

Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Knowledge Creation by Scholar-Practitioners in Asia



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Outline: Questions to explore



- What are Scholar Practitioners? What Knowledge do they create?
- Why do Scholar-Practitioners Create Knowledge?
 - Wicked Problems
- What are the Sources and Types of Management Knowledge?
- Reflective-Practice: How do Scholar-Practitioners create knowledge? How is it different from Plain Practice? Different from Research?
- What are we doing to develop Reflective-Practitioners/Scholar-Practitioners?

WHAT IS A SCHOLAR-PRACTITIONER?

Introducing the DIVERSITY of Scholar-Practitioners
INDUCTION: Thinking From a few specific instances to a General Theory

What kind of people are the Scholar-Practitioners?



- They are Senior Execs – Upper-Middle to Upper Level Corporate Execs (there are some entrepreneurs – Fores Chow; Julian Ho)
- They are from a DIVERSITY of Companies
- They are Personally DIVERSE
 - Responsibilities, Background, Age, Sex, Ethnicity
- So what is COMMON Among Them?

What is Common?



- They have a problem to which answers are not available in current practice or in current academic – theory
- They are motivated enough to work for and find rigorous answers to their problems



What are the type of Knowledge are they are Creating?



- The Knowledge is DIRECTLY RELEVANT to their Company, Industry, or Economy
- It addresses a REAL Problem (not a “Gap” in the literature) that they are facing – The Answer is Likely to Have REAL Value to them
- The Answer to their Problem is NOT available in Current Management Theory, Research, or Education –
- **WICKED PROBLEMS**

Well-Behaved/ TAME Problems: What we Teach in B-Schools



- Problem is Well-Defined by someone, usually other than the problem-solver
- Problem is Uni-Disciplinary
- Focus is on Problem Solution not Problem Definition
- Goals for the solution are Well-Defined
- Solution Methods to Problems Exist
- Resources for Solving the Problem are Available or we know how to get them
 - Expertise, Data, Time

WICKED PROBLEMS



- We do NOT Know what is the Problem – Or even worse – What it can Actually Become? The problem understanding evolves and mutates as we go deeper
 - **An Engineer's Problem:** Building the Three Gorges Dam
 - **A Finance Guy:** Due Diligence on Mergers and Acquisitions: Valuation; HR, Processes; National Politics
 - **Corporate Strategy:** Guiseppe and the Renewable Energy Business – Simple Problem to Wicked: Company Rhythm; Water
- There is no existing “Algorithm” or the Method to Solve it
- It is a Multi- or Inter-Disciplinary Problem
- We currently do not have commonly available/accepted Resources to Solve it

What Makes Problems Wicked? Problem Setting or Framing



- Problem of Child Malnutrition in Under-Developed Countries
 - The Nutritionist's Perspective – Optimize Diet given constraints of Nutritive Requirements and Family Income
 - Agronomist – Food Production
 - Agri-Business – Land Holdings and Economies of Scale
 - Demographers – Population Growth vs. Agri Growth
 - Engineers – Inadequate Storage & Logistics
 - Economists – Inequitable Distribution of Income, Wealth, and Land Holdings
- Different Framing has Different Solutions
- Which Framing and which Solution? Or all?

What makes Problems WICKED?



- Inadequate Problem Setting or Framing
 - Most Disciplinary Academic Research
- Uncertainty – we have identified all relevant variables – just do not know what values will they have
- Conflicts in Values –
 - Hedy Sat's Problem – Health Care Reform – in US and in Hong Kong
- Unique Problem – Never Encountered Before. Markus's Problem
 - What Makes a Problem Unique? Location? Scale?
- **WICKED PROBLEMS: BUT Isn't That we Pay the Managers/Consultants Big Bucks for?**

