

Creating Breadth in Business Education Through Service-Learning

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We argue service-learning pedagogy and the associated educational experiences provide a partial solution to the significant problem of narrowness in business education. Service-learning pedagogy seeks to balance academic rigor with practical relevance, set in a context of civic engagement, which furnishes students with a broader and, we argue, richer, educational experience. We present four specific critiques of business education: (1) the business curriculum focuses on functional and discrete rather than cross-functional and holistic knowledge; (2) coursework emphasizes practical problem-solving “tool kits” rather than deep theoretical knowledge; (3) the underlying paradigm of business education views humanity and human interactions in purely transactional terms; (4) the grounding morality of business education asserts the supremacy of shareholder wealth. Based on our collective experience with service-learning, we believe that the pedagogy presents a needed counterpoint to the narrow focus of business education. The four Rs of service-learning: Reality, Reflection, Reciprocity, and Responsibility each yield a broader educational and experience base for students.

Why should business educators¹ in general, and management scholars in particular, care about service-learning? In what follows we argue that service-learning pedagogy provides business and management educators with a tool that can help them resolve a fundamental challenge that business education has faced throughout its history: How to mix academic rigor with practical relevance (Cheit, 1985). On the one hand, critics impale business education for being atheoretical and

lacking academic rigor (Gordon & Howell, 1959) or for being beholden to corporate interests and funding (Gioia & Corley, 2002). Trank and Rynes (2003) go so far as to question the very premise that a business school education counts as professional education, they wonder whether business schools have returned to their atheoretic roots as vocational training schools. Gioia (2002) and Kochan (2002) cite the preoccupation of business schools with the corporate mantra of shareholder wealth as an important contributor to recent ethics scandals. On the other hand, another set of critics argue that business education is too steeped in academia’s rigor and methodologies; thus producing overly technocratic (Mintzberg, 1975), fragmented (Hayes & Abernathy, 1980; Porter & McKibbin, 1988), and pragmatically irrelevant (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002) faculty and graduates. We argue that in balancing the interests of academia and praxis, business schools produce students and faculty members with overly narrow views of business, management, and success.

¹ In this article we use the term *business education* to refer to the broad spectrum of functional and disciplinary coursework undergraduate and MBA students receive in business schools. Business education includes accounting, finance, marketing, operations, and supply chain management. Management education for us represents a subset of business education and includes those disciplines and topics falling under the general rubric of the Academy of Management membership. Thus, management courses include Human Resource Management, Organizational Behavior, Organization Development, Organization Theory and General Management, Strategy, and Ethics or Business and Society courses.

We argue that service-learning pedagogy, and the associated educational experiences provide a partial solution to the problem of narrowness in business education precisely because the pedagogy blends academic rigor with practical relevance, set in a context of civic engagement. We have conducted service-learning courses for over a decade in a variety of formats at our institutions ranging from purely elective service-learning field studies to required service-learning experiences in core courses in both undergraduate and MBA programs. This range of experience over a number of years and a variety of settings has given us some perspective on what makes service-learning in business education both effective and sustainable; it also convinces us that service-learning experiences furnish faculty with a powerful vehicle to broaden the education their students receive.

Service-learning has garnered widespread acceptance in higher education and become a familiar practice across college campuses. One of the reasons for this acceptance is that it has been built upon the strong philosophical foundation of John Dewey's pragmatism; Dewey believed in the "primacy of experience" as a source of learning with the immediacy and closeness of experience to the individual facilitated in an "organic connection between education and personal experience" (Dewey, 1938, quoted in Giles, 1990). Service-learning also fits well with David Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning that models learning as occurring in one of four distinct ways: People learn by *concrete experiences* with the real world, by *reflective observation* of their own (and others') lived experience, by *abstract conceptualization* of theoretical concepts and models (the focus of cognitive pedagogies), and/or by *active experimentation* to discover cause-and-effect relationships or to determine which of many solutions proves viable. In essence, service-learning finds legitimacy in Kolb's model because service-learning pedagogies assume that significant and important learning takes place by the combined processes of abstract conceptualization, concrete experience, and then reflection on that experience.

Jacoby (1996: 5) has provided a more recent working definition of service-learning as "a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development; service-learning combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity change both the recipient and provider of the service." "This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportu-

nities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content" (National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2005). Service-learning proponents argue that important academic and civic skills can be learned best by doing (Bonar, Buchanan, Fisher, & Wechsler, 1996). In our experience and in the management literature on service-learning (c.f., Godfrey & Grasso, 2000), the pedagogy can be woven into curricular objectives in three "typical" ways: (1) service-Learning (little "s", big "L"), where the primary emphasis on academic learning and the service experiences are a "bolt-on" feature designed to complement isolated course objectives (e.g., an introductory OB course that has students work in a homeless shelter to crystallize learning about cultural assumptions and biases); (2) Service-Learning (big "S", big "L"), with a dual emphasis on civic service and academic learning where service experience is tightly integrated into course objectives and the reciprocal and reinforcing relationship between the service experience (which occurs over multiple interactions) and the academic content of the course generates meaningful and enhanced learning (e.g., helping a nonprofit agency develop a strategic plan as part of a capstone strategy class (Davis & Michel, 2000); (3) Service-learning (Big "S", little "l"), where the primary emphasis lies in the community service activity such as in-depth "consulting" experiences that offer students extended exposure and practical experience. In what follows we consider the effectiveness of each service-learning "type" in providing a broad experience that counters an increasingly narrow view of business education. We use the various capitalization schemes of the term service-learning described above to refer to the discrete types. Table 1 further illustrates the three general types and gives examples of each type within management and business education.

