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Teaching Business in the Global Century

Eds.

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Global Review: A Biannual Special Topics Journal

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Introduction

Hermann Schwind, Saint Mary’s University

To be invited as a guest editor for an academic journal is a great honour, and I would like to express my gratitude to the editors of the Global Review. Although my academic background is Business Administration and my special interest area Human Resource Management, I always had a strong interest in teaching and learning, which I believe, is a natural extension of the professional curiosity of most academics. Most will teach, but few will do research alone, and understanding teaching techniques or how students learn becomes an essential part of an academic’s career.

The articles submitted to the Global Review offer a broad perspective on Teaching and Learning, as can be expected when the theme provided is broad in itself: Teaching Business in the Global Century. The focus of the journal is global and the topics of most of the accepted articles are truly international. Even if the content of an article is national, the results are relevant globally.

The first article, “Analyzing Terse Stories: Socialization into the Academy,” has story telling as its topic and methodology. I have to admit that first I was skeptical about both topic and method. Being the product of PhD programs in the Seventies, we were indoctrinated with the dictum: If it cannot be measured it does not exist. Qualitative research, at that time, had been the domain of European academics and frowned upon in North America, where number crunching was the dominant analytical tool of an academic. I have mellowed over the decades and am now willing to accept qualitative research as an...almost...equivalent to quantitative studies. Yes, a bit of reservation remains. But this article makes a convincing effort, and succeeds, to be academically sound in its build-up (literature review), foundation building, appropriate methodology, convincing analysis by using valid measures, realistic results, proper discussion, and persuasive conclusions. In addition, it resulted in myself going back to my own PhD studies and “commiserating” with these students, as they tell their personal tales.
Cohorts of PhD students were asked to write stories about their three to four years of experiences in their programs, the insights they gained, and how they developed into credible academics. Seven key topics were identified: why I’m here; I don’t belong; do they think I am good enough?; hey, I’m a PhD student after all; my cohort, my friends (or not); I need help; where is the conflict? As the authors describe it, this small study contributes to our understanding of the socialization process that pre-academics go through and provides some valuable lessons to PhD program directors and instructors.

In the next article, “Critical Thinking in the Globalized Business Classroom: The Existential Imperative,” we jump from individual storytelling to a broad philosophical issue, the connection between critical thinking skills, a basic requirement for business students, and some aspects of existential philosophy. The critical thinking requirement is counterbalanced by the make-up of the typical current Canadian classroom, composed of millennial students from all over the world and with very diverse backgrounds. They are exposed to an excess of information and choices, making critical thinking essential. But these developments create a conflict. We live longer, thanks to improvement in technology and medical progress, yet at the same time we experience more stress, anxiety, and depression. People with critical thinking skills then tend to ask some basic existential questions: Who am I? What is the meaning of life? and How should I live? The authors suggest that modern university education needs to assist contemporary students to challenge conventional wisdom and gain an understanding of the self in the workplace. The authors make useful recommendations on how to deal with these issues in the curriculum and the classroom.

I must say that I was impressed with the expertise with which the authors, Business Professors, weave that network which combines the existential philosophy, originating with Kierkegaard in the eighteenth century and further developed by Nietzsche, Sartre, and Heidegger, with a modern business curriculum. They argue, and I have to agree, that we as educators have to equip our students with the capability to assess the value of their own existence and how to make it more relevant to themselves and society: a masterful opus.

In the third article, “Emotional Intelligence, Team Learning Effectiveness, and Academic Performance: A Quantitative study of Middle Managers Attending Corporate Education Programs,” the author has bravely stepped into a somewhat controversial topic, the
use of Emotional Intelligence (EI) as a measure of performance. HR practitioners love EI, because it seems to describe the ideal characteristics required of an effective manager: emotional empathy, ability to be aware of, and in control of one’s emotions; recognition of one’s own and others’ moods; responding with appropriate behaviours and displaying proper social skills. The controversy arises because some psychologists challenge the definition of EI as an intelligence dimension. They rather perceive it to be special knowledge or social expertise or skills.

The author acknowledges the controversy but believes his study will contribute to solving the question of what EI really stands for. I welcome his view. Only empirical studies will provide sound data to resolve this issue. Perhaps, as an HR person, I should be allowed to make a personal comment. I mentioned before that HR practitioners like EI, because of its desirable characteristics appeal. Looking at applied EI studies, there seems to be a preponderance of evidence that employees with higher EI scores perform better (Poskey, 2014). Of course, it does not answer the question of what the proper definition is: Intelligence, Knowledge, or Skills. However, EI gives us HR people a tool to make selection decisions which, according to these applied studies, provide positive organizational results. That is all practitioners ask for.

The author uses as subjects middle level managers of a consumer goods manufacturer, but makes recommendations to the application of the results in an educational environment, which makes the study relevant to this journal. It has significant limitations because of the sample used, as acknowledged by the author, but it is methodologically sound. As a minimum, it contributes useful data to the resolution of a popular academic controversy.

The fourth article, “21st Century Pedagogy in Open Society: Is it a Shadow Pedagogical System with Social Media as a Pedagogical Tool?”, gave me two surprises. One, I learned something in Education I had not heard of, a “Shadow Pedagogical System”; and secondly, the author begins his discussion with a reference to 350 BC. It turns out that the Shadow System is just a different terminology for homeschooling, tutoring, online learning, and social media, short for all non-traditional ways of education, and the reference is to Alexander the Great, Aristotle (his teacher), and Plato (teacher of Aristotle). The author uses the latter reference to build his case to advocate the overcoming of the unequal access of a large part of the world’s population to higher learning. He describes convincingly, using UN and US statistics, the negative economic
impact of lack of higher education on nations, from low wages, to inability to work in jobs requiring knowledge of advanced technology, to low national productivity and Gross National Product. As the author sees it, and he makes a good case, the Shadow Pedagogical System provides an effective way to allow disadvantaged population groups access to the necessary advanced education required now for more complex jobs.

The Khan Academy is a well-known example of an institute that provides free education to millions of students around the world. This open access, according to the author, will be a critical educational component of the ongoing information revolution. This increased access to education will in turn facilitate positive global connectedness and democracy.

The next article, “When You Really Don’t Mean it: A Model of Plagiarism Behaviour and its Correlates,” discusses, on a theoretical basis, the issue of student plagiarism, certainly a popular and current topic. There is no doubt that cases of student plagiarism are on the rise, but what causes it is not that clear. The authors offer a number of reasons, ranging from an increase in enrollment of international students coming from cultures where individual property, especially literature and intellectual assets, are not perceived to be proprietary to students who cheat for personal gains. They propose, and make a good case for, classifying the occurrence of plagiarism into four categories: True Deception, Naïve Deception, Clueless Deception, and Hapless Deception.

