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Editorial Introduction

Introduction to Teaching & Learning: Management Education as an Emotional Science

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The environments in which management is taught are remarkably similar. Large lecture theatres, seminar rooms and syndicate rooms are structured to allow instructor-led activities based on students sitting down, listening and taking notes. These environments are designed to match the underlying paradigm upon which management education is built; management education is a cognitive science. The environments are used to decant knowledge about management into students through direct lectures, seminars or workshops where those on the receiving end “think” about the relevance of the ideas to their current or future work.

Conceptualizing management education as a cognitive science is somewhat detached from the experience of management. Anyone who has worked as a manager will know how difficult it is to perform as a rational manager who operates solely in the cognitive realm. Every thought and every action has an emotional element to it. Some of these are obvious; the joy and the consequent glow of winning a big order, the anger and rage against a colleague who has stabbed you in the back, and the fear and anguish of having to give someone a verbal warning. But other aspects of emotion are less obvious and influence our decisions unconsciously. Feeling a bit “down in the dumps” can make us more pessimistic in our forecasting, having had a winning run makes us more optimistic, and a painful mistake will make us more risk-averse.

In the past 15 years or so, technological advances in brain scanning have offered a new understanding of how the brain works, and, in particular, how our primitive emotions influence our behavior. The work of Joseph LeDoux (1993, 1996) has shown that a small area of the brain called the amygdala operates as an “emotional computer” (Oakley *et al.*, 2006: 147) that has connections to the cognitive areas of the brain, but operates independently. One aspect of this independence is the automatic appraisal of situations, goals, concerns and reactions to dangers and threats. These are simple, bifurcated assessments of good and bad that occur unconsciously. In a business environment, an example might be our first impressions of an interviewee. The moment we see them, we make assessments, many of which are unconscious. This emotional landscape then accompanies us through the interview and results in what occupational psychologists call “the halo and

horns effect"; our positive or negative leaning towards the candidate influences our subsequent assessments. Through these primary appraisals of situations and events, emotions unconsciously influence our thought processes and often prevent us from being as coldly rational as we might like to be.

Until recently, emotions were something to be controlled and minimised. Kövesces (2003) and Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have shown that the language of emotions operates through five metaphors: natural forces, opponents, diseases, fluids and animals or other living things. The phrases "waves of emotions," "struggling with our emotions," being "sick with envy," "simmering with rage," and "my love has withered and died," all suggest that historically emotions have been viewed as elemental forces waging war against us. But they are real, they are here to stay, and they influence our cognitive processes. A management education curriculum that fails to include them does its students a disservice.

After some earlier work by others on the subject, the study of emotion in a management context was kick-started a few years back with the publication of Daniel Goleman's (1996) best-selling book, *Emotional Intelligence* (EI). In it, he further advanced the concept "emotional intelligence" as an ability to be able to recognize and manage one's own emotions in an organizational setting. This book stimulated additional research into emotions in the workplace, but until recently EI has not been extended greatly into practical teaching applications. The two papers in this section address this gap.

The first paper provides an interesting new activity that produces affective responses in the classroom to help students experience emotion. The authors Carolyn I. Chavez and Maria J. Méndez introduce us to a new teaching method called the MEAP, which stands for Mood, Emotion and Affect in Group Performance. They utilize role-plays, but do so in a manageable, low tech and approachable way. In brief, students work in teams to solve crossword puzzles, but one member of the team has been primed to take on one of two unhelpful roles

based around emotional states. This activity stimulates discussion of emotion in two ways. The first is through a reflection on the emotions that were experienced during the activity. The second is to look at the impact of the inclusion of "moody" people in the group on performance.

The second paper offers a conceptual explanation of how instructors can make learning meaningful through experience. It is a "call to arms", an exhortation to management educators to make their courses more challenging, transformative and thereby more impactful. The starting point for the authors, David Saiia, Granger Macy and Maureen P. Boyd, is Kolb (1984: 38): "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." The experience that they have designed is relevant to a strategic management class and, like the first paper, utilizes role-play in a manageable way. The activity involves students writing mini-CVs designed to sell their skills and value to a firm. Then, nominated members of the class "bid" for the people who will comprise their teams all semester. This interesting twist on team allocation provides a fertile ground to discuss emotions as well as many issues linked to strategic management, recruitment and marketing.

Although quite different in their subject matter, these two papers are "horses of the same stable." They encourage management educators to incorporate experience and the emotion it brings into their teaching. When things get emotional, they become more difficult to manage and control, but they also become more interesting and more memorable. These papers show how such activities can be contained and incorporated into relatively large classrooms. In doing so, the papers offer the prospect of new and exciting teaching which has a greater impact on our students.

If you want to find out more about emotions and the latest thinking on the subject, I would recommend two sources. The first is the textbook by Oakley *et al.* (2006), which is listed below. The second is Dacher Keltner's tremendous Psychology 156 lectures at the University of California Berkeley. These are available to download, free of charge from Berkeley's iTunes University space.

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