NARROWNESS IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

In this section we extend our major contention that business education provides students with a dysfunctionally narrow view of business and their role as employees or managers. To do so we present four specific critiques of business education: (1) the business curriculum focuses on functional and discrete rather than cross-functional and holistic knowledge; (2) coursework emphasizes practical problem-solving "tool kits" rather than deep theoretical knowledge; (3) the underlying paradigm of business education views humanity and human interactions in purely transactional terms; (4) the

TABLE 1
Types of Service-Learning

Type of Service-Learning Experience	Examples
service-Learning (Little "s", Big "L")	
Service experience discrete, not woven throughout course concepts	Introductory OB class organizes local service projects to apply team-based content.
Valuable in large introductory or survey classes with entry-level students when available time outside class is limited	Integrative core students design business activities and donate profits to local charities (Michaelsen, Kenderline, Hobbs, & Fruch, 2000).
	Freshman business seminar uses service projects to introduce students to stakeholder models and business impacts (Lamb et al., 2000).
	Personal finance students spend 5 hours in community service teaching budgeting to low income residents.
	Upper division HR course involves students in performance evaluation design, training design and implementation, or negotiation projects for local not-for-profit agencies (Clark, 2000).
	MBA strategy students help local religious association plan for membership increases, and financial health (Davis & Michel, 2000).
	MBA Leadership students self-design, organize, and implement service experiences to apply leadership skills in highly ambiguous and complex environments (Friedman, 1996).
	Marketing MBA students assist local not-for-profit in developing a targeted fundraising campaign: segmentation, messaging, collaterals, and implementation.
	Executive MBA students work with local "urban core" disadvantaged or minority businesses on specific business issues and projects (Taylor, 2000).
	MBA students help state government establish small business consulting center to assist minority-owned businesses.
	MBA integrative project team helps local utility solve subsidy application and distribution problem for low income families (c.f., Mercer, 1996).
	Upper division accounting students provide VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) for other students and community members during tax season.
Service-Learning (Big "S", Big "L")	
Service experience central to course as it applies several course concepts	
Valuable in capstone courses, integrates learning from several areas. The goal is, in general, to expose students to the type of work professionals engage in within a social issues setting.	
Service-learning (Big "S", little "l")	
Targeted problem-solving focus on organizational, social technical needs	
Valuable as a directed field study to reinforce key curricular concepts. Projects are often expertise-based and entail significant service deliverable or implementation.	

grounding morality of business education asserts the supremacy of shareholder wealth.

Functionalism

Critique one focuses on the curricular shortcomings of business education and has its roots in the academic nature of business education. We argue that current business education inculcates students with an overly constrained knowledge base that is primarily functional in nature; this functional orientation systematically neglects consideration of how different functional elements fit together in the actual practice of business. The higher order work of business professionals entails making judgments and working on issues that span the functional areas of the firm. Students may leave the business school with specialized

knowledge in marketing, accounting, finance, or human resource management but often have little understanding about how the tools used to solve functional problems affect other areas of the firm. The functional orientation is a natural by-product of the academic nature of business education—universities and colleges are organized into departments based on disciplinary groupings; for most universities, control over topical curriculum and individual courses rests with departments. The predominant Research 1 model encourages function-based research and publication, further limiting faculty members' abilities to teach integrative or cross-functional analysis.

Mintzberg and Gosling (2002) buttress our claim as they argue that the contemporary MBA curriculum focuses on the functions of business more than the practice of managing. While they acknowledge

that managers need specialized knowledge, they consider as even more important the need to weave together these functional areas of knowledge into a holistic competence. Mintzberg and Gosling (2002) suggest that the highly amorphous yet prized skill of self-knowledge, or wisdom, can only be found when students (and managers) are exposed to the reality experienced by others, thus bringing insight into their own world. The ideal MBA curriculum would allow ample time for students to surface, discuss, and grapple with the cross-functional, ill-defined, and yet very real issues managers must attend to every day—a far cry from the traditional model of functionally scoped, narrowly defined, and limited “administrative situations” found in most case studies.

This functional narrowness has two negative implications, one for employers and one for business schools themselves. For employers, narrow functional specialization means that business school graduates enter their workplace with a set of skills that prepare them to be entry-level cogs in a machine but leave them bereft of a larger view of organizational forces and imperatives that would help them question and examine business decisions and assumptions and thereby become strategic contributors early in their careers (Hamel, 1996). For business schools, the problem is that our students eventually “get it;” they mature in the workforce and learn that most problems are multidisciplinary and most work cross-functional. This realization often reinforces their impressions that learning in business school is “ivory tower” and “irrelevant” because the tasks of business are so different than they were taught in business school.