In Eastern cultures students are more prone to learning by rote. They are taught to memorize the sayings of great masters and quoting them is perceived to be a sign of higher education. In such a culture citing the source of a quotation is seen as unnecessary, because it is assumed that the reader is familiar with it. According to the authors, transposing such students into a Western academic environment can cause clashes with academic plagiarism policies and rules. Avoiding plagiarism in the first place would be the preferred solution. This could be achieved by exposing foreign students early in their enrollment process to information sessions or asking instructors to clearly explain the consequences of plagiarism in each course and course outline and, very importantly, explain why this is so important in Western cultures. It is, of course, assumed that Western students are familiar with the plagiarism rules, because they very likely were exposed to them in high schools.

While the authors of the article have come up with a convincing model of plagiarism based on the two dimensions—
Significance of Academic Integrity to the Individual and Significance of Academic Integrity in the Socio-cultural Environment— they have not addressed the issue of its operationalization. The four categories of their model make intuitive sense and the authors provide sufficient content validity. It will be more difficult to develop appropriate measurements, because that will require construct validity. Luckily, in my opinion, there is sufficient literature available in the Cross-Cultural Management field (Hofstede comes to mind) and in Psychology. Undoubtedly, the authors have laid the groundwork for future studies.

The last article, “An International, Trans-Disciplinary Graduate Student’s Journey Through Academic Writing at a Canadian University: On the Intersection of Linguistic, Cultural, and Cross-Disciplinary Challenges,” is one of those rare publications with a sample of 1, a personal experience intertwined with a discussion of the internationalization of our institutions and the problems caused by interdisciplinarity, a new term for me, but which made immediate sense due to my background in Mechanical Engineering prior to Business Administration. While the authors explain the general difficulties international students experience when studying in another culture and language, the discussion also addresses the problem when the switch is compounded by taking on another discipline. One of the writers then uses her own experience to offer some practical aspects of the two switches, i.e., language and discipline. It certainly makes for an interesting reading.

The article begins with description of the problems international students face when they change from their studies in their mother tongue to studies in the language of their host country, in this special case from China to Canada. The authors argue that first the international student has to achieve an adequate proficiency in the new language, especially if a career is envisioned which includes working in the new language. The problem will be exacerbated if the student switches disciplines, e.g., from Engineering to Management, or, as in this case, from Journalism to Education. Each field of study has its own language, often called jargon, because it is commonly difficult for “lay people” to understand the experts when they talk to each other.

I remember, coming from Engineering, my first encounter with a course in Introduction to Psychology. What a nightmare to read all about these new terms and concepts that made so little sense in the beginning. And it was in a foreign language. So I have sympathy for this writer and her struggles.
The authors offer helpful recommendations to university administrators and educators to assist international students in their adaptation to a different culture in general and a different academic culture in particular. Their advice aims specifically at instructors, who encounter in their discipline-specific courses students who come from other fields of studies. In such a case very personal feedback is essential for the success of the student.

This last article offers a fitting conclusion for six studies that relate to a discussion of global aspects of Education. I have to say that I was generally very pleased with the quality of the contributions and it was a pleasure to comment on them. My congratulations to the editors, who made a fine selection of topics, all covering different aspects of the subject matter of international studies. I feel that this volume makes a genuine scholarly contribution to the field.

Dr. Hermann Schwind is Professor Emeritus, Human Resource Management, at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, Canada. He received his PhD from the University of British Columbia, BBA and MBA degrees from the University of Washington, and mechanical and industrial engineering degrees from German institutions. He worked as a Service Manager and Training Director for ten years with the US Caterpillar Tractor Company’s German dealership, five years as a technician with the German Railroad, and retired in 2000. He is the principal author of Canadian Human Resource Management, a best-selling Canadian textbook (McGraw-Hill Ryerson; currently in its 10th edition), published over 80 articles and papers, and contributed chapters to 7 books.

References

Analyzing Terse Stories: Socialization Into the Academy

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Abstract: This paper is an ethnographic analysis of the experience of PhD students earning a doctoral degree in an AACSB accredited university in Atlantic Canada. The key findings of the analysis are the likely unanticipated requirement of graduate students to completely immerse themselves in the learning environment for four to six years mastering the theoretical foundations and research methodologies of their chosen fields. Students also spend substantial, and no less important, time learning how to be academics. This paper explains how these two processes are intertwined and how, through socialization, students can understand and succeed in their roles.

Key Words: doctoral students, learning environment, socialization

Introduction

The study of business education focuses strongly on MBA and undergraduate programs, as well as executive and continuing education, but tends to ignore our PhD programs and how our future faculty members are developed (Mitchell, 2007). As academic identity begins to develop during the PhD education, it is important for us to understand how that development takes place.

The authors of this paper completed the course component of a doctoral program as a cohort. Storytelling has been a deeply embedded and encompassing aspect of our PhD experience, from our first days in new student orientation to the present day, through

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graduation of three of our members. In formal and informal storytelling episodes, new students are introduced to program expectations and images of success. Storytelling became an important way to build bonds amongst cohort members and students from other years, as we shared experiences that we turned into our own stories. Most importantly, we told stories to each other as a way to make sense of our new lives as academics (A. D. Brown, Humphreys, & Gurney, 2005).

Following in the reflexive tradition of Humphreys (2005), Learmonth and Humphreys (2012), and Vickers (2002), we are intrigued, as researchers, with the role storytelling played in our success. Drawing on Gabriel’s (2000) own goals, and in response to Vickers’s call for “those of us in academe... to write about what we know” (2002, p. 619), we ask what the stories of doctoral students, those stories both told and not told, tell us about the transformative nature of the doctoral school experience. Our status as insiders of the program and as participants in the study enables us to interpret the terse stories emerging from the study participants and sheds light on the role of researcher as a co-creator of narratives (Segercrantz, Tuori, & Vilen, 2008).

