

1. Session Title: Crossing the bridge from knowledge to action - developing facilitation techniques to create intrapersonal change.
2. Abstract (100 word maximum)

Knowledge is available at the click of a keyboard; however, we propose that beyond supporting students to build skills in evaluating the veracity of the 'knowledge' that is freely available, the teacher's role is to support transformation as a person, not just know more, but to call for change to equip the students both with the skills but also the mindsets needed to take meaningful action. In this session, we explore how to facilitate students to bridge the 'knowing-doing gap' to be able to act in a manner that supports the development of a more sustainable and ethical world. By exploring the type of teacher you are and wonder questioning technique, teachers can shift to facilitating change in mental models of students to support action in their world.

3. Three Keywords

Knowing-doing, ethics, wonder questioning

Introduction:

University education continues to evolve, from its earliest iterations where knowledge sharing and giving was the primary role as a result of knowledge being a scarce resource (when literacy and access to printed books were the exclusive domains of the clergy and wealthy). Today, as universities respond to societal changes and needs, they have moved beyond knowledge hubs to solution hubs dealing with societies grand challenges (Benner et al 2022). At the same time, access to knowledge has increased with the introduction of the internet some 30 years ago (1993) and more recently ChatGPT. In this session, we explore

how to facilitate students to bridge the ‘knowing-doing gap’ to be able to act in a manner that supports the development of a more sustainable and ethical world. Through a defined questioning technique, students are able to shift their mental models to enact the change they aspire to in their world.

As a result of societal changes and needs, the role of the teacher in universities has evolved significantly. With access to knowledge at the click of a keyboard, we propose that beyond supporting students to build skills in evaluating the veracity of the 'knowledge' that is freely available, the teacher’s role is to make transformational learning easier, that is to transform as a person, not just know more, going beyond facilitating knowledge transfer and calling for change to equip the students both with the skills but also the mindsets needed to take meaningful action. In this way, the teacher builds transformational learning experiences whereby the student ultimately behaves differently and takes actions upon ethical and sustainability issues.

The number of students undertaking business programs (both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels) continues to grow (Universities Australia 2020). These programs are often seen as a means to gain better employment opportunities in an ever increasingly competitive business environment (see for example Chao, Hegarty, Angelidis and Lu 2017). As ever-increasing numbers of future business leaders are educated in the ‘hallowed halls’ of our Schools, our reach into the ‘real world’ of business has never been greater. Just as universities adapt and adjust to societal needs, there are also changing expectations of business education with a shift to more community/social and sustainable goals (Cornuel 2022). While critical thinking is a widely held outcome or requirement of management graduates, the ability to address the problems of the 21st century including the imperative of being able to operate in volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environs

requires that students need to be able to act upon their knowledge. Students who master these skills and mindsets will also be more employable longer term.

If knowledge were enough to change behaviours, then we would already see a different planet. Waste would be reduced, and harmful actions would not be taken. Sweatshops would have been closed down as consumers chose only ethically sourced and produced clothing. But knowledge alone changes little. Philosophers have implored us to think differently, and, for a few, this creates a change in how they act, and ultimately how they exist. Minimalists, and those who have undertaken the more extreme challenges of (close to) zero waste, fit into these categories. The ongoing challenges posed by these, and other wicked problems show that for many others, knowledge alone is not sufficient to change behaviour.

After the scandals of the early 2000s ethics classes were introduced in many business schools as a compulsory way to ensure that students who studied business had, at least, considered their moral and ethical responsibilities. Business Schools signed up to PRME, pledging that they would teach the responsibilities of ethical management and assess it as part of their 'learning outcomes'. These initiatives primarily focused on knowledge acquisition (through exposure to content measured through written outputs such as essays and case study reports). Exposure therapy has long been held by psychologists as a means to ensure the mistakes of the past are not repeated as if exposure to a wrongdoing/situation acts like a vaccine to prevent the person enacting such wrongdoing given similar situations or temptations. To highlight this, for example, while knowledge of the use of child labour has spurred some consumers into action, it is known that while the general consumer may take an interest in the working conditions of those who make the goods/ services and establish strong purchase intention, self-interest more typically drives the purchasing behaviour. Hence, knowledge of where or how a garment is produced is not (generally) enough to see a brand

‘cancelled’. Thus, while there is some evidence that knowledge alone works for some, a university course can only provide ‘short term’ exposure (up to 14 weeks), and direct evidence of change is left to anecdotal comments, the infrequent email or some self-reported ‘epiphany’.

