Do Teachers of Management "Practice What They Preach"?

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This paper reports on the teaching of management units and examines the teaching practices inline with the management and in particular the leadership and motivation techniques and theories that are taught in these units. The theory challenges the notion that many management academics "Practice what they Preach". In a dynamic environment that cries out for Transformation Leadership, Transactional management is often the norm. The findings highlight that academics especially management executive academics do "Practice what they Preach" and this counters the argument by some Theory 'X' academics that students have an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if they can. Leading to the only way to get most students to work and study is they must be coerced, controlled, directed, threatened with punishing with bad marks or failure. (McGregor 1960 p34)

Field of Research: Management: Towards successful management teaching.

1. Introduction

Teaching, like management is all about human beings. Few service industries in the world would be so people orientated as education. Yet, often the teaching techniques we employ are the very techniques that we don't recommend to students of business and management. Weberian bureaucratic techniques are seen to be extremely efficient in our universities and are often the norm, yet we extol the virtues of Post Modernism. (Morgan, G. 1997) We implore our students to become Theory 'Y' managers, but many teachers adopt a Theory 'X' attitude towards their teaching practises. *(McGregor 1960)* This paper looks at the various management theories and techniques that are taught to business and management students and compares and contrasts them with the teaching methods that are used to pass on that knowledge.

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2. Literature Review

Successful managers don't fit into a mould. Managers can be found from eighteen to eighty, from every colour, creed or gender. (Robbins, Bergman & Stagg 1997 p5) Teachers are no different. Good teachers inspire students to become the leaders in tomorrow's world. However, poor teachers like poor managers can alienate students resulting in them leaving. This attrition rate of so many university students exacts a high price - in dollars, in missed opportunities, and in human lives. (Erickson, Peters & Strommer 2006) Even though students are largely responsible for their own success in university, poor customer service accounts for 72 percent of student attrition. With dropout students stating that teachers do not give a damn about them, they feel they don't fit in or they have issues with the university staff. (Raisman N. 2007).

Neal Raisman (2007) offered a different way of thinking about the student-institutional relationship. Unlike many teachers who believe that students are the inputs, the teachers are the transformers and the final product is a qualified person or the contrary view that students are actually customers since they contribute to the cost of their education. He stated that: "Students aren't customers – they're clients," he said. "It's very much like a doctor-patient relationship. The doctors are there to give you the best information, direction, and advice they can to help you be stronger and to help you meet your needs". The writer agrees with Raisman to a certain extent, but believes the relationship, rather than a doctor, is more that of a high class gym instructor, personal manager or career coach.

Whatever metaphor you use it does appear that we need effective teachers/instructors/managers to inspire students to attain their higher goals. Teachers, like senior managers have intelligence, imagination and knowledge as essential resources, but only effectiveness converts them into results (Drucker 1967). The writer believes that teaching effectiveness can be learned and that students, even in larger units can be inspired and motivated by using a Theory 'Y' teaching attitude combined with good basic management roles of planning, organising, leading and controlling techniques.

Almost fifty years ago Douglas McGregor was telling the world about Theory X and Theory Y managers. He contended that Theory X managers (or teachers) believe that *"The average human being has an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if they can" and "because of this human characteristic of dislike of work, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of organizational objectives"* (McGregor 1960 p33-4). Theory X practitioners would embrace the Scientific Management theories of Fredrick Taylor who believed that workers are like the stereotypical old soldier who must be strictly controlled or they would be lazy and that the only way to get workers to produce was by the use of monetary incentive schemes.

Max Weber shared Taylor's ideals and he was a big advocate of division of labour, hierarchies, strict rules and impersonality. His Bureaucracy Administration model was popular in Germany in the 1930s and early 1940s. One of the most successful Theory X types was Henry Ford. (Waddell, Devine, Jones & George 2007) His division of labour and production line methods revolutionised the working world, so there is no question that Theory X methods can work, but could it have been better if some of his production line methods were combined with a Theory Y method of dealing with people.

Transactional Leadership is another form of Theory X management style. It is another form of Taylorism that is all about the division and measurement of work and rewarding against those criteria. It works well in the short term, monetary rewards are usually a good motivation method in the short term, but it soon loses its appeal once people become used to their increased earnings. (Waddell et al 2007) Likewise giving students high marks for easy tasks fails to motivate or stimulate students in the long run and in fact can de-motivate high achieving students who feel their course or unit is being devalued.