Our research, in which we invited all current and former students in the PhD program to respond to a set of questions about our PhD experiences, resulted in two main areas of analysis—empirical and methodological. In the first, we analyze the stories gleaned from participant responses as to the importance of the PhD experience in the socialization process of becoming an academic, and what the student stage of the socialization process entails. From a methodological perspective, we use our empirical data to examine the concept of the terse story (Boje, 1991), contested within the literature as to its validity as a story (Gabriel, 2000), analyzing its strength and value when both the researchers and the participants are deeply embedded in the research context. We demonstrate the value of the terse story found in written data where the shared past experiences of researcher and participant, the inclusion of the researcher as participant, and the iterative comparison of stories across several author/participants constitute the context for within which terse stories are developed and analyzed. This shared context enables the richness of interpretation of these terse stories.
Theoretical Foundations

Doctoral Education

Academics grow and develop throughout their careers. Akerlind (2005) posits that development progresses hierarchically through stages of becoming more productive and efficient in work output, achieving academic credibility and recognition for work, improving the quality and effectiveness of work, accumulating personal knowledge and skills, increasing the depth and sophistication of understanding in the field, and contributing to disciplinary growth and change. While Akerlind’s (2005, 2008) studies start at the beginning of the formal academic career, academics begin their growth and development during their doctoral school years. It is during these years that potential future faculty begin to understand what a career in academia entails (Austin, 2002) and start to be socialized as an academic as well as a PhD student (Golde, 1998), while deciding whether or not to pursue academia as a career. They are in the early stages of Akerlind’s (2005) first academic developmental stage of becoming more productive and efficient in work output. We have extended Akerlind’s model by applying her framework in a detailed examination of this first stage.

Doctoral students, regardless of whether they come directly from their undergraduate or masters programs or from a career in industry, seem to lack an understanding of what, exactly, a doctoral education entails (Golde & Dore, 2001). The biggest area of frustration and confusion is the requisite transition from participating in a structured education environment to becoming an independent researcher (Gardner, 2008; Lovitts, 2008). Gardner (2008) identified three phases in the process toward independence for doctoral students: admission, integration, and candidacy. The integration phase, from beginning the program to attaining candidacy, includes coursework, social integration and relationship formation, selecting an advisor and a dissertation topic, and, for many, holding research or teaching assistant positions. This phase, while stretching students in terms of skills, knowledge, and endurance, retains the known educational context of guidance, structure, and clear, regular milestones.

The activities of the integration phase are intended to prepare students for the candidacy phase, when their primary focus is the independent research required to complete their dissertation. The literature and our own experience indicate that students struggle
with this independence and lack of structure, and miss the close relationships formed with peers during the integration phase. Many students find that the relationship that is the most important during the candidacy phase, their relationship with their faculty advisor, is the most difficult to form during integration and is not supportive enough to help them through candidacy (Gardner, 2008). Our own experience bears this out as we formed an informal organization within the formal academic program, drawing support from our cohort that culminated in writing this paper.

As might be expected of individuals who are choosing a career of research and teaching, PhD students are highly attuned to what is going on around them. They listen to formal conversations with faculty and other students and they pay close attention to casual, off-hand remarks and stories told for social and entertainment reasons. They also observe behaviours and take particular note of instances in which behaviours do not match messages (Austin, 2002). The process of becoming an academic is not smooth and automatic but rather involves conflict, exclusion, doubt, and frustration (Archer, 2008). In an effort to understand their environment and resolve this conflict, exclusion, doubt, and frustration, PhD students actively engage in storytelling—both telling and listening to stories. Such storytelling serves the individual needs of each student and also influences their interactions with others in the PhD program, and hence the organization itself.

**Storytelling**

The study of stories and storytelling within organizations is based on a wide ranging understanding of what, exactly, a 'story' is (Bird, 2007; Boje, 1991; Bruner, 1994; Gabriel, 1991; Hyde, 2008; Rindfleish, Sheridan, & Kjeldal, 2009; Watson, 2009; Whittle, Mueller, & Mangan, 2009). Stories as a unit of analysis run the gamut from small conversational snippets within a larger narrative to precisely defined interactions containing particular characteristics. Boje used “an exchange between two or more persons during which a past or anticipated experience was being referenced, recounted, interpreted, or challenged” (1991, p. 111) as an operational definition of a storytelling performance. Boje’s broad definition of a story expands the number of available, analyzable interactions and moves the story away from crafted and scripted monologues of past or lived experiences (Georgakopoulou, 2006). Focus is put on everyday happenings, whether past, ongoing, future, or even hypothetical
events, that emerge through conversation. Eliciting stories as a research device with emphasis on the ongoing and mundane presents the possibility for rich findings, even in small snippets of one-sided accounts. The analysis of these snippets is enhanced by the interpretation made possible by the researchers’ own experience of the studied milieu (Humphreys, 2005; Vickers, 2002). Reissman (2001) reminds us as well that stories found beyond the spoken word, in writing, diagrams, and photographs, are also potential subjects for analysis.

The researcher is encouraged to look beyond the simplicity of the story itself to the meanings and interpretations that the storyteller implicitly offers (Gabriel, 1991; Hyde, 2008). Stories can, at a surface level, entertain and educate us, but stories also play a role in the social construction of reality (Watson, 2009). If “stories often conceal as much as they reveal” (Gabriel, 1991, p. 858), then a simple surface-level reading of the story, while possibly entertaining, provides us with only a small amount of available information and ignores how we use stories to shape our identity (Watson, 2009) or clarify our Self-concept (Bruner, 1994). Why does an individual tell the particular stories that she tells? Why are certain events ignored, or glossed over, while others are given the focus? Bruner (1994) suggests that one of the criteria that guides how we choose what we tell involves our need to feel agentic within our own lives, and that agency is directed toward achieving our desires and expectancies. In our drive to reduce cognitive dissonance in our lived lives, we are comfortable ignoring glaring discontinuities as we tell others about ourselves. We also have a deep need to portray our risky decisions as successes.

We argue in this paper that the more embedded a researcher is in the context of the story, the more s/he is capable of seeing what has been concealed, and hence the deeper the analysis of the story becomes (Learmonth & Humphreys, 2012). The analysis is further deepened when the researcher also participates in the study and a dialogue emerges between different data points through the analysis process. Storytelling, or narrative research more generally, engages the ‘lived’ world, and all of its complex nuances, rather than an objective ‘real’ world (Rhodes & Brown, 2005). Adopting storytelling as our methodology immediately situates our paper in the subjective, and as such our presence in the world we are researching strengthens our ability to capture the complex nuance inherent in the stories. Furthermore, the greater the shared understanding between storytellers and their audience the more terse stories can
become (Boje, 1991). When telling a story to an audience embedded in the same social context, the storyteller is likely to abbreviate, gloss over, or replace particular sections of a story with a statement such as “it’s the same old story”, while other sections might be accentuated. The accentuated parts tell us what the storyteller is purposefully choosing to share with us (Boje, 1991). A terse story thus emerges when participants assume the context is well understood by the researcher.