“Tool Kits”

Our second critique arises as business schools seek to respond to market pressures by shedding their academic underpinnings. The result is coursework fraught with analytical narrowness where the emphasis lies on superficial problem-solving “tool kits” at the expense of exposure to or understanding of the underlying theoretical drivers that make such tool kits work. Students, particularly MBA students, can become quite adept at solving isolated problems, but quite inept at recognizing how or where particular situations fit into general classes of problems. Further, they have little understanding as to why “tool kits” are constructed the way they are, or often how “tool kits” actually work, beyond entry of numbers into spreadsheets. Trank and Rynes (2003) point to several sources for the rise of this atheoretic analytic emphasis: abandonment of the belief that busi-

ness and management is a profession, complete with its own body of theoretical knowledge, student demands for narrowly focused and immediately relevant courses and training; simplification of business curriculum; a lack of historical grounding; and a focus on business fads and heuristics. Pfeffer and Fong’s (2002) critique of MBA education echoes this theme. They note that having an advanced degree such as an MBA may move the student up the job queue and enhance job-finding prospects, but the analytic focus and content of the degree itself do not necessarily provide or enhance the skills actually required to *perform* jobs effectively (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). In short, tool kits may look nice on the resume but be of marginal value in the workplace.

This phenomenon appears fairly recent but goes back to the original critique of the business school—that it was little more than a glorified trade school lacking any academic underpinnings (Gordon & Howell, 1959; Cheit, 1985). The current iteration of this technical myopia has been linked to the “privatization” and market orientation of business schools (Zell, 2001). As business schools have come to rely more on MBA tuition to finance their operations, and external rankings to both attract the best students and justify their tuition, they have of necessity become more responsive to the needs of those customers (Gioia & Corley, 2002). Business schools also exist in a larger academic world where the now-dominant view is that students are customers (Shelley, 2005).

Acquiescence by faculty to the antipathy of students toward deep theoretical explanations represents one consequence of that market-driven responsiveness. Consider the following accounts, recorded by Zell (2001: 328–29):

Some professors also note on the part of students a decreasing tolerance for theory. One said, “they? [MBA’s] they don’t want to hear the R word—research—forget it. Or the A word—academics.” Another grumbled: “in the MBA program you can’t possibly try to teach any of them complex mathematics. They don’t want to [learn that]. That’s what my students tell me. They want to use Excel and solve an 8 by 8 program . . .”

[Another said] “They want content delivered in a way that the connections to their careers—to their potential roles as managers or consultants or traders on Wall Street or whatever it is they choose to do—is pretty darn immediately clear.”

While much of the focus on immediate relevance provides a strong market test for the value of ideas, there is a strong downside as well. The net effect of a focus on analytical tools but not theory is to produce students who can solve relatively simple, or off-the-shelf, business problems, but who get a deer-in-the-headlights look when faced with a problem that doesn't fit into an easy template, or one that requires mixing and matching different tools from their kit; off-the-rack problems can be solved with ease but customization escapes many students. Further, many important curricular topics may be of little immediate value to students but have value as graduates move away from entry-level positions and toward the executive suite; avoiding theory because it lacks short-term relevance creates a long-term deficit detrimental to personal and organizational effectiveness.

Transactional Focus

Critique three highlights what we view as paradigmatic narrowness in business education—the predominant, yet inherently narrow, transactional view of human and social interactions taught in business schools. The source of this narrowness is academic in nature; beginning with the composition of faculty. AACSB accreditation requires that faculty have terminal degrees in their relevant fields so business schools are long on technical training such as economics, psychology, and engineering and short on humanistic grounding in disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, political science, or literature. The transactional view first appears in micro-economics courses that lay the groundwork by modeling an economy of two entities, firms and consumers, each defined by rigid maximization functions that transact with one another only on the premise of individual gain. Economic theory becomes the backbone of business education (Gioia, 2002), and this early sedimentation of the transactional view (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) sets the stage for the rest of business education: Marketing courses that teach how customer preferences can be more precisely determined in order to increase sales and selling prices; supply chain courses that focus on managing “processes” to maximize the efficiency and profitability of transactions with suppliers and distributors; and finance courses that suggest that all relationships or interactions can (and should) be assessed according to the net present transactional value of those relationships or interactions.

Management education does not escape this paradigm. OB and HR courses often portray the role of motivation as a tool to improve productivity

and effectiveness; strategy courses encourage students to evaluate every transaction or relationship on its potential to contribute to competitive advantage. Even ethics courses often fall victim to presenting ethical behavior in transactional terms (reducing costs of compliance or punishment), or advocating social responsibility as a mechanism of increasing competitive distinction or advantage.

Gioia and Corley (2002) contend that business school administrators have strong incentives to view the world in transactional terms. The objective of curricular redesigns, physical improvements, or staffing changes is often to improve position in national rankings or to garner more donor money for the school. In an environment where business education has become increasingly “privatized” and competitive (Zell, 2001), every action has the potential to better or worsen schools in the all important rankings against competitors and in the fight for donor dollars. Naming a business school, with its attendant endowment or donation, becomes an almost consuming task for deans and development officers. Indeed, the hunt for donor dollars led one business school to “name” the vending machine room to garner a corporate donation.²

A transaction-based paradigmatic view has negative consequences for individuals and societies. For individuals, a transactional approach to life creates its own inertia that may impede the development of deeper human relationships; indeed, taken to its extreme, this view leads to a destructive narcissism and overly materialistic orientation as every action becomes a transaction designed to maximize self-gain and self-love (John Paul II, 1991). For societies, the transactional paradigm undercuts the basis of citizenship, civility, and civic duty. The important notion that some tasks (e.g., providing goods to a local shelter) should be done in spite of the lack of individual benefit, or that some civic obligations (e.g., voting) have the status of duties and cannot be abandoned or skirted simply because they have low transaction value. When only the transactional element of human existence is emphasized, other human purposes such as justice, fairness, compassion, or service are necessarily de-emphasized and occasionally scorned. Finally, in a recent *AMLE* polemic, Ghoshal contends that prevailing management theory has been based on “a set of pessimistic assumptions about both individuals and institutions—a ‘gloomy vision’ that has actively freed

² We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer for bringing this case to our attention.

students from any sense of moral responsibility.” (Ghoshal, 2005).

