

4-3-2015

Leaps in Learning: Reflective Questioning and the Mastery of Threshold Concepts

Catherine C. Giapponi
Fairfield University

Barbara Ritter
Coastal Carolina University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/omj>



Part of the [Organizational Behavior and Theory Commons](#), and the [Organizational Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Giapponi, Catherine C. and Ritter, Barbara (2015) "Leaps in Learning: Reflective Questioning and the Mastery of Threshold Concepts," *Organization Management Journal*: Vol. 12: Iss. 2, Article 6.
Available at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/omj/vol12/iss2/6>

TEACHING & LEARNING

Leaps in Learning: Reflective Questioning and the Mastery of Threshold Concepts

Catherine C. Giapponi¹ and Barbara Ritter²

Co-Editors

¹Charles F. Dolan School of Business, Fairfield University, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA

²E. Craig Wall Sr. College of Business, Coastal Carolina University, Conway, South Carolina, USA

Business students are exposed to vast amounts of information. Although such exposure affords opportunities for learning, it does not necessarily promote depth of thought and understanding. The challenge for educators is to move students beyond surface learning to deeper levels of understanding that will prepare them for the complex, fast-paced, and rapidly changing business environment. In the summer issue of the *Organization Management Journal*, the Teaching & Learning section offers two articles that focus on enriching the classroom learning experience by promoting deep thinking and transformational learning.

In the first article, A. Georges L. Romme and Inge C. M. van Seggelen-Damen explore reflective questioning as a way to improve the teaching and learning process in “Taking Nothing for Granted in Management Education: A Systemic Perspective on the Role of Reflective Questioning.” The authors explore reflective questioning as an act of sense-making that can be deliberately encouraged by classroom instructors to deepen the classroom experience. A number of propositions are presented, resulting in a causal loop diagram detailing variables related to and encouraging (discouraging) the emergence of reflective questioning.

Thomas P. Bradley, Gerald F. Burch, and Jana J. Burch consider student mastery of threshold concepts in the second

article, “Increasing Knowledge by Leaps and Bounds: Using Experiential Learning to Address Threshold Concepts.” The authors propose that threshold concepts can be troublesome for students and, if not mastered, create barriers to learning. They present an experiential exercise that moves students beyond surface learning to concept mastery. Based on a simulated pizza production and delivery business, the operations management exercise used guided assignments to move students through the pre-liminal, liminal, and postliminal stages of threshold concept mastery.

Classroom activities and pedagogies that encourage students to dig deeper, deconstruct or reconstruct meaning, recognize and challenge basic assumptions, uncover blind spots and rigorously engage with business management theory and practice, promote deep levels of understanding. The model of reflective questioning and the experiential learning exercise presented in the two articles contained in this edition of *OMJ's* Teaching & Learning section foster and promote such depth of understanding and thinking. In the search for teaching strategies that transform student learning, these articles will be of interest to both new and seasoned faculty.

Address correspondence to Catherine C. Giapponi, Charles F. Dolan School of Business, Fairfield University, 1073 N. Benson Rd., Fairfield, CT 06824, USA. E-mail: cgiapponi@fairfield.edu