There is some tension over the use of terse stories in storytelling research, indeed even the idea that terse stories are, in fact, stories. Gabriel (2000) and Boje (1991; Boje, Rosile, & Gardner, 2004) have debated whether or not terse stories are stories, or “little more than delicate fragments of sense” from which meaning has drained (Gabriel, 2000, p. 20-21). Gabriel (2000) argues that listeners may be unaware that a story is being told if they are unfamiliar with the coded signifiers that are used to shorten, accentuate, and gloss over various parts of any given story. Boje, Rosile, and Gardner (2004) submit that terse stories are not ‘proper stories,’ in that they lack narrative, but that terse stories still create actionable knowledge and exist in the storytelling space.

The stories we analyze in this paper are often terse, although never as terse as ‘you know the story’ or ‘9/11.’ We submit that our participants wrote their stories for their audience, and that knowing how embedded the researchers are in the context under study, participants felt that terse stories were acceptable to convey their meanings. The risk that participants would tell stories they believed the researchers wanted to hear is not borne out in the data, as we shall illustrate below. There is a diversity of perspectives and interpretations of shared experiences. We entered the analysis already knowing the characters, the plot, the conflict, and the emotion. As a result, the narrative may be terse, but the stories themselves are incredibly meaningful.

**Becoming an Academic**

Learning through active participation in a social practice contributes to an individual’s identity formation within his or her community (J. S. Brown & Duguid, 1991). “We become who we are through telling stories about our lives and living the stories we tell” (Bruner, 1994, p.53). It can come as no surprise, then, that as we engage in the informal learning process of becoming academics, we tell stories. Stories can also be used to determine, in part, the extent
of integration between the student and the organization (Rhodes & Brown, 2005), in this case the organizations being both the specific PhD program and the institution of higher education at large. Through the very process of telling our own stories to others we change our individual and group identities (Bird, 2007; Rindfleish et al., 2009). At times, those identity changes result in the socialization of the storyteller into the group. Collective narratives, or stories, have also been used by groups and individuals to cope in high-load and high-complexity environments (A. D. Brown & Humphreys, 2003), characteristics that doctoral programs share. Our PhD education and our socialization into becoming an academic come together, and can be analyzed through, the stories we tell and hear. In this particular study, we propose a set of socialization stages that we developed through the analysis of terse stories and our own involvement in the program.

Context and Methodology

This paper is based on a case study of one management doctoral program, selected due to the experiences of the authors as students in the program. The students in this program have an average age of 38, with almost all coming to the program with an established career in a field outside of academia. Two of the 44 students in the program came from a Master’s degree into the PhD, and only one of those students had limited experience in the world of work. All other students have work experience ranging from 2 to 30 years’ worth. Most students bring some teaching experience to the program, and many manage extensive external obligations, including spouses, children, and full-time jobs, while enrolled. As a full-time program designed to accommodate working professionals, there are two separate two-month residential sessions encapsulating six of the eight required courses, three in each consecutive summer session. Completing three doctoral level courses in a condensed delivery model is an extremely intensive and stressful endeavor, adding to the existing stressors of family obligations, work commitments, and for many, physical separation from personal support networks.

There is a single admission point in the spring of each year when students are admitted as a class cohort. Due to the significant amount of time spent together both in class and outside during the coursework sessions, class cohorts become focal points of shared experiences and interpersonal interactions. The balance of the year and the candidacy phase are spent in relative isolation, in the stu-
dent’s work and home milieu, often geographically distant. This forced autonomy requires considerable effort and motivation for the students to complete the assigned work and maintain their participation in the program.

There are structured events for cohorts in the summer sessions, including an orientation in which new and continuing students are invited to share the story of why they chose the PhD and how they have managed to navigate the program to date. This session includes advice and tips from senior students and graduates based on their experiences. There are also specific sessions in the residency period that bring two cohorts together to share and “teach” program content to each other as a group, and students achieving candidacy are invited back as guest presenters on methodology. Informal spaces allocated for social exchanges and shared office space extend the story telling tradition in the program.

All 44 past and current doctoral students, spanning ten distinct class cohorts, were invited to participate in the study. Thirteen responded (five male and eight female) from seven cohorts. Participants were invited to write a story about their PhD student experiences. They were guided in the story writing by a series of five open-ended questions (for a list of the questions, see Appendix A). The questions were compiled based on a list of the critical aspects of our own PhD journeys, and were targeted toward eliciting the telling of significant experiences in their education. The research design sought to identify critical incidents (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 83), and to trigger storytelling from these. The criticality of incidents is determined by the teller (Webster & Mertova, 2007) and such events can illustrate how people cope with change and transition (Strauss et al., 1973). Participants were asked to respond to two or three of the questions, and some answered all five. Responses were an average of 700 words in length. The use of questions and guidance in the preparation of written stories provides participants with a focus and an understanding of the study in which they are involved (Keats, 2009).

When we analyzed the responses we looked for stories within the answers to the questions. Although asked to provide stories, not all respondents provided what could be called a story in all of their responses. Some responses included chronological detailing of events, but lacked any element of plot and emotion. We were sensitive to Gabriel’s (2000) definition of story so closely tied to plot and structure, and at the same time we were sensitive to the truncated aspect of the responses we received, where many participants
seemed to assume that students in the program shared a common understanding of the events being described. The themes that emerged from our analysis were found in responses across all the questions. There was a strong link between the first question and the first theme; however, the first theme also appears in responses to the other questions.

The use of written stories may pose a methodological concern, as the storytelling research generally makes use of oral stories gathered through observation or interviewing. The fact of having been written, rather than told orally, does not make a story any less a story. In fact, for most people, the word story connotes written text. Our use of written stories allowed for the analysis of multiple text types (Keats, 2009), as a key component of our analysis involved understanding the written stories in the context of the oral stories that we heard and told throughout our time as doctoral students. Participants told different stories in a guided, written format than they had in a spontaneous, oral format, which gives us insight into what is being glossed over and what has been retained as students make sense of their doctoral student experience.

Written stories provided continuity in data collection regardless of geographic location and the freedom of respondents to craft their stories asynchronously, both factors designed to increase responses. Additionally, the respondents should have felt a greater sense of anonymity, having the ability to choose language that masked identities of themselves and those within their stories. While we are analyzing how our intimate knowledge of the environment under study provides us with a greater ability to delve more deeply into the responses, we also acknowledge that participants may be reluctant to share potentially negative stories with people who know all of the story characters.

Each author also contributed to the data for this study (4 of the 13 participants). Two authors are male, two female. All of the authors are members of the same cohort. Like the other participants in this research, we provided written stories of our individual experiences around the topics within the open-ended questions. Our cohort reflects many of the characteristics of the population and the non-author participants: we are of mixed gender, we face varied marital and child rearing situations, our work experiences come from a number of different industries, public and private sectors, and some of us were full-time students while others continued to work full-time through their studies. We are a close-knit group of friends, and the data in this study reveals that other cohorts also
experienced close relationships of mutual support. The process of writing our own stories provides not only “commentary upon our academic lives” (Learmonth & Humphreys, 2012, p. 112), but also permits us to reflect more deeply on the research question. This requires some discussion about the reflexive nature of this project.

