What Type of Knowledge Is Required in the Business Curriculum? Pedagogic and Curriculum Response to the "New Knowledge"

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Introduction

One of the most common complaints concerning university education is that it does not prepare graduates adequately for the world of work. This is, of course, a view that comes foremost from employers themselves (see, for example, a recent survey by Archer and Davidson 2008), although it is also a perspective accepted by the UK Government (Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills 2008). Such criticism has produced genuine soul-searching within the academy, particularly in relation to postgraduate management education (e.g. Mintzberg 2005), although the Employability "movement" in the UK (e.g. Knight and Yorke 2003) has a focus on undergraduate business education. The outcomes of this process of genuflection, however, have been mixed at best in terms of impact upon the business curriculum generally. There is certainly evidence of a greater emphasis upon skills development, of the introduction of Personal Development Planning, internships/work-based learning (WBL) and a greater interest in career management skills. However, there continues to be a heavy emphasis on disciplinary-based and propositional knowledge in the design of business programmes, and often little attempt to incorporate trans-disciplinary and integrated perspectives.

This chapter argues that one of the key criticisms of contemporary business education relates to its approach to knowledge construction, and the prioritising and privileging of disciplinary-based propositional knowledge in the core curriculum. It is suggested that, in general, business education has been slow to respond to the changing conditions and nature of knowledge creation outside of the academy, and it is posited that a recognition of this "new knowledge" is crucial when developing the skills and attributes identified as being important in the workplace. It is further argued that, although project-based learning and WBL opportunities should be

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expanded within the higher education (HE) curriculum as a way of making learning more relevant to the business world, of equal importance is how this knowledge is fused with disciplinary-based propositional knowledge within the majority of modules or educational experiences a student is exposed to. In grappling with this issue, business educators have the possibility of re-making the business curriculum to make it more authentic, more engaging and more relevant to the world of organisations and businesses.

By way of illustration, the findings of a small scale research project examining student learning from a "live" company project will be examined. The learning outcomes of this project will be evaluated from a knowledge perspective, and the ways in which these could be leveraged across the broader curriculum discussed. A typology of leveraging approaches is formulated. It is concluded that by incorporating authentic learning approaches more extensively within the curriculum, which expose students to or enable them to develop aspects of the "new knowledge", and then leveraging these broadly across the curriculum, business educators can forge a knowledge synthesis and support skills development that will go some way to bridging the expectations gap between universities and business.

Setting the Context

Askling et al. (2001) detect a historical change in the characteristics of university curricula in the contemporary period, suggesting a transformation in the underpinning epistemology of degrees from single to inter/multidisciplinary perspectives and domain-based studies. Progressive educators welcome such a shift, but the extent to which this is changing the student experience at the chalk face is perhaps over-stated (Currie and Tempest 2008). *What is taught and how it is taught* continue to be criticised for their usefulness in preparing learners for the demands of twenty-first century organisations. Van den Bosch (2008) reviews the major criticisms of contemporary business education using Mintzberg's now (in)famous conclusion that "conventional MBA programmes train the wrong people in the wrong ways with the wrong consequences" (p. 193). In terms of the middle of these criticisms, attention is drawn to the "functionalisation" of the business curriculum, the casualty being insufficient attention placed on the need for curriculum integration and an associated fragmentation of knowledge. Bennis and O'Toole (2005) are critical of the ways in which business education is influenced significantly by the expertise, affiliations, aspirations and interests of academic staff, which may be at odds with what might be termed a business interested and focused curriculum. Hagen (2008) suggests that much management education is outmoded due to its adoption of a narrow curriculum founded upon a dominant organisational form, incorporating bureaucratic and hierarchical approaches to management and based upon instrumental rationality. Pfeffer and Fong (2002) investigate why participants in MBA programmes do not prioritise or appear to value high academic achievement. They identify a number

of contributing factors: a disjuncture between the business curriculum and learning how to manage; teaching approaches not relevant to support the development of management skills; and no direct link between educational achievement, salary and promotion/career progression. And Currie and Tempest (2008) report on the "transmission" approach to knowledge which characterises much of contemporary business education.