Shareholder Wealth

While the first three critiques focus on practical shortcomings in business education, our fourth critique is strongly moral in nature: The vision that the moral purpose of business is exclusively to increase shareholder wealth. Kochan (2002: 139) argues that a root cause of recent scandals (e.g., Enron, Tyco) is “the overemphasis American corporations have been forced to give in recent years to maximizing shareholder value without regard for the effects of their actions on other stakeholders.” This market-based morality arises from the abandonment of a long tradition of ethical theory and, as we articulate below, the perversion of foundational economic theories. We agree and resonate with the argument that, as fiduciary representatives of shareholders, managers have moral obligations to work on their behalf. We take issue, however, with the bastardized versions of these fiduciary responsibilities which are silently, yet pervasively, taught in business schools: A manager’s (and by implication an employee’s) sole responsibility is to work for the good of shareholders or owners, as manifested in increasing the stock price or profits.

This morality of business rests on two underlying assumptions: (1) the goal of management is the creation of shareholder wealth, and (2) the resulting relentless “invisible hand” of competition leads to a better life for all. The first argument comes from John Locke’s (Locke, 1690/1988) argument for the primacy of private property rights, while the second draws from Adam Smith’s (Smith, 1776/1965) famous argument that it is the greed, not the benevolence, of the baker and the butcher that create economic well-being for all. Smith and Locke may well roll over in their graves each time their names are invoked to justify these moral assumptions, for both bounded their pragmatic economic and political doctrines within a larger moral system.

In an individualistic world, according to Locke, property and individual liberty exist unfettered by social constraint; however, property and liberty prove difficult to protect, enhance, and enlarge. Recognizing the power of collective social organization to provide the security and stability necessary to enjoy the happiness facilitated by property and liberty, individuals willingly cede some of their independence to a governing body in exchange for the promise of that governing body to safeguard their property and liberty. The state, in

turn, recognizes this voluntary submission and orders itself to protect and preserve individual property. Such is the basis of property rights, of which shareholder rights are a natural extension.

The business school doctrine of shareholder wealth creation omits Locke’s balancing principle: the principle of moderation in the acquisition and exploitation of private property. When individuals appropriate property—whether land, productive assets, or capital, such property ceases to be available for general use. To avoid the exhaustion of public resources, Locke held that each person should only appropriate as much property as he or she could actually use; the rest should be left for others to enjoy. Thus, in his example, one need only remove as many apples from a tree as he or she could eat, but the tree itself should be left for others to enjoy. In terms of managerial obligations to protect and enhance wealth, the principle of moderation argues forcefully that profit making and profit taking must occur in a context that balances the needs of others (society at large) with the apparent and immediate needs of property owners.

Most business school faculty and students are familiar with Adam Smith’s “invisible hand” that produces social welfare and betterment out of self-interested competition. As Smith argues, it is the self-interested behavior, not the benevolent behavior, of economic actors engaging in multiple decisions about resource allocation that optimizes resource use. Paradoxically, all win when each thinks only of him- or herself, such is the miracle of the market. What most business students and faculty do *not* know is that Smith bounded the greed of butcher and baker by strong moral sentiments. For Smith, as for other enlightenment scholars, human achievement was measured by the perfection of the virtuous life, not merely by the acquisition of material goods. Smith’s butcher and baker could engage in self-interested calculations *precisely because* their self interest was naturally bounded by moral sentiments—including sentiments of beneficence and concern for others. As Smith puts it: “[T]o feel much for others and little for ourselves, that to restrain our selfish, and to indulge our benevolent affections, *constitutes the perfection of human nature*; and can alone produce among mankind that harmony of sentiments and passions in which consists their grace and propriety” (Smith, 1759/1984: 25, emphasis added). While the butcher and baker surely worked for their own economic gain, that economic gain would *also* be used to benefit others, not merely enrich their own coffers.

The lack of moral restraint implied by the share-

holder-wealth imperative creates negative impacts for both individuals and society. For individuals, the preeminence of shareholder value can all too quickly translate into the relentless pursuit of personal wealth. The exclusive pursuit of monetary income leads not only to alienation from other social goals and values, but also facilitates the belief that any action can be justified by the slice of the economic pie accruing to an individual. The emphasis on shareholder value as the only end of business may work to create strong socialization and rationalization pressures for unethical behavior (Anand, Ashforth, & Joshi, 2004), and appears implicated in the motivations behind recent scandals such as Enron, Tyco, WorldCom, and Arthur Anderson. For society the effects are similar; only the level of analysis differs. The narrow moral foundation of shareholder wealth creation facilitates the alienation of business from society and an abdication by business of responsibility for social betterment, and further reinforces pressures on individuals and organizations to shade, crowd, or disregard lines of moral behavior in their business activities.

BREADTH THROUGH SERVICE-LEARNING

In the following we make the case that service-learning can provide an antidote to the problems of narrowness we described above. We are not so naïve as to believe that service-learning can, in and of itself, remedy the problems of narrowness in business education. A complete remedy requires directed action aimed at all four areas of narrowness and should include significant cross-functional or integrative projects within the business curriculum; a faculty incentive system that rewards what is taught (e.g., theoretical rigor mixed with relevance) rather than how students perceive their experience (i.e., student ratings); exposure by upper division business students to more humanities-based disciplines such as literature, critical studies, and philosophy; and strong formal courses and informal business school symbols that emphasize social goals beyond shareholder wealth creation. Service-learning pedagogy represents an excellent first step; however, as the pedagogy enjoys legitimacy within the broader academic community (c.f., National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2005), the pedagogy can be initiated through individual faculty effort, and excellent materials exist to help faculty members use the pedagogy effectively (some of these resources are detailed in our conclusion below).