**Reflexivity and Storytelling**

Reflexivity is “the turning back of an inquiry or a theory or a text onto its own formative possibilities” (Macbeth, 2001, p. 36) and looking for “unseen [or] privileged relationships… between analyst and the world” (Macbeth, 2001, p. 38). When examining these formative possibilities, we note that the study itself was triggered, in part, by the first successful dissertation defense and subsequent graduation of one of the authors. In passing such a critical milestone, we felt the need to understand how we had made it to this point. This is significant because, as Platt notes, “[in] so far as the people one interviews are… members of the same restricted community, the interviewer is not anonymous but has a history and perceived characteristics some of which may be directly relevant to the research topic” (1981, p. 77).

Social science research has typically carried an expectation of a certain distance between subject and researcher, as this is thought to impart objectivity and legitimacy to the findings. In storytelling research, this would supposedly result in the storyteller speaking without undue influence from the researcher, while the researcher makes conclusions from a neutral position. Yet, storytelling research has not “been about the telling of the subject’s story, rather, it was the social scientist’s reading into the stories being performed and shaped through inquisition and interrogation events” (Boje, Luhman, & Baack, 1999, p. 343). Further, Morey and Luthans (1984) question the emic (subjective) and etic (objective) divide in organizational research, arguing that both perspectives are required to provide new insights. Our approach straddles the emic/etic divide. We participate as informants of stories (emic) as well as outside researchers making choices to categorize and order the subjects’ world (etic). This balancing act is not unknown in organizational research. For example, Humphreys (2005) examines his own non-traditional academic career path in organization studies and uses his own stories as data in the self-analysis. Boje et al. (1999) include the researchers’ stories of their struggles and feelings of doing storytelling research in the analysis of stories from an organiz-
tion. Given both empirical examples and theoretical calls for greater inclusion of the researcher in the analysis, this approach serves both needs. Vickers (2002) advocates writing as an insider; she claims texts produced from a neutral and disinterested voice are less interesting to read. Including the researchers’ stories enriches our analysis and writing because our stories “allow for insights into processes, phenomena, and… group dynamics that others cannot witness” (p. 619). Furthermore, our role as insiders enriches our interpretation of the terse stories and sheds light on the role of researcher as co-creator of narratives (Segerrantz, Tuori, & Vilen, 2008) of graduate students.

Analyzing Terse Stories

Mindful of the context of the program and of our shared experiences, we did not treat the data as “objective facts” that were “wrenched from their context” (Boje, 2001). Our shared experiences with our participants gave greater meaning to the terse stories proffered than would be found in a more traditional researcher/participant setting. The question then becomes, how does this intimate knowledge on the part of the researchers further the research itself? In answer, we illustrate the value of the terse story through our analysis. All submitted stories were collected by one of the authors who then anonymized the data by removing the name of the storyteller and names from within the story. The remaining three authors only saw the anonymized data and did not know which stories had come from the other authors. Each of the four authors performed an individual analysis of the anonymized data. During this stage of the analysis we used a holistic-content interpretive model (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998), exploring the explicit meanings of the participants’ responses to compile a set of stories. When looking for stories, we looked for instances when the participant recounted a past experience that involved some element of plot, problem-solving, or emotion. Sometimes an answer to a specific question involved multiple stories, other times there were none. We then analyzed our set of stories intertextually and through a categorical-content interpretive model (Lieblich et al., 1998), grouping the stories by theme, where the theme was generally a common meta-story.

Following the individual analysis, we merged our stories into one final set of six common, or meta-, stories. As would be expected, our individual analyses were not all the same. We started
with 44 participant responses in total, and ended with six common stories, four of which are stages in the socialization process. The process of creating our final set of stories was one of much discussion and debate. After developing our set of six common stories, we went back to each individual story that had been categorized, and re-analyzed it from a holistic-content interpretive model (Lieblich et al., 1998), this time exploring the implicit meaning. Our second analysis focused on the implicit messages of the stories, what was missing from the stories based on what we knew from our personal experience, and why, out of all of the possible stories that could be and have been told, these six were the common stories that emerged.

Results and Discussion

No story begins at the beginning. This is doubly true of terse story fragments, which are comparable to broken pottery shards or puzzle pieces that do not fit together coherently but are moved about until a plausible organization story emerges (Sintonen & Auvinen, cited in Boje 2001). Our analysis reveals common story fragments at distinct points in time: at the outset of the program, midway through, and at the end of the degree. A set of common stories emerged from the data and we present these stories as ways through which our academic identities begin to be formed. Six common stories were identified, and four of these stories can be seen as a series of stages in the socialization process of becoming an academic as a doctoral student. We present these stages in a chronological, or hierarchical, manner, with the intended beginning being the start of the PhD program. We posit, however, that this set of stages could be experienced at various points in the process of becoming an academic, such as when looking for, and starting, new jobs. The remaining two stories capture the relationships that students used throughout their doctoral studies to aid in their success, both technically and socially. Table 1 lists each of the common stories and its associated socialization stage. We discuss each stage/story in detail from the perspective of becoming an academic and our methodological use of terse stories.

What is Missing?

Before presenting our analysis, and the corresponding stories, it is important that we highlight that which is missing from the stories.
Participants knew that their audience has a detailed understanding of the way that the program works, so were able to tell their stories without explaining the formal structure of the program, the course content and structure, the comprehensive exam's demands and format, and without identifying key characters beyond a name or position. Any researcher conducting a storytelling-based study within an organization would take the time beforehand to gain familiarity with the structures and processes of that organization, and so our own experiences with the organization are not significantly different in that aspect. Where we do differ, though, is in our deep understanding of the emotions underlying each of those structural and/or procedural characteristics—the emotions that are a key characteristic of a story. We propose that, in fact, the majority of readers of this article, being academics themselves, feel a strong emotional connection to the stories being told because of their own doctoral experiences. Success in the PhD is not guaranteed; the overall dropout rate of PhD students is 40–50% (Lovitts, 2008). Thus when a participant refers to the accomplishment of having successfully defended his or her dissertation, with no further elaboration, we know the story that is inherent in that statement, where others outside of the academy would not.