These comments have turned attention to ways in which the business curriculum is determined, influenced and reproduced. In the context of undergraduate business education in the UK, Macfarlane has highlighted and analysed the key role of university academics. He suggests that degrees in business studies have developed relatively free from external demands and, surprisingly perhaps, without substantial involvement from employers, and concludes that:

> There appears to be a gap between the essentially academic orientation of staff and the expectations of institutions looking to business faculty to lead an enterprise culture. (Macfarlane 1994, p. 4)

He notes the absence of a strong business studies culture within universities, suggesting that the subject area tended to be introduced through established departments which may have emphasised their own disciplinary base. These disciplines may orient themselves in either a pure or applied direction depending on their structures of knowledge and intellectual traditions. Where disciplines emphasise pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, business studies is perceived to sit uncomfortably within an academic culture that identifies itself with "pure" rather than "applied" approaches, even though students tend to define the subject pragmatically as a study "for" rather than "of" business. His overall conclusion is that most business studies lecturers are recruited from mature disciplines, and that there are relatively few with practitioner-based backgrounds, which has implications for the approaches of lecturers to both epistemology and pedagogy (Macfarlane 1998). This situation becomes problematical due to the recognition of the different characteristics of knowledge generated in the academy and the workplace, and provides an insight into why employers often criticise the business curriculum and the lack of preparedness of business graduates for the world of work.

The "New Knowledge" and the Business World

Gibbons et al. (1994) chart the development and characteristics of a new form of knowledge and new processes of knowledge generation they feel permeate the contemporary period. They label this new form of knowledge as Mode 2, compared with traditional Mode 1 knowledge. They summarise the differences as follows:

> In Mode 1 problems are set and solved in a context governed by the, largely academic, interests of a specific community. By contrast, Mode 2 knowledge is carried out in a context

of application. Mode 1 is disciplinary while Mode 2 is transdisciplinary. Mode 1 is characterised by homogeneity, Mode 2 by heterogeneity. Organisationally, Mode 1 is hierarchical and tends to preserve its form, while Mode 2 is more heterarchical and transient. Each employs a different type of quality control. In comparison with Mode 1, Mode 2 is more socially accountable and reflexive. It includes a wider, more temporary and heterogeneous set of practitioners, collaborating on a problem defined in a specific and localised context. (Gibbons et al. 1994, p. 3)

Mode 1 knowledge is rooted in a Newtonian view of scientific knowledge practices and the aspiration to leverage this approach across broader fields of inquiry, using the universities and the process of peer review as the chief mechanisms of quality assurance. In contrast, Mode 2 knowledge involves problem identification and solution as practices generated in context, understood and pursued via a fusion of disciplinary perspectives (i.e. through the creation of transdisciplinary understandings) and processes, with communication and dissemination through the agents involved based upon their participation. The production of Mode 1 knowledge is seen as being primarily in the universities and government research labs; for Mode 2 knowledge, a wider variety of agents are involved (research departments in private firms, consultancies, specialised research companies, research centres and research groups in universities) connected through a network architecture. The result of this is that the location of Mode 2 knowledge generation is "socially distributed".

The drivers for a move to Mode 2 knowledge generation are associated with the move to post-industrial societies, globalization, the increasing costs and complexity of technology and increasing demands placed on firms and governments by society in terms of providing solutions to problems and issues that affect general welfare. As constituting forces in the business environment of organisations, they command a response in terms of both efficiency and effectiveness and a changing paradigm of production (Ruigrok and Van Tulder 1995). In summary, the new economics of production are characterised by a move from the pursuit of economies of scale to the pursuit of economies of scope. This has important implications for the kinds of skills and attributes which are bundled into defined role and job requirements in modern organisations:

Important kinds of knowledge are being produced not so much by scientists, or technologists or industrialists, as by symbolic analysts, people who work with the symbols, concepts, models, data, produced by others in diverse locations and who configure them into new combinations. (Gibbons et al. 1994, p. 84)

Although the main thesis of Gibbons et al. focuses on scientific knowledge development, they also suggest that the move to Mode 2 knowledge production is observable, relevant and valid in a humanities and social science context.