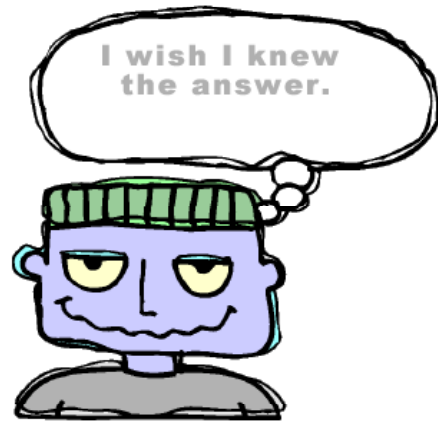


**MANAGERS NEED
KNOWLEDGE TO SOLVE
THEIR PROBLEMS, AND IF...**



**IF THE KNOWLEDGE IS NOT
AVAILABLE, THEY NEED TO
KNOW HOW TO GENERATE
THAT KNOWLEDGE**

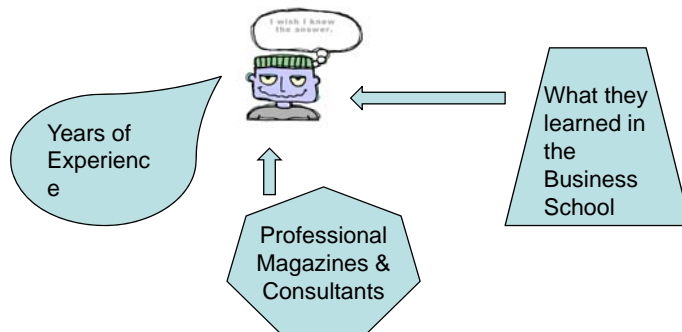
Practitioner



Manager as the Reflective Practitioner



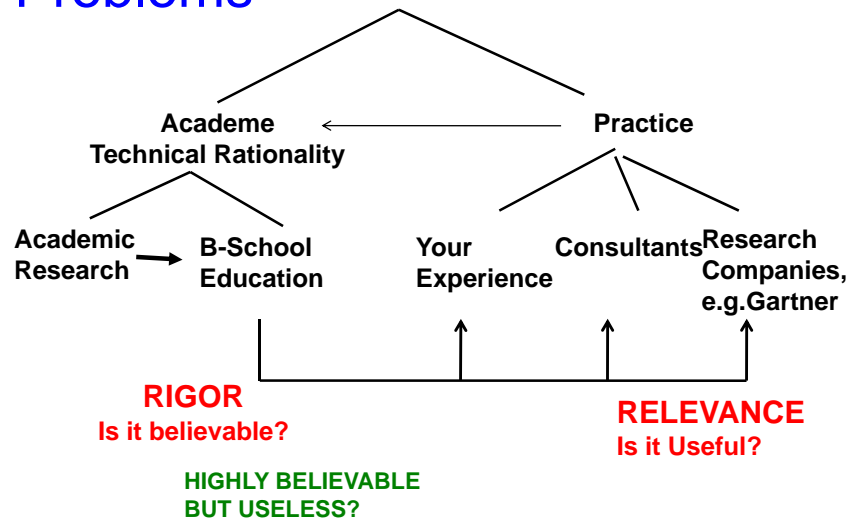
Sources of Professional Knowledge



And where did this Professional Knowledge come from?



Available Solutions to Problems



Problems with Current Academic Management Knowledge



- Developed in the Western Culture – Actually a very small part of the West – North America; Anglo-Countries; and Western Europe; and some Northern Europe (even cross-cultural theories) – **using western cultural assumptions**
- Developed using dominant Western Research Paradigm– Logical Positivism – **ok for Pure science – Not Business**
- Developed in the Context of Industrial Revolution – **Now it is the Knowledge Revolution** – Concrete vs. Abstract work – and different type of workers
- Developed Studying **Now Failing** Management Practices in the West – while Asian managers are developing new Knowledge – for the new Business Context **because they need it.**

More Problems with Academic Management Knowledge



- **FROZEN IN TIME** - Most Current Management Theories and Methodologies are based upon **OBSOLETE** Theories and Methodologies in the reference disciplines
 - The reference disciplines – Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science; History - have moved on – Management Researchers are still flogging 40 year old ideas and methodologies (**intellectually lazy?**)
 - **Some Examples:** Hofstede's Cultural Differences; Abbv. Williamson's Transaction Costs; Theory of Reasoned Action; van de Ven's Typology of Interdependence; TAM; Yin's 30 year old Case Studies; Search for Quant. And Reductionism

My Attitudinal Bias



CURRENT WESTERN SUPPLIED MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES ARE SIMPLY NOT ADEQUATE FOR SOLVING THE WICKED PROBLEMS IN THE EMERGING ECONOMIES

Will Asian Business School Academics Develop the Needed Knowledge? **NOT LIKELY**



- They are run by Academics Socialized in Western Universities
- Their reward systems depend on Western Academic Standards – namely publishing in Western Journals
- They will continue to produce research useless for Emerging Economy Problems
 - There is no KUHNIAN – STRUCTURAL SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION in ASIAN B-SCHOOLS – They are busy creating **MaCaulay-esqe Research Clerks** (Macaulay' Minutes on Indian Education, Feb. 2nd, 1935)

SO – IF WE CAN NOT EXPECT ASIAN B-SCHOOLS TO DO IT, WHO WILL DEVELOP USEFUL MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE?



Who Will Develop Useful Management Knowledge



- Those who need this Knowledge to Solve these WICKED PROBLEMS
- Those who are – on a day to day basis wrestling with Alligators – and in doing so creating new Knowledge
- They Are RELEVANT – but Currently NOT RIGOROUS
- If we can Train them in USEFUL RIGOR – Useful Rigour but Not Useless Ritualistic Rigor – we can have some HOPE of Developing a New Generation of MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE

**WE NEED TO BEGIN TO DEVELOP ASIAN
REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS**