Any group of high-achieving individuals placed in the intense, high-stakes environment of a PhD program is going to experience conflict. There will be conflict amongst students, conflict between students and faculty members, conflict between students and their external obligations and responsibilities, and conflict between academic organizations. Some conflict is on a personal level as students compete to be the top performer, other conflict is on a more philosophical level, as students and faculty debate competing ideas, paradigms, and theories. Conflict also exists on a professional level, as students find their expectations of an academic career differ from the reality (Austin, 2002). The very program itself has, in some ways, its foundation in conflict, as the vast majority of students enter the program as functional managerialists based on their previous training and work experience and go through two intensive coursework sections in which their paradigms of thought are questioned vehemently and new paradigms are introduced. Many participants thankfully credit certain faculty members with opening their eyes to a completely new world of management theory and thought. At the end of the process, that thanks is genuine, but the conflict that was engendered to reach that end is glossed over in the stories told for this study.
Conflict is noticeably downplayed in the collected stories. Many of the participants’ stories involved belonging: belonging to a cohort, belonging to an organization, belonging to a profession. We do not question that belonging plays a key role in the socialization of an academic, through both personal experience and as shown in the literature (Akerlind, 2005, 2008; Gardner, 2008; Golde, 1998). What we do question, though, is that a set of 44 stories about key events in the doctoral experience can be as muted on the subject of conflict as our data is. Only three participants tell explicit stories about interpersonal conflict. This silencing of conflict is in direct contrast to the idea that “it hardly seems possible to imagine a worthwhile, telling story that does not entail conflict” (Gabriel, 2000, p. 119). Stories that are told and re-told tend to deal with misfortune and adversity, which is our experience with the stories we heard, and still hear, when with our PhD colleagues. The stories told for this study, however, are mainly positive, challenging us to explore them more deeply.

We present each theme below and provide context and comparison between author and participants’ perspective for each in turn.

Table 1. Common Stories and Stage of Socialization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Story</th>
<th>The Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why I’m here</td>
<td>decision to become an academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t belong!</td>
<td>questioning personal capability; doubt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do they think I’m good enough?</td>
<td>seeking external validation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey, I am a PhD student after all</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My cohort, my friends (or not)</td>
<td>initial support*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need help</td>
<td>ongoing support*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The initial support and ongoing support stories capture the supportive relationships that are developed and nurtured throughout all four of the socialization stages.
Stories and Stages of Socialization

Why I'm Here. The doctoral student experience does not start on the first day of classes, nor upon acceptance into the program, but with the decision to apply for a position. While many graduate students choose to pursue a PhD as the next logical step of their academic journey, students in business doctoral programs are often returning to academia from a number of years in the workforce. All of our thirteen study participants had been in the workforce for anywhere from two to twenty years before deciding to pursue a PhD. Eleven of the thirteen participants responded to the question regarding their motivation to pursue the PhD, and all of the authors answered this question. Nine of the eleven respondents mentioned instrumental reasons related to career goals while 5 of 11 spoke of intellectual challenge. The stories of why doctoral students have chosen to pursue a PhD obviously differ among participants, but the telling of the story itself is common for all students. ‘Why are you here?’ is a commonly asked question among program members, and is an important question for both the initial introduction and relationship-building phases of the program. Some stories are simple—students needed a PhD to keep their job.

I chose to do so because I have to in order to retain my current university employment. My university tends to (out of necessity) hire non-terminally qualified lecturers, some of whom catch the bug and desire to make a career out of it. I am one of these people. (P13)

Other stories, however, show the complex set of reasons for which some of the participants chose to leave their established careers and, essentially, start again in the field of academia. Absent from these stories, however, is discussion of doubt about whether or not the decision to pursue a PhD was the best decision, and discussion of any interpersonal conflict that ensued while making the decision—conflict with employers or family members who felt that pursuing a PhD was a bad idea.

I chose to become a PhD student for four reasons. First, I had a lot of work experiences that I wanted to process somehow... there were very few people in Canada who had doctorates doing research in my field... I could capitalize on an area of research that few people were exploiting. Second,
my job wasn’t really going anywhere, and I felt very demor-
alized and insignificant. I had tried a few times to ‘get ahead’ in my work by doing all the usual stuff... All of these things ended up resulting in nothing. I was really not in the right place in life. (third) I have spent more time in school than in work, and I’ve never particularly enjoyed ‘working’ in the ‘real’ world. I find that I can see through all the illusions and stereotypes, and I’ve always had a hard time working for the bottom line or outcome without questioning why. (P2)

The students who were pursuing their PhD so that they could continue teaching at the university level told terse stories in response to this question. The students who had returned to school for other reasons, including personal challenge, told much longer and more involved stories. The story about teaching, enjoying it, and then pursuing a PhD is a common story to which all PhD students and graduates can relate. Where there were other reasons that pushed, or drew, a student toward a PhD, more explanation, more storytelling, was necessary, because the audience was not embedded in their pre-PhD environment. A terse story would not work.

I Don’t Belong! This theme emerged when participants told stories about first feeling like a PhD student (10 out of 13 responded, including all of the authors) as well as in stories about important people on their journey and key moments in their journey. There is no bifurcation of the data that indicates the authors are distinct in this regard. Common stories told by first year students include the strong feeling that they have made a terrible mistake and that they do not belong in a PhD program. These stories are also told by upper year students and graduates, as a way to provide guidance and advice for those first year students.

Throughout the first year, I felt very much like an impostor in danger of being found out at any moment. It was a very surreal experience, I was going through the motions, but I don’t think I really got it. I first started feeling “real” around the first week of the second summer. We were in [faculty member’s] class when I suddenly realized I knew what the *&* he was talking about. It wasn’t until comps when I had to re-visit everything from the first two years that it all came together and I felt like all the pieces came together. (P12)
Words like ‘imposter’ recur in the stories, along with expressions of not understanding the vocabulary and ritual of graduate research studies. Everyone has experienced a new situation of some sort—a new job, a new education program, a new place of residence—in which they have felt as though they had no idea what was going on nor what they should be doing. At that level, many people can understand this story. People who have completed a PhD understand the storyteller’s reference to several aspects of the educational journey, however only those with direct knowledge of this program will understand the terse story represented by ‘comps,’ and also the initial orientation sessions that triggered a feeling of being in way over your head. What is critical to this story, though, and left unsaid by the storyteller, is that this particular individual, along with 42 of 44 students who enter the PhD program, had come from an academic background and work experience grounded in a managerialist perspective; they suddenly found themselves in a sociological, critical theory-based program rooted in an entirely new paradigm of thought. When she says she suddenly realized that she knew what her professor was talking about, she, to some extent, means it literally, as class discussions involved concepts such as discourse, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, and constant references to Foucault. Standard fare for sociologists and those in the humanities, this is completely new ground for most finance, accounting, or marketing professionals! We were all going through the motions in our first set of courses, having little idea of what we were talking about, but trying to act like we knew it all. One author repeats the story using almost the same words as P12. It was an incredibly stressful and frustrating experience, involving much internal and external conflict, followed, for most, by a major breakthrough and great pride. This story is critical to the participant’s success in becoming an academic, but potentially rather dull to those outside of the program itself.