Universities have long been exhorted to move beyond the "ivory tower" position that some say they inhabit within society, to consider the needs and interests of a wider group of stakeholders than those that exist purely within the higher education system. A response of many universities has been to engage in a form of technology transfer, where they attempt to apply the knowledge they have created in-house to organisational and societal problems, thereby demonstrating

a direct contribution to societal welfare. However, this has not, until recently, interrupted or removed their key focus on Mode 1 knowledge creation; rather this encouraged universities to pursue avenues for the application of such knowledge. In Mode 2 the nature of knowledge transfer is perceived differently; indeed the use of such terminology detracts from the fundamental shift in process: industry and HE are now participants in the process of the production of knowledge, working within a symbiotic relationship that generates qualitatively different forms of knowledge.

The idea of a new knowledge, more relevant to business and organisational needs, created in response to their concerns and involving their role and participation in its generation, is also reflected in the growth of interest in organisational learning, work-based learning and the importance of tacit knowledge within organisations. This is a different understanding of "new knowledge" compared to organisations. Gibbons et al., but equally it is an understanding which identifies a departure in terms of the creators of knowledge, its characteristics, the purposes of knowledge and the sites of knowledge creation. Brennan (2005), for example, suggests that this "new knowledge" is high in use value for organisations, is constructed and utilised within the workplace, is the outcome of collaborative work within organisations and participation in outside networks, and consequently "...the workplace itself is seen as a site of learning, knowledge and knowledge production" (Brennan 2005, p. 7, 8). The importance of this "new knowledge" to organisations is exemplified by the resources and energies they are willing to apply to its production. Margaryan (2008), for example, reviews the development and implementation of a model for technology-enhanced WBL implemented within Shell EP Netherlands. Ultimately, this represents a new epistemology based upon an eclectic combination of viewpoints in educational philosophy. Contributing streams of thought are varied here. They include those writing in the constructivist tradition (e.g. Bruner and Piaget), who see knowledge as being constructed by individuals based on the experiencing, interpretation and (re)articulation of phenomena/stimuli, as opposed to learning being simply the process of the storing and reproduction of knowledge, i.e. individuals are characterised as active agents in the creation of knowledge. The work of Vigotsky and the notion of activity theory are also referenced in this context, which emphasises the social dimensions of knowledge creation and the thesis that cognition is always localised in specific social and cultural practices. And the work of those who promulgate the notion of situated learning/cognition (e.g. Lave and Wenger) is also drawn upon, where learning occurs as a result of participating in specific communities of practice.

Business educators have responded to this recognition of the different characteristics of knowledge in the academy and the workplace by innovating the pedagogy of business education via implementing problem and inquiry-based approaches and incorporating WBL into the business curriculum. These approaches have the avowed intentions of fostering a greater degree of interaction between theory and practice, and generating the knowledge and skills valued by organisations when they employ graduates. In this context, Van den Bosch (2008, p. 201) identifies a number of "implementation levels":

Levels	Explanation
Theory-based or discipline-based	Students study conceptual, theoretical and methodical knowledge, through which they become familiar with the disciplines. No additional arrangements are offered
Case-based	Students study styled and generalized specimens of situations in practice. They learn generalized methods to solve built-in problems
Task-based or problem-based	Learning sequences use style problems as a starting point. Students define a problem and subsequently collect relevant (scientific) information to analyse and conceptualise the problem
Inquiry-based	Students carry out research (theoretical and empirical) to increase their knowledge about a problem that is usually defined with the context of the educational institution and for purposes of scientific development
Practice-based or project-based	Students participate in (research) projects, which aim to clarify realistic business problems. They usually work together with the owners of the problem

With respect to project-based pedagogy and the link with Mode 2 knowledge generation, one progressive approach that has gained currency in HE institutions is the Alborg model. The product of Alborg University, established in Denmark in 1974, this emphasises problem-oriented and project-based learning, using group projects with industry and a "democratic learning model". Projects incorporate elements of analysing problems, designing solutions, implementing solutions where possible and testing for outcomes. This model is seen as a direct pedagogic response to the challenges of acquainting students with the new knowledge and its generative processes, and as a way of preparing students for vocational roles in modern organisations.