Our experience with the pedagogy leads us to believe, however, that service-learning experi-

ences can offer students poignant lessons about understanding the relevance of community needs, with an impact that far exceeds the minimal attention given these issues in a typical business curriculum, and can, for the vast majority of undergraduate and MBA students, significantly "change the providers [students] of the service" (National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2005). Formal testing by researchers substantiates our belief that service-learning experiences engage students more in the subject matter, in the classroom as a whole, and that it increases both academic performance and critical thinking skills (Astin & Sax, 1998). Our experience has been that 10–15% of students categorically reject service-learning experiences as worthless or irrelevant, 10–15% feel that these experiences match their vision of what business should be about, and the remaining 70–80% of students are willing to take the experiences seriously and that the vast majority of these report tangible benefits from the experience.

The service-learning literature identifies three distinct elements critical for successful service-learning, which we term as the 3 Rs: *Reality*, *Reflection*, and *Reciprocity*. To these three we add a fourth R—*Responsibility*—which we will explain below. In what follows, we describe each element, give examples, illustrate how this element overcomes narrowness in business education, and discuss the impact each R has on the three types of service-learning we outlined earlier. We choose to use anecdotal evidence from our own experiences to demonstrate the impact of these service-learning elements in broadening students' experiences and perspectives. We admit that anecdotes lack empirical regularity and statistical precision; however, they illustrate one of our most important insights about service-learning: The real impact of the pedagogy is best understood by looking at the impact on individual lives (both students and community clients). Our repeated experience leads us to conclude that while service-learning may not be the only solution to the problems of a myopic business education, it can offer compelling and lasting benefits to students.

Reality

Reality here means that service-learning incorporates real and rigorous academic content, and service-learning experiences enhance this academic content by allowing students to apply the content in a real-world setting (Godfrey, 1999). *Reality* also refers to the magnitude of social issues students grapple with; they serve in settings where significant and often intractable social issues such as

poverty, homelessness, hunger, or illiteracy are the focus of activity (Jacoby, 1996). The real moral issues of social justice, human dignity, and individual happiness are at stake in these situations, and the presence of these timeless issues makes service-learning a unique, powerful, and particularly meaningful type of experiential education. Reality also means that students do real work—they don't just make copies or answer phones, but they participate in a meaningful way in working on the underlying issues.

One group of our MBA ethics students saw the harsh realities of trying to work on social problems in a compelling fashion. The group had taken a project to help the local chapter of an international non-government organization (NGO) develop an internal accounting system. While frustrated by demands from the international office and at the same time trying to be attentive to local needs for service and the funding preferences of key donors, the local office wanted to establish a second set of books, sometimes to more accurately portray local transactions, but other times to skirt international rules or keep certain donations private. These students learned powerful lessons about real-world organizational ethics: Questionable behavior and actions often build on the best of intentions; few activities are categorically wrong or right, much depends on context; and outside auditors, consultants, or directors must tread carefully when highlighting areas where abuses could occur but have not yet occurred.

Reality works to counter the curricular shortcoming of a narrow functional focus by putting students in the middle of situations that span functions, cross disciplines, and bring them into contact with multiple stakeholders representing different interests and varied demands. The student group we mentioned earlier not only learned that something as innocuous as an internal budget had deep ethical implications, but also that the budgeting process (within the finance discipline) was inextricably linked with internal organizational policies (strategy), politics, and culture (organization theory), and external activities such as fund raising (marketing), service delivery (operations), and regulatory and stakeholder relations (business and society). Although functionalism may be ingrained in academic and business school reality, educators can build a curriculum that forces students to deal with the broad, complex, and integrated reality of organizational life. Real service-learning experiences represent a powerful antidote to the artificial functionalism of business school.

The power of the exposure to significant social

issues in real organizational settings will naturally vary according to the type of service-learning experience employed by faculty. In the case of bolt-on service-learning experiences, students only have limited interactions with the real world and lack the breadth of exposure, and the repeated number of interactions, that allow the fine-grained texture of organizational reality to become apparent. Tightly integrated Service-Learning experiences maximize *Reality* through broad and repeated interactions with the community client organization and their business issues and allow students to see the multifunctional, multidisciplinary, and multiobjective real world. Finally, expertise-based Service-learning experiences usually don't tie to broad curricular objectives, and while these projects offer students a deep dive in solving specific problems, they may have only limited value for students to gain a broader exposure to various clients, managerial issues, and stakeholders.

Reflection

Not all so-called service-learning experiences produce sustained and integrated learning. Giles (1990) explains that the educational value of experience depends in part on the principle of reflection, which balances the learner's subjective or internal elements and the external or objective elements of the experience. The typical business curriculum helps students strengthen their analytical skills; we seem quite good at teaching how to observe and critique the external-objective elements of cases, whether experiential or prepackaged. *Reflection* provides the internal-subjective component to effective experiential learning and is a critical component of best-practice service-learning (Jacoby, 1996). Reflection forces students to think deeply and write cogently about how the service experience has affected *them*, not only about how their efforts affected the clients or the agency; reflection assists in Dewey's "organic connection" between the experience and the individual.