In our analysis of the stories from the perspective of the socialization of doctoral students into academics, this story combined with our pre-existing understanding of the characters and emotions, speaks to both the frustrating stage of feeling strongly as though you do not belong in academia, followed by the realization that you are, in fact, slowly finding your way. This participant’s story, which is representative of all of our participants, included feeling completely lost in a new sociological discipline, working through the frustration, the ignorance, and the conflict, sticking with the program when full of doubt, and achieving her first major
success—feeling that she was a PhD student.

*Do They Think I'm Good Enough?* Continuing in the integration phase, in their efforts to fit themselves into the doctoral school environment, participants often relied on external validation as an indication of their progress and/or success. This theme is reflected in responses to several of the guiding questions. Strong validation seems to come from faculty involved with the program, as students look to them for evaluation and support both inside and outside of the formal classroom and supervisor structures. Grades were assigned for papers and courses, but grades on coursework were not a sufficient indicator as to whether or not a student was becoming an academic. The stakes in a PhD program are high, and students were not willing to continue with the program if their chances of success were slim. The need for validation starts in the early days of the program, as students question their decision to pursue a PhD, and continues through to the end, as the ultimate validation comes in the form of a PhD awarded by the university, the faculty, and experts in the student’s field of study. These stories of achieving validation and approbation from faculty are told by students in order to compare effort, progress, and reward.

I think I realized in the most grown up way I have ever realized anything in my life, that these people were gathered here because of me. And more than just me; because of some ideas that I had… These ideas were different, unique, and other people found them interesting. I don't know that it made me feel like a student (other than the obvious hierarchy around the table, me being the junior member) as much as it made me feel like a researcher. (P8)

I had not bargained on the incredible boost of self-esteem and self-confidence I have received. Maybe it is like the Wizard of Oz—I feel like the tin man [sic] who now believes that she has a brain because someone gave me the paper to prove it! (P11)

Absent from the stories again, but certainly present in the actuality, was the conflict inherent in looking to others for validation. Students did not always receive the validation they were looking for. Grades were not always as high as expected, feedback was not always positive, and not all students felt that they were welcomed into the collective group of pre-academics. Perhaps one of the
most important sources of validation, and of conflict, is the dissertation supervisor. Finding, and changing supervisors is glossed over with terse stories like “the individual who eventually became my new supervisor” (P1), which does not convey to the uninitiated the angst of incompatibility between student and thesis supervisor, nor the dilemma of seeking new support and guidance mid-program. Finally, there are a few terse stories of conflict within the cohort during the process of fitting in and seeking acceptance.

The first time we met was in the welcoming meeting. I didn’t know anybody, and so I felt quite alone. I was nervous because I didn’t rehearse the introduction of self to the group during the (preschool events)… the first class with the cohort was a key event… I felt that I was being evaluated or tested, and I didn’t quite feel that I was part of the group. (P2)

As first year students, we were told many stories about the point in the first residency section when we would receive a letter from the faculty addressing the areas in which we were falling short as PhD students. The story of the letter was told often, told dramatically, and was scary for new students, and the event itself became a seminal event in our education, afterward referred to as “the letter.” Only one participant related it to us as part of the study. Many stories present the program as one in which all students are welcomed with open arms, and competition is minimal. In addition to P2’s comments, above, one participant was open about her feelings of being excluded from the main group.

We also seemed to feel a little left out of the main body of the PhD program, that perhaps there was a hierarchy of students within the program and that we were not a part of the “in crowd”. Simple things… seemed to highlight this separation that we felt between ourselves and other cohort members and faculty. (P5)

**Hey, I am a PhD Student After All.** As all study participants, at the point of the study, had either graduated or were still active in the program, the stories of feeling that they did not belong had counterpoint stories in which students recounted those events or experiences that led them to believe that they did, after all, belong. In other cases, students came to the realization based on their
growing comfort with the program and the content, and their increasing awareness that their fellow students were experiencing, or had experienced, the same doubts. All respondents provided stories supporting this theme. Students are here telling stories of the successful stages of identity formation as academics, and through those stories are providing informal or incidental learning opportunities for students who are still struggling. In general, this time of a positive burgeoning academic identity occurred during the integration phase (Gardner, 2008) of their education. The following excerpt illustrates the role played by the structure of the program in shaping this phase.

When I returned for my second year of studies, I found that I had indeed learned quite a bit. I was able to help some of the newer students move through the exact same feelings as I had just one year earlier, as those ahead of me had done. I didn’t know it all; in fact, I knew very little. But I realized that most people within the program knew a little but tended to act as if they knew more than they did, hiding behind jargon and nonsense…. It was at that point that I began to feel like a PhD student and that I was ‘on’ the path. (P6)

The student matures as an academic partly though separation and reflection induced by the long period of isolation between academic coursework, and partly as a function of being a senior student and bearing the burden of perpetuating the storytelling tradition as an orientation device for the incoming cohort.

My Cohort, My Friends (or Not). The intensive nature of the program under study and its single annual intake leads to highly defined cohort units. Over the history of the program, some cohorts have quickly bonded into organizational sub-units that provided friendship and support for their cohort members. Other cohorts have had friendships form within them, without a strong bonding as an entire unit, and yet others have struggled with intense competition, internal fighting, and animosity. Stories told about cohorts for this study were overwhelmingly positive, with only three negative cohort stories related. The stories we heard, and re-told, however, throughout our doctoral experience were generally the negative stories—the stories where extreme conflict occurred between cohort members, and the repercussions of that conflict. The following stories illustrate the balance that students attempted to negotiate between supportive cohort relationships,
and the understanding that at a fundamental level academia is about conflict in the form of debate around ideas.