Theory X followers use the following power over their students-Legitimate, Information, Reward and Coercive Power. Although they can get compliance from their workers or students, they often get resistance. (Waddell et al 2007) Teachers who use these methods rarely bring out the creative abilities of students and although they will get similar results to other teachers it may be hard work for everybody involved.

However, Theory Y followers use Reward, Expert and Reverend Power to get compliance, but more importantly engender commitment from workers or students. (Waddell et al 2007) A committed class of students will usually out perform a class of resistant or compliant students. McGregor's Theory Y practitioners believe that, *"The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or rest"* and that *"External control and the threat of punishment are not the only means for bringing about effort towards organisational objectives. Man will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of objectives to which they are committed"* (McGregor 1960 p47).

These Theory Y humanist ideas are not new; back in the 1920's Mary Parker Follett was one of the first 'Theory Y' management style theorists. She argued that managers should allow workers to participate and exercise their initiative and then they will make a greater contribute to the organisation.

Henri Fayol the great French management practitioner of the early 20th century was a Theory Y manager. Although 'Division of Labour' was the first and 'Esprit de corps' was the last of his 14 principles of management, one gets the impression that he did care about people and thought about his workers as humans and not just part of the production machine. (Waddell et al 2007)

Elton Mayo was onto the Theory Y line of thinking when his Hawthorne experiments discovered that workers' attitudes towards their managers affected their level of performance. Dale Carnegie used similar leadership principles to McGregor in his 1930s leadership courses.

The writer believes transformational leadership is another form of McGregor's Theory Y, and when used in teaching can inspire and energise students to solve problems and strive for high performance. The majority of modern day management theorists such as Robert House are Theory Y believers and post modernism management is taking Theory Y to the next level. *(McGregor 1960)*

3. Methodology and Research Design

The research aimed to investigate the activities related to management techniques and teaching principles. It uses a review of the literature on teaching and management theories with a reflective case study of successful businessman turned academic, John McElvaney. John was a former director of several companies and a founding fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors Association. In recent years John has been a very successful lecturer at Deakin University and winner of awards for his teaching excellence. His teaching activities have included Operations Management, Strategic Management, Organisational Theory, Organisational Behaviour, International Business and 1st Year Management.

Many of the Australian universities benchmark themselves against the leaders in the Course Experience Questionnaires (CEQ) (Ramsden 1991) of graduating students in Australia. Deakin University is no exception and uses the Student Evaluation of Teachers and Units (SETU) as their internal method of measuring the effectiveness of teaching on units on a cohort by cohort basis. (Deakin University 2008) Teaching methods using the basic management roles of planning, organising, leading and controlling will be examined in this paper with a special emphasis on leading and motivating in the class room.

4. Discussion of Findings

John's work in progress qualitative research at this stage indicates that many teachers who gain very high SETU scores at Deakin University are more likely to be inspirational teachers, teaching smaller non-core units (up to 200 students). In the past, the larger compulsory core units (up to 2000 students) were mainly taught by part time and new teachers. These large units usually taken by 1st year students are likely to have much lower SETU scores. The reasons for this have not yet been determined, but the need to use Taylorism principles to manage such large units could be a factor. Since students are required to do compulsory units that are not of their choosing, Theory X management principles are sometimes used by teachers to coerce students to do their work.

Some of the findings and recommendations using the basic management roles of Planning, Organising, Leading and controlling management roles with McGregor's Theory Y in teaching business units are below.

Planning

The findings highlight the importance of good planning of each facet of the unit's curriculum. Making sure that we can clearly articulate the objectives of management units so that students 'understand what they are being taught' (Biggs 1999 p23) should be the basis when formulating curriculum objectives.

Biggs (1999 p49) says, as part of the planning stage we should be asking "what should our students be able to do intellectually, physically or emotionally as a result of the learning in that unit". However, he believes that most teachers use the 'Transmission Model' and see their job as only delivering truths about the discipline. Using this Theory X or scientific method of teaching can lead to much criticism about the relevance of business schools' courses. (Bennis & O'Toole 2005).