Reflection focuses on questions such as "What did I learn?" and "How am I different after this experience?" rather than analytical questions such as, "Why did the intervention work?" or "How would we do it differently next time?" Formal reflection tools include student journals, reflective essays, portfolios, and oral interviews. Reflection invites students to make deep, internal links between the experiences they have had, their academic coursework, and their own selves and lives; thus, it works to increase the likelihood that ser-

vice-learning provides education, not merely experience (Giles, 1990; Jacoby, 1996; Kendall & Associates, 1990). Eyler, Giles, and Schmiede (1996) claim that effective reflection includes the 4 Cs: It is *continuous* because reflection is an ongoing part of the course or experience, *connected* because reflection asks students to make explicit links between the academic and service components of the course, *challenging* because reflection invites students to think critically about the issues they confront, and *contextualized* because reflection considers the circumstances and events surrounding the experience.

Godfrey and Grasso's (2000) AAHE monograph contains six descriptions of service-learning pedagogy in action. Each author describes how reflection serves to both reinforce key elements of the service experience and to provide a venue for continued exploration and new learning. Clark (2000) writes about how her HR students gained several valuable insights through the reflection process: a clearer understanding for the role and practical application of HR work and interventions, a deeper appreciation for the dedication of client agency staff to bettering social conditions, a stronger realization of the breadth and magnitude of social problems even in a small college community, and an energizing dose of self-confidence and personal satisfaction about their individual contributions to their community.

Reflection counters the analytical dimension of narrowness, as it gives students the opportunity and requirement to think deeply and blend the external service and academic experiences with their internal attitudes and philosophies, a skill we find lacking in a "tool-kit" driven business education. Good reflection, like a good service-learning course, is not atheoretic. Analysis can help students draw links between theoretical concepts and the external-objective situations that constituted their experience, but reflection also allows them to make connections between theory and themselves. This deep personal connection often has a revealing, yet energizing effect on students: They see that theory actually explains their own experience complete with difficult implications for attitudinal or behavioral change and can provide them with the answers to issues and challenges facing and directly involving *them*.

Each type of service-learning experience can garner the value of reflection in countering analytical narrowness. The jolting difference between "town" and "gown" that students see in bolt-on service-learning experiences can provide ample fuel for meaningful reflection. The longer and deeper exposure to social issues and interventions

that come with integrative Service-Learning and field study Service-learning experiences allow for commensurately deeper reflection. The key for course design is simply to make the length and importance of the reflection vehicle (e.g., journal vs. essay) match the breadth and depth of the experience.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity ensures that both the service recipients and students gain from the exchange (Jacoby, 1996) and means that community agencies or aid recipients should be regarded as partners rather than simply clients. The goal of service-learning is that each party benefits, learns from the other, and teaches the other during the course of the experience (National Clearinghouse for Service-Learning, 2005). Reciprocity stands in contrast to the traditional academic consulting model used in most field studies and many project-based learning experiences, where students presume to possess superior scholarly knowledge which they will employ to rescue the inferior client. Reciprocity means that students and community partners contribute different types of knowledge that work together to reinforce learning and improve performance by both parties. Reciprocity provides an opportunity to deepen the service experience as students become equal and trusted partners, able to see the roots and consequences of social issues with greater clarity as well as the history and mind-set of current interventions.

One of our MBA-level field study service-learning experiences, designed partly to help students learn and apply career development skills, illustrates the power of reciprocity to "change the provider of the service" (National Clearinghouse for Service-Learning, 2005). The team, composed primarily of women, aimed to help women who were victims of domestic violence or neglect and who were forced to leave their homes with children in tow, to be able to effectively write a resume, network for job referrals, and gain confidence through knowledge of basic interviewing techniques. On one visit, students met women in the shelter, some of whom were professionals themselves and many of whom came from upper income groups. Some students were struck with how much in common they had with these women. Through working with these women, the students gained deep insight into the causes, effects, and broad swath of grief, pain, and destruction cut by domestic violence or neglect on personal, family, and community life. These students went out to help the women at the shelter, but the experience they had moved them

from a transactional model of service-delivery to a reciprocal model where each party learned, and taught, valuable life lessons; the students learned about coping and resiliency from these women, while the women learned what they needed to do to make themselves more marketable in the workplace.

When done well, reciprocity places students in a set of relationships that offer a different view of human interaction than the predominant transactional model. The process of well-designed service-learning experiences quickly moves from a unilateral transaction (students helping not-for-profits or socially disadvantaged individuals) to a reciprocal interaction where students and their community counterparts learn from and teach each other. The principle of reciprocity helps students (and community partners) treat each other as equal partners; this equality sets the stage for mutual learning that can help students understand that not all business interactions operate from the rampant paradigm of arms-length business exchanges where individual gains are the primary objective.

Each of the three types of service-learning experiences realizes high value from reciprocity since reciprocity stands as a fundamental principle of effective service-learning praxis. Whether students work with community partners for an hour, a week, a month, or an entire semester, experiences designed in the spirit of reciprocity will provide both students and community partners with ample opportunities to interact rather than merely transact, resulting in mutual respect and learning about what it really takes to manage projects and organizations effectively. Even the briefest of service-learning experiences have the potential to build both conceptual and problem-solving skills in students, exposing them to perspectives that they otherwise would not have. Service-learning consulting projects, with the technical expertise being shared by students, must be carefully monitored by faculty to ensure that the experience does not devolve into a traditional consultant-client transaction, but rather, operates as a true partnership with both parties' needs being met.