There is now a wide evidence base (see, for example, Ball 1995, Winn 1995, Laughton and Ottewill 1999) which suggests that the approaches above can act as powerful learning opportunities for students—exposed to the "new knowledge" and its associated generative processes—to "bridge the gap" between education and the workplace. By way of illustration, the case study below describes the learning outcomes students experienced as a result of participating in a company-based project as part of their course.

Case Study

Students, as part of the MSc International Business and Management programme at Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University, UK, engage in a "live" group project, working with a local company on a specified business problem. The purpose of this module is to expose students to authentic business problems in context, to experience the negotiation of a brief as a project team, to encourage reflection on the theory–practice nexus and to develop commercial awareness based upon

a review of the WBL experience. A further objective is to expose students to a process of knowledge generation and development outside of their discipline-based university education, which mirrors to a large extent the processes of knowledge creation described in the Mode 2 and "new knowledge" literatures.

In semester one of the academic year 2007–2008 four students formed a group to work with a local Sheffield company that produced labels for the steel industry, chemical industry, gardening industry and drinks industry, amongst other sectors. The company is a small and medium enterprise (SME), employing at the time approximately 50 workers, and was a family owned firm. The company was interested in the following:

1. A review of the company website and its effectiveness in new business development, sustaining company profile and customer support
2. A review of current good-practice in e-marketing which could be used to benchmark current organisational practices
3. An evaluation of the effectiveness of PR through trade journals and recommendations to increase the effective use of trade journals in the context of the development of the company's marketing strategy

The students visited the company on a number of occasions, were provided with company and industry information and data and given access to the company's website and a director. Review meetings with the company provided students with feedback on work in progress, and a final presentation and written report were made available to the company director who was also the company lead for the project. Before the commencement of the project, the students in the group (four in total, one student from India, one from Kenya, one from Thailand and one English-Chinese were asked to identify their personal objectives and the learning they felt they would gain from the project although the latter was not asked to engage in the reflective exercise as he was an undergraduate student drafted into the project team due to his web skills and expertise). Aspects identified, distilled from an analysis of structured interviews with students before they engaged with the project, were:

- Gain work experience
- Knowledge about the industry sector
- Knowledge of the UK business environment
- Knowledge on the role and use of trade journals in business
- Knowledge of B2B marketing
- Development of consultancy skills
- Development of cross-cultural communication and teamwork skills
- Report writing skills
- Research and analytical skills
- Project and time management skills
- Knowing the company from an insider point of view
- Ability to work under pressure
- Practical knowledge from a real life business project
- Improving my resume

Interestingly, the students commented upon a mixture of knowledge, skills and attributes they were hoping to develop further via participation in the project which are difficult to facilitate in the traditional university classroom environment. At this early stage this identified the powerful nature of problem, inquiry and employer-based projects for the learning of business students. Of particular note are the knowledge-based outcomes students were hoping to achieve for themselves (e.g. knowledge on the role and use of trade journals in business, knowing the company from an insider point of view, practical knowledge from a real-life business project) which would be the outcome of producing new knowledge for the company. In terms of process, the students involved themselves in conversations with senior managers of the organisation, in a tour and explanation of production processes and technology used in the plant, identifying and obtaining relevant company marketing documentation, obtaining access to and evaluating the company website, obtaining relevant trade journals, in telephone interviews with sub-editors and marketing/sales staff of trade journals, identifying relevant academic studies and research from the university learning centre and acquiring knowledge, guidance and support from the supervising tutor. In addition, they drew upon their existing skills and knowledge to produce a summary report and recommendations for the company after "making sense" (Weik 1995) of the issues the company was interested in as reflected in the terms of reference for the project.

