

Title

Creatively leveraging the power of story through Métissage to honor both heritage and reinvention.

Abstract

Métissage is a creative teaching method to support inquiry that interweaves personal stories. It is “a way of merging and blurring genres, texts and identities; an active literary stance, political strategy and pedagogical praxis” (Chambers, Donald, and Hasebe-Ludt, 2002, para. 1). This interactive, experiential session will invite participants to create their own Métissage by drawing upon their stories and ideas around reshaping management education and then explore the collective commonalities and differences that emerge to dialogue deeply around radical possibilities for reshaping education. Management educators will leave with a classroom learning tool and approach that can be used immediately.

Keywords

Experiential, storytelling, teaching tool

Activity Introduction

Narrative Métissage is a creative teaching method that interweaves personal stories and supports the co-construction of knowledge about self, others, and the world. It is “a way of merging and blurring genres, texts and identities; an active literary stance, political strategy and pedagogical praxis” (Chambers, Donald, & Hasebe-Ludt, 2002, para. 1). Narrative Métissage moves from expressing individual stories to becoming “a means of conveying truths about the human condition” (Furman, 2006, p.138). In this sense, it acknowledges both the individual and the collective, and supports the complex and often messy unfolding of our shared humanity.

Considering how to reshape Management Education, educators can support students by creating a space where students can speak about their own experiences and at the same time interconnect with others to see how individual stories also create a collective community story. Furthermore, utilizing Narrative Métissage, educators enable students to recognize and challenge personal assumptions and ways of viewing the world. As well, it offers that ability to explore “the complex and intersecting axes of identity, power, and privilege” (Clover et al, 2017, p. 25) and/or a variety of other topics to deepen authentic dialogue and consider radical possibilities for change. This tool can be adapted and applied across various settings, such as undergraduate, graduate, cross-denominational and traditional classroom courses.

Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications

Narrative metissage and education honour the relational interaction between and among human beings (Josselson, 2013; Ospina & Uhl-Bien, 2012). As well, a pathway is employed in which “The central concern is not how narrative as text is constructed, but rather how it operates as an instrument of mind in the construction of reality” (Bruner, 1991, pp. 5–6). To capture the richness of students’ life experiences, educators can invite them to share their stories with each other. This approach allows educators to step beyond their own knowledge of the classroom content and to more fully explore the meaning that students make of their life and work experience. As Riessman (1993) asserted, “Nature and the world do not tell stories, individuals do. Interpretation is inevitable because narratives are representations” (p. 2). Individuals tell stories, and as Gergen (2000) noted, “Researchers now seek means of extending the platform of admitting more voices to the conversation, and generating understanding through exposure to the first-hand accounts of people themselves” (p. 95). Therefore, Narrative metissage offers an opportunity to both equalize and broaden the voices that are heard in the classroom environment.

The juxtaposition of multiple narratives through the process of Narrative Métissage can also support an intersectional analysis of identity, power, and privilege (Etmanski, Weigler & Wong Sneddon, 2013). Intersectionality is a concept that attempts to address the multiplicity of complex dynamics embedded in human relationships, organizations, and global social structures, as well as the oppressive or enabling circumstances to which these dynamics give rise. It is defined as “the interweaving of oppressions on the basis of multiple social identities as well as marginalization that [is] both relational and structural” (Moosa-Mitha, 2005, p.62). Narrative Métissage has the potential to be a powerful method for expressing intersectionality in practice insofar as it demonstrates the intersections and divergences of one person’s story from another’s. Likewise, a variety of other topics can be explored to deepen authentic dialogue and consider radical possibilities for change.

Overall, the facilitators highlight a collaborative approach towards adult learning and education which involves such things as social constructivist (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Gergen, 2000) approaches to knowledge co-creation, emergence (Scharmer, 2007), transformation (Norris, Barnett, Basom & Yerkes, 2002), compassion in uncertain times (Wheatley, 2006; 2005) and learning through the arts (Boal, 1979; 2006 ; Brookfield, 2002; Clerkin, 2015; Clover & Stalker, 2006; 2007; Etmanski, 2014; Snowber, 2012) which contributes to effective teaching and learning in the field of management.

Learning Objectives

- Explore the concept of reshaping management education through an arts-based classroom learning tool
- Interconnect with others to see how individual stories also create a collective community story.
- Engage in radical conversations around creatively leveraging the power of story through Métissage to honor both heritage and reinvention.
- Understand and experience a classroom learning tool and approach that can be put to immediate use.

Exercise Overview

- Welcome & Overview (15 mins)
- Metissage reading as example (15 mins)
- Participant Writing of their Metissage (15 mins)
- Story Weaving & Participant Presentations (15 mins)
- Debrief (30 mins)

Debriefing guidelines are as follows: First, participants will be invited to pair up and share their initial reactions and thoughts (“Turn to person next you and share one thing that struck you or that you noticed?”) After a few moments, they will be invited to engage in a group conversation around: What? So What? What now?

Potential specific questions that will be asked in the debrief are:

- What came up for you either personally symbolically?
- What themes, either in individual stories or collectively, did you see?
- Did you notice any anomalies?
- What could this mean to you, either around themes or anomalies?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Did anything confirm what you currently are thinking about reshaping management education?
- What was the difference between hearing our story and telling your own story that gives you insight into reshaping management education?
- What do you see are the radical possibilities in how you might apply this tool in the classroom?

Regarding logistics, we, the facilitators will bring extra pens, paper and a resource handout. This workshop can be done with small or large groups.

Session Description: Activity/Exercise

In this 90 min interactive session, participants will employ the innovative arts-based practice of Narrative Métissage to develop, engage in, and share their vision for co-creating more holistic and inclusive education. The session will begin by cultivating a safe space for exploration, vulnerability, and discovery. We will then offer an introduction and overview of both Intersectionality and Narrative Métissage. Following this overview, participants will have the opportunity to craft their own stories about inclusive (and exclusive) practices in education, as well as their vision and/or radical desires for transforming education.

Participants will work together in small groups to create their own Narrative Métissage, where stories will be woven together and then spoken aloud. After the presentation of these interwoven stories, participants will explore individual and collective themes emerging from the readings and engage in conversations around transforming education. Participants will also explore how the practice of Narrative Métissage can be engaged or adapted as a tool and practice in cultivating more holistic, inclusive education in their own contexts.

Application to Conference Theme

The tool of Métissage offers a place for reflective journaling and the topic prompt will explore people's past, present and future possibilities around reshaping management education with colleagues. The experiential activity used in this workshop is also easily adapted for multiple topics and purposes within the classroom.

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