As in a normal business, the unit being taught should have a mission that dovetails into the overall vision of the organisation. Theory Y practitioners promote the vision. Hence, in the vision for Deakin University to be 'Relevant, Responsive and Innovative" then the unit being taught should also have similar goals in their mission and unit objectives. All teachers, especially new and part time teaching staff and students in that unit should be fully aware of the unit goals and the plans for achieving those learning objectives at the commencement of the semester.

Organising

Recruiting and training sessional teachers, room selection, organising suitable class times and technology coordination are vital issues in the organising phase of managing a unit and these areas are explored in this case.

The teaching of Management in universities is usually a core subject in Business, Commerce or MBA degrees. Yet, often academics who teach management have little practical management experience and teach from a purely theoretical prospective. That's fine in most cases because, after all, universities are not trade schools but there to give students insights into the macro theoretical side of the discipline and not concentrate on the practical micro or 'how to' side. The theoretical approach however, conflicts with the goal of some universities and their students to be 'Job Ready'.

The accepted better way to balance the theory and the practical approach is to use executive professors/teachers (especially in tutorials) who have had management experience and knowledge. (Clinebell & Clinebell 2008). Fortunately, good unit coordinators can usually organise to employ these types of teachers, because there is a large body of part time executive

academics that are willing, for reasons other than money, to assist with the teaching of management and business subjects. However, research indicates that we do not train and motivate part time teachers to achieve the highest teaching standards our students expect. (Gappa & Leslie 1993)

The writer is conducting ongoing research into these issues and he believes it is very important that part time teachers are treated in such a way that they are motivated by intrinsic goals to deliver the best quality teaching.

Good managers would not accept substandard facilities for their workers, neither should a unit coordinator/teacher accept inadequate lecture theatres or tutorial rooms for their tutors or students. Organising the right facilities at the optimum teaching time is also vital for the running of the subject. Accepting time slots for undergraduate lectures at 8 am on a Monday or 5 pm Friday for instance will more than likely result in poor attendance and high failure rates. Good managers strive to get the best technology available to help their employees do a better job, so too should a unit coordinator. The right textbook, powerpoint slides, computer programs, publisher's website resources, DVDs, videos, testbanks, lecture recordings, business simulation games, student communication systems and many other technical aids are available to give flexibility and enhance the understanding of the subject matter and are all fully utilised by the better teachers.

The standard university under graduate lecture can be boring, so setting the right mood for the lecture helps to get students into the right frame of mind. The writer uses songs and video clips whilst the students are settling themselves into seats in the lecture theatre. Songs such as the following are played; *Imagine* by John Lennon (1971) at the commencement of the semester. *Eye of the Tiger* by Survivor (1982) before lectures on Strategy. *Always look on the Bright side of life* by Eric Idle (1979) before lectures on Attitudes and *Don't worry be happy* by Bob Marley (1977) played prior to the final revision lecture etc.

It is likely that even though the students are in the right frame of mind to pay attention to the content of the lecture, attention will wane after 20-25 minutes. A different tactic needs to be employed to reclaim their attention. The writer uses short video or DVD clips that are directly relevant to the lecture topic and between 4-10 minutes long can be successfully used at this stage. With online facilities such as "Youtube", finding suitable and relevant material to use as boredom breakers is now quite easy. Other monotony breakers such as asking questions, small group exercises and going through the latest news on the topic can be used. This is also the ideal time to ask if any of the students have any questions regarding the content of the lecture so far. After this stage the students should be more engaged with the topic and alert enough to want to hear the remaining 20-25 minutes of the lecture.

The careful organising of the lecture and how much time you will be spending on each point is essential for a successful lecture. Having to miss important sections because teachers ran out of time or finishing too early because

lecturers just stood behind the lectern and recited the words from the PowerPoint slides is the sign of a poorly organised lecture.

Leadership.

Leadership of the unit will ultimately determine the success of the management unit and Theory Y leaders use a combination of Reward, Expert and Reverend Power to get compliance but more importantly commitment from workers or students. A committed class of students will usually out perform a class of resistant or compliant students.