Responsibility

Although not formally identified in the literature, we add a fourth R for effective service-learning: *Responsibility*. Responsibility captures our philosophy about professionalism and we believe that business service-learning experiences ought to send a clear message: Because business students have received much (in terms of educational opportunity, skill development, and job opportuni-

ties), much can and should be expected of them in strengthening community life. If social betterment in a capitalistic system depends on noblesse oblige, then the principle of responsibility helps reinforce *oblige*, while traditional business education focuses on *noblesse*. Students are now, and always will be, citizens of their communities (local, regional, national, and global). Responsibility holds that in addition to their wealth-creation goals students should assume the obligations of citizenship; there is a moral imperative for them to use their business skills, talents, and knowledge to better those communities where they live and work. The principle of responsibility moves a service-learning experience beyond an afternoon or a semester with a strong forward-looking component; it follows from reflective questions such as "How am I different because of what I did?" with "How can that different *me* contribute to a better community?" Our principle of responsibility maps onto Giles' (1990) principle of continuity wherein effective experiential education links present experience with future intentions or opportunities.

Although *Responsibility* may sound like something straight out of a Beta Gamma Sigma brochure or smack of political activism, the principle sinks its roots deep in ethical theory. Classical philosophers such as Aristotle (1941) and Cicero (44 BC/1991) viewed ethics as having both a private and public component, with the public component defined by a life working toward betterment of the community. Responsibility indirectly builds on Kant's (1785/1956) first categorical imperative that individuals should act as they would have others act to build a society all would desire to be a part of. The principle draws direct strength from philosopher Martin Buber's (1970) teaching of finding self-fulfillment through helping others, European postmodernist Emmanuel Levinas's (1985) stress on the criticality of considering "the other" in a moral life, and American feminist philosopher Carol Gilligan's (1982) ethic of care.

Business students can be cynical toward, and desensitized against, invocations of the principle of responsibility, after all "B-school is about making money." To address this, we communicate the philosophy of responsibility formally through our course syllabi and course announcements. Interim and final feedback, both written and oral, present an opportunity to question students about, and point out the need for, a sense of forward-looking responsibility. Formal class discussion of the service experience as well as informal, out-of-class discussions serve as other venues from which to articulate and reinforce this concept.

The principle of responsibility stands as a direct

and clear counterpoint to the prevailing rule of shareholder wealth maximization by explicitly grounding students in, and focusing them on, the rights, obligations, and opportunities they have to contribute to "others'" interests, where "others" are not uniquely shareholders. The message of personal, and corporate social responsibility is sometimes a wake-up call to students; some students respond as if they are hearing a foreign language for the first time (hence the need for constant repetition), others see social and community responsibility as a natural extension of corporate responsibility, and a small group treats the message as cool water on a hot day.

One of the authors ran a very intensive service-learning experience in our full-time MBA program. The experience required students to work with community partners in developing and implementing curriculum to help strengthen financial literacy among children and youth in our community. One student wrote the following in a reflective essay about the sense of responsibility he acquired through the project:

When first given this assignment I initially wondered what on earth a project like this had to do with business ethics. However, as the semester progressed, and I got deeper into the project, I realized the following points . . . My observations apply more to the value of the project, how my attitude for this project changed over time, and most importantly how it has changed my plans for the future.

- Busy MBAs, and professionals alike, cannot afford for their own good to disconnect themselves from the rest of society for the sake of the profession, or just because they are "busy."
- Return the favor! Along similar lines of where much is given much is expected, when others invest in our future [the student writes of the subsidized cost of his education], we have a responsibility to invest into others' futures, in essence, passing along the favor.

Both service-Learning and Service-learning models provide moderate opportunities for inculcating the principle of responsibility and countering the morality of an exclusive focus on shareholder wealth. Bolt-on experiences lack the continuity and repetition that allows the message of responsibility to have ample air time; while the abstract principle of responsibility, and the opportunity to highlight it, often becomes obscured by the deep involvement required of students in courses focusing heavily on the deliverable in expert field study Service-learning experiences. Integrated Service-Learning courses maximize oppor-

tunities to share the philosophy of responsibility, as they provide faculty with ample and recurrent opportunities to effectively articulate the principle and students with enough exposure to settings where their work makes a difference to allow the message to sink in.

In the above we argue that service-learning can provide a needed antidote to the narrowness prevalent in B-schools. Table 2 offers a summary of how each service-learning element helps overcome the problems of narrowness in business education, considered within each type of service-learning. Our discussion has matched a central element of service-learning pedagogy with one dimension of narrowness in business education; while each R clearly acts directly on its corresponding dimension, our experience is that there is both overlap and synergy among the Rs: Reality begets Reciprocity; Reflection reinforces Responsibility, and so on. While each R counters narrowness along particular dimensions, when instructors combine the four Rs in well-designed service-learning courses, the synergy among the Rs provides students with a robust and meaningful set of experiences that can, for their limited "weight" in the curriculum, significantly broaden students' educational breadth and attendant attitudes.

CONCLUSION

Our experience highlights an important observation. Countering the prevalent narrowness of business education through service-learning necessarily requires that the pedagogy be effectively implemented. We conclude our essay with a brief discussion of resources available to faculty, and of practices to enhance their ability to effectively implement service-learning pedagogy.