The outcomes of the project were reflected upon by the company and the students with respect to their different interests and motivations. These were then evaluated by the author. The company perspective was derived from verbal feedback to the academic supervisor provided by the company director who had been involved with the project. This was highly positive, in that the recommendations produced by the students in relation to website design/review and marketing of company products in trade journals were to be acted upon by the company, i.e. had the potential to create value for the company. Indeed, the company expressed an interest in employing one of the students to implement some of the recommendations. The students were asked to reflect on their experience in relation to their initial statement of personal objectives and the learning they had experienced. These interviews were taped and transcribed. Summary reflections on personal objectives are reported in the Appendix. The analysis of student reflections presents a range of experiences in terms of learning derived through participation in the project and personal objectives fulfilled and unfulfilled. A number of observations/findings are pertinent in the context of the aims of this chapter:

1. Students gained different kinds of business knowledge compared to what they had experienced as part of their university studies through using different knowledge generation processes (see headings "Knowledge about the industry sector", "Knowledge of the UK business environment", "Research and analytical skills" and "Practical knowledge for a real life business project" in the Appendix).
2. Students gained an understanding of the open (as opposed to closed) nature of business issues and problems (see heading "Knowledge of B2B marketing" in the Appendix).

3. Students gained skills valued and useful in the workplace and so developed their work-related capabilities (see headings "Development of consultancy skills", "Report writing skills" and "Project and time management skills" in the Appendix).
4. Working as a project group itself generated important aspects of personal knowledge (see heading "Development of cross-cultural communication and teamwork skills" in the Appendix).

The evaluation of project outcomes from both the company and student perspectives suggests the symbiotic benefits for both the company and the students involved. The evaluation supports the view that problem/inquiry-based projects within a work context can be a powerful pedagogy and help students to develop knowledge, skills and attributes that are highly relevant to contemporary organisations. Furthermore, it provides insight for universities with respect to the kind of knowledge and skills valued by organisations, which presents a challenge to traditional disciplinary-based curricula in the teaching of business. It is to this challenge, and the ways in which the business *curriculum* (as opposed to *pedagogy*) can be influenced and modified, that the discussion will now turn.

Leveraging the Learning from Work-Based Projects—Invigorating the Curriculum

The case findings present a detailed and granular account of the learning (both skills and knowledge) that students achieved as a result of participating in the company project. The conclusions support the viewpoint (e.g. CBI/Universities UK 2009) that WBL (in its many forms) is something that universities should be engaging with as a way of supporting the business capability of students. However, there is a danger here that universities simply adopt a "bolt on" approach to WBL, perceiving this as a panacea, rather than exploiting this in a more creative way to respond to the criticisms of business education from employers. There are opportunities to leverage the learning from WBL approaches, to inform the business curriculum more generally, and to utilise the knowledge developed in a work-based context to produce a more "business enriched" knowledge base as a platform for student learning. The chief opportunities for curriculum invigoration in this context are described below:

Generating Theory from Practice Often learners are asked to apply theory to practice in WBL situations and reflect on the links. There is evidence that students find this a difficult process to undertake and often alienating in terms of the disjuncture they experience between these two aspects (Little and Harvey 2006); at its starkest students find it impossible to perceive business problems, business issues and business realities in the way their text books describe them. Following the example of grounded theory, there is an opportunity to task learners (via their assignments and reflective accounts of their work-based experiences) with the development of their