Robert House's Path-Goal Theory and expectancy theory, says that we need to find out what our workers or students are trying to obtain from the job, unit or course. According to Bette Erickson, Calvin Peters and Dianne Strommer in 2006: 1st year American university students want to learn more about the things that interest them (77%), to get training for a specific career (75%) to gain a good general education and appreciation of ideas (65%) to prepare for more advance study (57%)

Teachers should reward subordinates or students for high performance and goal attainment with awards, recognition, personal letters and a minimum of personal emails to students who perform well.

Teachers should clarify the paths to goal attainment for subordinates or students and remove any obstacles to high performance and express confidence in their abilities. Help can be given in the form of library assistance, access to data, stock market reports, past analysis, show copies of the best assignments for previous classes.

To briefly summarise the writer's thoughts on leadership in teaching utilising ideas from Douglas McGregor (1960), Dianne Waddell (2007) Dale Carnegie (1936), Peter Drucker (1967), Ken Bain (2004), Erickson et.al. (2006), Clinebell and Clinebell (2008) and many of the authors mentioned on the references page the following could be used;

T= Targets.

E=Encouragement

A=Achievement.

C=Culture

H=Happiness.

T= Targets.

Develop the curriculum targets and mission by finding out what should our students be able to do intellectually, physically or emotionally as a result of the learning in that unit" and what our students are trying to obtain from the task, unit or course. We should clarify the paths to goal attainment for subordinates or students, Build bridges not obstacles to high performance and express confidence in their abilities. Give them whatever assistance is available such as copies of the best assignments from previous classes, data analysis reports etc. to show the high standards that are expected of them.

E=Encouragement.

Smile. Begin lectures and tutorials in a friendly way. Be optimistic and have an 'always look on the bright side of life' attitude. Remember their names, (the writer has photos of students in his tutorial register and also above his office desk to ensure he easily remembers students' names). Encourage people to talk, ask questions, be a good listener and avoid giving direct orders. Use emotional intelligence and dress for the occasion. Get students in the right mood and frame of mind. Always be supportive and approachable. Be empathetic and empower them to make their own decisions.

A=Achievement.

Arouse a desire in students to achieve success by appealing to their nobler motives and throwing down a challenge. Talk about the University's past students who have achieved success. Give students high expectations and a class reputation to live up to by giving them the best examples from previous classes.

C=Culture.

The classroom culture should always be non-threatening, supportive and empowering. Control should be by peer culture methods and never coercive. Don't directly criticise or complain to students. Never say 'You're wrong" but respect the students' opinions and always avoid arguments. Talk about your mistakes before you indirectly bring attention to student's mistakes. Use encouragement and make their mistakes seem easy to correct. When you are wrong admit it and apologise for your error.

H=Happiness.

Make them happy by rewarding them for their achievements. Give praise and honest appreciation for the slightest improvement, Make them happy with the things you suggest, dramatize ideas and better still let them feel the idea is theirs. Use group work in tutorials extensively to give students an opportunity to network and be able to voice their personal opinions about the topics being taught. Let the students know why you are passionate about the unit you are teaching. Give academic and character references to capable students.

Control

Provided the teachers are able to anticipate the problems early in the planning and organising stages, feed-forward control of the unit is minimised. Good leadership minimises the need for concurrent control. Feedback control is done using standard record keeping in tutorials. (Waddell et al 2007) Monitoring of marks is important to highlight at risk students and high achievers who need rewarding. Good class room culture is extremely important and the techniques to develop self managed teams capable of producing innovative management solutions should be highlighted. Identify the natural leaders amongst the students and get them on your side early in the semester, for they can exert positive peer pressure on the other students. So, control by culture is the most favoured in this instance. Performance measurements are still important in the control process and should be closely measured to ensure that efficiency, quality of the unit, responsiveness to students and innovation of teaching methods are meeting or exceeding the targets set by the teaching staff and university.

5. Conclusion

Investigating how successful teachers of management subjects perform is vital to the on going success of Australian universities as providers of world class quality education. Students often comment that they want to be taught by academics who really know what they are talking about and executive academics with extensive industry experience on average obtain higher student evaluation scores. However, by practising 'What they Preach' all academics can become better teachers. It can be argued that inspirational teachers follow Douglas McGregor's Theory Y of management when they teach their management students. However, further research is needed into the teaching of business in our universities and this work is a very small step towards it. More and more part time staff are being used to teach in the world's universities and further research into the training and motivation of part time teachers is needed to ensure that the quality of university education can be continuously improved.

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