan or Strategy

Benefits of Solution Orientation

- Consider use of knowledge (tool)
- Forces students to consider practice not only analysis
- Fosters transfer

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“Seeing and Hearing is Believing, but
eating is knowing.”

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