own theoretical and conceptual insights by undertaking structured inquiry and sense-making (Weik 1995) whilst engaging with WBL. Given the limited opportunities that may exist to engage in systematic research, such conceptual insights would be provisional, preliminary and formative, but there would be dual benefits from such a task in terms of a deeper understanding of investigative and research processes and the generation of "...mental models, 'propositional knowledge' which enables the creation of new knowledge to solve problems as yet unknown" (Hagen 2008, p. 156).
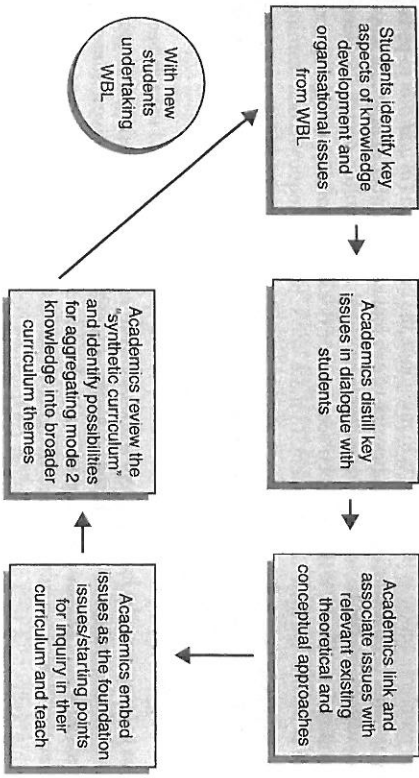
Generating "Live Cases" that Can Be Used in Classroom Learning The case method has attracted considerable criticism in the recent period (see, for example, Mintzberg 2005 and Currie and Tempest 2008). WBL can be leveraged to produce grounded and more realistic cases, which incorporate a genuinely integrative perspective, which can be presented and commented upon reflexively and which reinforce a student centred approach. One way to harness these benefits would be by asking learners who have engaged with WBL to prepare and present a case on a particular curriculum theme (based on their own organisational experience), and to embellish this with "insider responses" as the dialogue within the class develops. This approach offers opportunities to express more than just senior management views of an issue, develop soft as well as hard skills of analysis (e.g. a dialogical approach to knowledge construction and understanding in an organisational context), and re-order power relations in the classroom (i.e. a move away from the teacher as the font of all knowledge, and from the sage on the stage to the guide on the side and the meddler in the middle as a teaching approach).

Using students Who Have Been on WBL to Deliver Class Sessions This is an amalgamation of the two opportunities mentioned above whereby students can deliver learning sessions to their peers on a particular curriculum theme, drawing upon their experiences and the knowledge they generated in an organisational context, with the tutor using this as a knowledge foundation to make links to and synthesise current academic theory and research findings.

Generating a Process Whereby Academics Can Benchmark the Authenticity of What They Are Teaching Bridging the gap between the world of work and the business school curriculum means there needs to be a reflective process undertaken by those with responsibility for curriculum design. The starting point of this process could be an audit or benchmarking exercise, whereby academics use feedback from learners who have engaged in WBL to evaluate the relevance of the topics they teach in terms of importance to contemporary organisations, the realism of what they teach in terms of correspondence with organisational practices and the gaps in the curriculum in terms of what is not being taught. For example, one potential outcome of this process could be that organisations are more interested in the ways in which they can respond to and minimise the impact of the current global economic downturn on their operations compared to an understanding of the macroeconomic causes of economic recessions.

Using WBL Topics and Issues as Foundations of an Ongoing Curriculum Development Process Rather than prioritising and privileging existing theoretical,

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propositional and declarative knowledge, the curriculum can evolve from and be sensitised to the knowledge generated in a workplace environment. A stylised process encapsulating the key aspects of such an ongoing curriculum development is outlined below:

Students identify key aspects of knowledge development and organisational issues from WBL → Academics distill key issues in dialogue with students → Academics link and associate issues with relevant existing theoretical and conceptual approaches → Academics embed issues as the foundation issues/starting points for inquiry in their curriculum and teach → Academics review the "synthetic curriculum" and identify possibilities for aggregating mode 2 knowledge into broader curriculum themes → With new students undertaking WBL

Conclusion

This chapter has suggested ways in which universities and business schools can respond to the perceptions of governments and employers that what they teach is not "fit for purpose" in equipping learners with the knowledge and skills they require to contribute successfully to the organisations that employ them. The principal argument is that the knowledge that is generated in the academy needs to mirror and be linked more to that which is both desired and (re)produced in organisations themselves. Problem/inquiry-based approaches to learning within an organisational context, as part of an academic programme of study, are suggested as a powerful pedagogy in this context.

The case study presented finds that students were able to both generate "new knowledge" for the company involved and gain insights into the process of "new knowledge" generation for themselves, as well as develop skills and attributes important in modern organisations. Specifically, they were able to develop different kinds of business knowledge compared to what they had developed previously in a classroom context; had gained an understanding of the "open" nature of business issues/problems, developed work-related skills (e.g. project management) and

aspects of personal knowledge (e.g. cross-cultural communication skills). In this sense it corroborates other studies in this vein (see, for example, Sas 2009, for a recent example), and provides "fuzzy generalizations" (Bassey 1999) which are seen as a specific feature of case study research. It is recognised that this is an exploratory case (Yin 1994) and, therefore, contains strengths and weaknesses that this mode of inquiry incorporates more generally.