The consequences of unethical behaviour are clear and well known. Case learning, videos showing the graphic consequences and to some extent, experiential learning have all been demonstrated to impact knowledge and even at times challenge long held beliefs. The field of business ethics is riddled with examples of ‘what bad people do’, and thus it is easy for the participant/ student to disassociate themselves from this ‘bad’ behaviour (Watson 2003; Trevino and Nelson 2021). Curriculum design and inclusion of programs such as Giving Voice to Values [GVV] (Gentile 2010) encourage action through teaching ways to take action. Practicing such actions in workshops and small group settings provides the basis upon which to support action, but does this go far enough?

Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) have long argued the need to move from talking and knowing into action. Further, as more Indigenous ways of knowing are being brought into Business Schools (Pio & Waddock 2021), a fundamental shift is needed to support students in their ability to act. While experiential exercises can offer support to make such changes in a controlled and low risk environment, we suggest that in order for our students to take risks and enact change they have to explore their current actions in a reflexive manner. Students must wonder about the knowledge and explore in a facilitated manner, ‘what if’, ‘what else’ and ‘what more’ can be done.

We argue our role as teachers is to support transformative learning and in doing so make it easier to take action, that is facilitate our students to do things differently, and ultimately then ‘be’ different over the longer term that bridges the gap. In this session, we explore how teachers can facilitate students to move beyond knowledge acquisition to the

more transformative paths of doing things differently and overall change at a ‘being’ level. We will share a questioning technique to use in class to create deep learning and change at a thinking and processing level. We suggest that facilitators in the Management and Organisational Behaviour teaching discipline and those in Business Faculties more broadly, have a responsibility to move beyond imparting knowledge to creating opportunities for students to transform how they exist and act.

Our experience with this approach, facilitating changes in action, one action at a time increased the capability for both change and transformation with 97% of students reporting a change in attitude in the first two weeks (of a 10-week term) and 86% stating they had changed their behaviour and actions as a result of being called to action beyond information. We focused students to consider and explore what was possible. Rather than focusing on what to do or not to do, wonder questions invite the student to consider possibility and agency of their actions. Further, informal and incidental feedback suggests our students are ‘doing’ their work differently as a result, with some students reporting their ability to talk of ‘doing and being’ in job interviews being the key difference to make them stand out from other graduates.

We argue that rather than what is taught, it is the way we teach that enable our students to bridge the gap between knowing and doing, and ultimately deliver the ‘being’ that leads students to become responsible business leaders able to address the challenges of the 21st century.

Learning Objectives, Engagement, & Takeaway

Facilitation as a term can be used to describe telling or directing people, coaching or supporting people in a process, or as a guide to make the process generally easier (although not necessarily more comfortable or smoother). It is also used interchangeably with being a

chair, or even a lecturer or tutor. However, we argue the role of the facilitator is to ambidextrously move between all of these in a seamless manner, challenging students to act differently and supporting their transformation into other (and hopefully more appropriate ways) of being in the world of work and business.

The learning objective of this session is for participants to develop ‘the wonder questioning technique of facilitation’, enabling teachers to build confidence to focus less on knowledge or content delivery and move to the creation of a learning environment focused on commitment to actions and consideration ways of being. Participants will focus on the fundamentals of creating wonder and develop further the use of the foundational wonder questions. Through the use of wonder questioning, teachers set back from providing answers or suggesting pathways of doing, to support students in co-creating their knowledge. Further, students are supported to transform through the process of reducing the use of absolutisms, universal quantifiers, and generalisations, in how students approach problems. We will explore how we, as teachers, can facilitate students to think differently about their actions and go as far to look to a fundamental shift in how the student ‘is’ in the world. Participants will work in small discussion groups asking each other the questions of wonder and considering how these support action taking and behaviour making change.

The key takeaway for participants is to support the transition from sage on a stage, guide on the side or meddler in the middle to transformative facilitation by adopting the use of question asking over information giving. We will also explore how commitment and consistency (after Cialdini 2006) in action leads to longer term changes in behaviour. Participants will leave the session having practiced the use of wonder questions and will have explored these key questions as part of their practice:

What type of teacher/facilitator are you?

Where is your identity placed in terms of knowledge?

What has led to this style in the past?

What would you need to do to change style?

Session Agenda

Time	Activity	lead
5 mins	Welcome, 'Being' as an answer to 21 st century business problems?	Facilitators
10 mins	Group discussion: 'who am I' (sharing experiences of practices as Sage? Guide? Meddler?) In this session by exploring the teacher's current identity, teachers will be able to consider the challenges they may face to enable students as co-creators of knowledge.	Participants
5 mins	Set up/ explain activity, in pairs or small groups each facilitator will have the opportunity to explore what limits students to making surface changes.	Facilitators
20 mins	Participants work in groups to develop 'wonder questions' for each of the vignettes With a prompt sheet to listen for absolutisms, generalisations and universalisms, the groups will facilitate each other's thinking and apply wonder questions to the discussion.	Participants in group develop strategies
10 mins	Debrief - how will you wait in wonder?	all
5 mins	Wrap up	all

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