Business faculty members wishing to incorporate a service-learning component into their courses should not feel that they are without support or resources. At the highest level, most colleges and universities belong to Campus Compact, whose founding mission is to promote service-learning and civic engagement on U.S. college campuses. Many universities, such as Montana State University, have incorporated service and community engagement into the formal mission; MSU business faculty members can rely heavily on the university-wide mission statement to reinforce their efforts in the classroom and with their faculty colleagues (Lamb, Lee, Swinth, & Vinton, 1998).

Many major colleges and universities have a service-learning center or office where faculty can go to get support, instruction, and resources for

TABLE 2
Types of Service-Learning and Their Effects

Value of Service-Learning Element on B-School Narrowness					
Type of Service-Learning Experience	Reality/Functionalism	Reflection/"Tool-Kit" Mentality	Reciprocity/Transactional Bias	Responsibility/Shareholder Morality	
Service-Learning (Little "s", Big "L") Service experience discrete, not woven throughout course concepts	Moderate Lack of in-depth contact and exposure attenuates breadth of exposure.	Moderate Tailored reflection helps develop broader thinking, but service is not tightly linked to course objectives.	Moderate or High Experiences can allow meaningful interactions with agency and clients.	High Students may make strong connections to community stakeholders but relevance may be compromised.	
Service-Learning (Big "S", Big "L") Service experience central to-course as it applies several course concepts	High In-depth contact over time allows complex problems to emerge.	High Significant reflection allows for exploration of multiple impacts and issues.	High Sustained contact helps develop sharing of knowledge/expertise by all.	High Significant and compelling community issue coupled with investments of time, energy, facilitates lasting focus on broader goals.	
Service-learning (Big "S", little "l") Targeted problem-solving focus on organizational, social technical needs.	Moderate or High Contact may be in-depth and over time, but can be quite narrow.	High Reflection and experience itself invites deep connections between tools and theory.	High or Moderate Knowledge sharing among partners may not occur, or project can have too tight a focus.	Moderate Understanding of client's needs are limited and may be lost in focus on technical details.	

designing and implementing service-learning pedagogy. Exemplary centers are found at the University of Utah, the University of Washington, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Portland State, and Boise State University. For faculty on campuses without such centers, we have found the directors of these centers quite willing to share best practices and knowledge. Campus Compact has published a tool kit for faculty which provides an introduction to service-learning as well as resources and readings available at the Campus Compact Website: www.compact.org.

For faculty who wish to implement successful service-learning experiences, we have found that the following four factors seem to contribute most to successful and sustainable service-learning efforts: Centrality, Commitment, Community Engagement, and Continuous Improvement. When service-learning activities are *central* to a course—that is they tie specifically to course objectives, which can be done in all three types of service-learning—the payoffs of the activity exceed the costs of implementation. Centrality also means that the social and ethical issues inherent in the service-learning experience will be reviewed and discussed in the course. The pedagogy works extremely well when civic engagement is also central to a faculty member's research or university service activities. Service-learning experiences thus provide faculty members with an effective and meaningful way to multitask.

Service-learning pedagogy requires a strong personal *Commitment* on the part of faculty to the underlying philosophy of civic engagement or social involvement by individuals and businesses. This commitment provides the needed momentum to persist long enough to overcome the personal learning curve involved and long enough to see students realize the positive value of service-learning. Service-learning experiences will not be effective if faculty members do not invest the time to properly structure and scope the service involved or to provide meaningful feedback on student assignments and reflection. Given the amount of time, energy, and work involved, the faculty member's role is truly pivotal to a meaningful service-learning experience. A recent study of faculty who do service-learning (McKay & Rozee, 2004) indicates that those faculty who are most effective and consistent in teaching service-learning are those who adhere to values and beliefs about civic responsibility and engagement strongly enough to take the risk to test and adopt service-learning pedagogy despite resistance from colleagues and lack of support within the campus community.

Although most faculty members do not have

much experience in setting up community partnerships, *Community Engagement* is a critical link in the chain of implementing and sustaining service-learning in a course. Service-learning requires going beyond ordering textbooks, selecting cases, and designing evaluation instruments. It requires building relationships of trust and understanding with community agencies and service recipients that transform the relationship from one of task accomplishment to one of partnership and mutual gain. Interaction and follow-up help ensure that such experiences proceed as planned, that adjustments in scope or mission are doable and appropriate, and that related deliverables actually add value.

Effective service-learning practitioners engage in *Continuous Improvement and Self-Reflection* to adjust their vision and implementation of the service-learning experience in response to feedback from both students and community partners. Some experiences don't produce expected gains, while others produce outcomes that can surprise and delight the most hardened cynic. Thoughtful reflection helps faculty members identify key success factors, failure indicators, and other process or content signals that improve both the efficiency and quality of service-learning experiences over time. Indeed, reflection is a central tenant in the *Principles of Good Practice in Combining Service and Learning* (Honnet & Poulsen, 1989) and provides the key link between "serving" and "learning" for faculty as well as students.

Service-learning is neither a simple nor a cost-free pedagogy, as we have learned. Our experience has taught us that service-learning can improve and broaden our students' managerial understanding and skills and application of technical knowledge; service-learning has the potential to instill within students a stronger sense of civic engagement and moral responsibility; and finally, service-learning connects us, as faculty, to individuals in our community who can use our help and from whom we can learn. This last element of service-learning continues to provide us with a deep sense of satisfaction and energizes us to continue this important work.

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