Furthermore, the opportunity to leverage the learning and knowledge generation in problem/inquiry WBL contexts to invigorate the curriculum (*in addition* to pedagogy) has been identified. A framework which includes a number of practical ways in which this can be undertaken by those involved in curriculum design has been outlined. Hitherto, WBL has been seen primarily as a way of supporting learners in skills and attribute development. In these ways, problem/inquiry-based learning in an organisational context has a valuable contribution to make to learner development, but business schools should also reflect on how they can incorporate the knowledge-based outcomes associated with this mode of learning to modify their curricula and make them more business relevant.

Suggestions for further research centre on the operationalisation of the approaches to leveraging the learning from work-based projects suggested, and on the impact on the curriculum reviewed from a variety of stakeholder perspectives: students, academics, organisations, the professions. It will be interesting to reflect on the extent to which curricula can be re-designed in this way and the barriers to progress in this context, as well as stakeholder perspectives on the usefulness of this approach in terms of producing a genuinely authentic business curriculum.

Appendix

Reflections on Personal Learning from Participation in a Student Consultancy Project with a Local Company

Personal objective at commencement of consultancy project	Learning outcome/achievement at completion of project
Gain work experience	"It happened in one sort of way. I thought that the consultancy project was working in the firm and the learning process might be different. The work given was more research based so it meant the project can be done at university…overall the experience was different, but good" (student one). "Q. You mentioned you hoped it would enhance your career path by demonstrating practical knowledge from a real life business project which a company prefers from an applicant when they apply for a job rather than just a certificate…A. Yes, I think is true" (student two). "It has been good to work with a company because it gets you prepared when applying for jobs" (student three)
Knowledge about the industry sector	"The research in the project is more related to a company's specific goals and how a business operates in a marketing environment; how you need to compete, what factors you need to look at. For example, competitor analysis—I had to look through journals and see how competitors appeared in the magazines and how they conveyed their message across…it was definitely a different way of doing things….In normal research we have a topic in mind and we do a research and read about it. This project would be useful for someone who would like to enter a business or someone who would have liked to enter the same field" (student one). "You have responsibility in something that the company requires. In study work the topics have already been written/talked about, e.g. case studies, which you are working on. In this project, you make something on your own which you can contribute to the business; it's up to them if they accept it or not but you can put your point of view across, which is interesting" (student one)
Knowledge of the UK business environment	"UK businesses are quite direct and focused" (student two). "I think other modules we can base on secondary data and academic stuff. In this project, secondary data is used but we had to think in depth and find the data unlike modules which can be academic stuff which you can defend and argue it. In this project you had to get on with the work and do it effectively, in the real situation" (student two). "In a real situation the business culture is quite different, you can't base it by using academic skills, you have to apply it. It's quite different, to argue and back up your ideas" (student two)
Knowledge on the role and use of trade journals in business	"Quite a lot of knowledge" (student one)
Knowledge of B2B marketing	"In this project we had no limitation to the research we were doing because it was marketing and as much information you can gain from the competitors and what the company should do and more discussion on this, the better" (student one)
Development of consultancy skills	"What I have learnt from the project is understanding the goals for the company, getting the message from the company and keeping good communication with them regularly. I have learnt the importance of keeping good work progress—working towards your goal and the timeline of the project" (student one)

Personal objective at commencement of consultancy project	Learning outcome/achievement at completion of project
Development of cross-cultural communication and teamwork skills	"Communication in a professional way is what we learnt during the process" (student one). "Q. Do you think the experience helped you to develop skills to work with people from other cultures? A. I think in terms of culture, for example, Indian people insist on doing something, you have to adapt but sometimes it's hard but my group mates are not so aggressive so it's quite good" (student two). "This project improved my English skills, conversation, presentation and discussions" (student two). "It's quite different because most of the work we discussed and allocated work. In this project we had to sit, think and sometimes we would have to make changes something even though it was a group effort. Whilst in other modules the process was different: discuss, have a meeting and allocate work" (student two). "One of the students there was a language barrier in a sense, so in the beginning it took time to understand. Eventually, since we were working together you try to understand what they are trying to and yes, it was good" (student three). "Since we were all from different backgrounds, there are things like punctuality, taking breaks—people have different ideas. It has worked out quite well, since we worked together before but not for a long project such as this one, so you get to know each others' strengths and weaknesses" (student three)
Report writing skills	"The project is a big assignment to be presented in a formal way which has given me the experience when dealing with companies that the dealings should be formal. I have learnt a lot about formality in the project to be conveyed in the consultancy project" (student one)
Research and analytical skills	"Q. Do you think the project has developed your research and analytical skills in different ways? A. Yes, I think it did because the kind of research done in the project was different to the research done in the masters programme" (student one). "Some people...may have come from a more academic course. It has been good that there is a different opinion though. Some people have been focused on the academic skills and not used it to applying it and they say that 'they haven't learnt anything at all'" (student two). "Q. Do you think it did improve your research and analytical skills? A. Yes, definitely because once you research something you need to understand why the person said that or why the particular topic was researched on. Through this I found out how to analyse some situations so it has helped me and my dissertation work" (student three)
Project and time management skills	"...in a project like this it's important to make progress regularly. This was done according to the timelines we set, we had to fulfil the project requirements within the timeline and timeline was not enough as we had to meet the demands of (the company director) because she had more things for us to do as well" (student one). "Q. Did you think the project improved your time management skills? A. Yes, but not as I expected because we did not have much pressure" (student two). "...we did develop confidence...we set targets in terms of finishing something, during the project we did have a better at managing time, but it took time to realise this" (student three)

Personal objective at commencement of consultancy project	Learning outcome/achievement at completion of project
Knowing the company from an insider point of view	"I would say I gained 50% of what I expected, maybe the reason of this is that we were not involved within the company and the many things the company does and all the aspects we would touch if we were working in the company. We were given a particular task which was done externally, meaning that we were not in the firm, which was fine... Since it was a small company they have limited things to do...if it was a bigger company it would have been a different experience for me...if the project duration was longer then I feel I would have got more of an insider point of view" (student one)
Ability to work under pressure	"Yes, I felt the pressure but as much as working on the project—the scope of this project was huge; we had to do a lot of things and so we had to limit ourselves" (student one). "To be honest, there was not much pressure!" (student two). "...I felt we worked well as a group, under pressure since we had other commitments to do" (student three)
Practical knowledge from a real life business project	"If we were not doing this project and was doing it as part of the a master's programme...we would not have done it as efficiently so we took a different approach; professionally, we learnt professionalism. For example, how to talk professionally when you are doing some business, deals, something about their business" (student one). "Communication in a professional way is what we learnt during the process" (student one). "...for the company report we have to be precise and business-like in what we had to say. In assignments you don't have to really, so the difference was that we had to think more thoroughly. This is because I have not done any professional work before so it was difficult and different for me to think in that context" (student three). "The phone interviews we did with the different magazines, those were good as after a few phone calls we knew exactly what to ask for to get the right amount of information. Also in terms of marketing, as when we first approached the magazines as students and that didn't work at all. Then we approached as label manufacturers, they were asking a lot of questions—what did you do, what's in the next editions and future events and exhibitions. The magazine people even asked for our e-mail address which was good" (student three)
Improving my resume	"For employers to see this...this project has added value to my CV" (student one). "Yes, I think is true" (student two). "I got to know more on how to interact in business terms, basically. To form objectives, what questions to ask and what specific work you need to do—to build my resume in a way, to be specific not 'beating around the bush'" (student three). "...team working as the project was done in a short period of time and also working under pressure. These are some of the things I would mention, as I felt we worked well as a group, under pressure since we had other commitments to do. These things I could put on my CV as it went well" (student three)

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