First, there would be my cohort members. I had some great personal struggles throughout the program and without such a supportive and wonderful group of people I would not have stayed. They encouraged me, argued with me and helped better me as a person and as a student. This group of people came from very different backgrounds but that did not matter. We never had to agree with each other’s opinions, but we did respect them. The level of debate that we achieved without offence to one another was tremendous. We were open to one another. These individuals have truly become four of the most important people in my life. I would say they are my family. (P1)

… one of my cohort members immediately challenged me (I didn’t even get beyond the first 3 sentences before she interrupted me!) There was always this tension, for me anyway, between engaging in fruitful academic debate, and ruthlessly stabbing someone in the back. In other words, you want to be able to debate ideas, but you don’t want to make it more difficult for your cohort colleague who may be on the spot giving a seminar. (P2)

As authors from a single cohort, we had often felt that our group was unique in the positive, supportive community we developed through the program. Other students had remarked on this internal collegiality. We were somewhat surprised to hear that other cohorts also saw themselves as special and supportive, in contrast to the oral stories we heard while on campus. Our experience validates the stories of other participants, and also reshapes our understanding of our own time in the program and the program structure’s impact on this important aspect of socialization.

I Need Help. Within the doctoral program itself, participants told stories about the strong levels of support that they received from their cohorts or fellow students from other years and from faculty. In many cases, the cohort provided an exceptionally strong support system for participants, but where cohort bonding did not occur and as students moved past the intensive coursework stage, participants still found support networks within the program. Pseudo-sibling relationships also appeared, with students farther on the
journey telling old stories and providing materials and support to others as those who have been there already. Many of the relationships that were developed outside of the cohort held the most importance during the candidacy phase of the doctorate (Gardner, 2008).

Once courses ended and our cohort dispersed, both geographically and academically… others in the PhD program joined my support network. I had excellent support throughout comprehensive exams from upper year students, and I had a thesis support network with students who were in the same stages of the dissertation as I was. My advisor and other faculty members also became integral to both getting my dissertation done, and learning how to become a faculty member, in terms of publishing, conferences, research, and finding jobs. (P7)

I really did feel like my thesis had emerged as the result of a lot of support from my professors, supervisor, committee, cohort and other PhD students from various cohorts who helped me. For example, I attended a ‘coffee club’ for two years during my thesis writing made up of students interested in discourse analysis. This little group did mock defenses with me, and each other member, before our defenses. We also read each other’s work and gave feedback. And, just as importantly, drank coffee together once a week and talked about our work, plans, dreams, challenges, etc. (P4)

Support networks were key for participants in navigating their doctoral education and forming their identities as academics. An individual’s support network became a key resource in defining success and identifying unsuccessful behaviours in others. These same networks that developed to support individuals through their degree also form a strong backbone of the doctoral program itself. On those occasions when current and graduated program members do meet in person, networks are renewed and many, many stories are told and re-told.

Where is the Conflict?

If interpersonal conflict was such an integral aspect of the PhD experience, why is it suppressed in participants’ stories? Our research
design may have precluded stories of this form of conflict. Students who experienced extreme conflict or who were part of dysfunctional cohorts may never have been fully socialized into the PhD program, and therefore may not have chosen to participate in the study. One of the strengths of our approach, that we, as researchers, were deeply embedded in the environment under study, is also a limitation. Participants may have purposely avoided relating stories of conflict for fear of speaking negatively about someone who is a friend of the researcher(s). In asking for written stories, we may have received truncated versions, as there was no immediate feedback for storytellers to encourage them to delve more deeply. Despite these potential limitations, terse stories of conflict do still appear in the data, sometimes couched in gentle terms as counterpoints to positive stories: “I have heard stories of screaming matches” and “I sat in on a class with one cohort where the tension in the room was overwhelming” (P1). These terse stories appear within the story of meeting the challenges of the program as a cohort and “ensuring we were all looked after” (P2).

Methodological implications taken into consideration, though, do not completely account for the conflict that was such an integral part of the process itself is missing from the stories of that process. The stories collected in this study, including the stories from our own cohort, are different than the stories we heard and told while we were in the thick of the PhD program. As individuals who are embedded in the context of the program, we know that in the absence of active conflict to talk about when students gathered, there was an avidly repeated collective lore involving stories of extreme conflict that had occurred in the past: “…my knowledge of other cohorts is limited. I have heard many stories, but have only experienced… a few” (P1). Have participants taken poetic license, silencing events of interpersonal conflict that interfere with their chosen storyline of belonging and success (Gabriel, 2004b)?

People tell stories in an attempt to reduce cognitive dissonance (Bruner, 1994) and to “make sense of different events that we experience” (Gabriel, 2004a, p. 2). We contend that doctoral school is an organizational setting where confusion, rupture, and change occurs for students, and so it is reasonable to conclude that they will respond to this situation by trying to bring order to this new environment. This organizing process may be attempted through labeling and categorizing the disorganized and seemingly unmanageable flow of experience until things begin to make sense. The organizational literature is filled with examples of people attempt-
ing to understand what is, or has been, happening to them during periods of extreme change or crisis (c.f. Kayes, 2004; Stensaker & Falkenberg, 2007; Weick, 1988, 1993), and during non-crisis ‘normal’ times (c.f. A. D. Brown & Jones, 2000; McCabe & Dutton, 1993; Oliver & Roos, 2003).

The stories gathered for this study differ from those told in the immediate education environment. Doctoral students in the midst of the intensity of the experience tell the stories, with all the related emotions, that are immediately applicable. When a student receives an unexpectedly poor grade, stories about the faculty member who assigned the grade are told. When a student struggles to work with a difficult peer, she hears stories about other difficult students. For this study, on the other hand, students were asked to tell their stories outside of the immediacy of the environment, and had time to reflect on what was important, and what they wanted to say. Participants wanted to tell the stories about the people who helped them toward success in a positive way—stories that we do not often get the chance to tell. The participants synthesized their experience to distill specific lessons and messages in their stories. In this process, the stories become terse. These terse stories are re-contextualized through the analysis of individuals who shared and understand the organization context. Not only are terse stories nonlinear and sometimes incoherent, they are also collective (Boje et al., 2004). We can use stories to stop time and process experiences. The stories still emerge, through analysis, as phases of development because the organization structure of the PhD program contributes to the story space as well. We have used terse stories to stitch together a narrative of the development of an academic.

Conclusion

Every story told is situated in a context greater than the story itself, existing in a web of stories through which the storyteller must navigate and select what s/he feels is the best story for the given moment (Boje, 2001). While participants were directed in the stories they told by the specific questions posed, the questions were broad in nature and were designed to allow participants to select stories that held particular resonance. The stories that we received are important to the people who told them, and through their telling we can gain an understanding of those doctoral school experiences that were, and have remained, vivid. Our small study of a single doctoral program adds to our greater understanding of the socialization
process that pre-academics go through, building on the existing literature on academic development and identity formation (Akerlind, 2005, 2008; Austin, 2002; Gardner, 2008). The common stories identified, *why I am here, I don’t belong!, do they think I’m good enough?, and hey, I am a PhD student after all*, map closely to Golde’s (1998) four key questions asked by PhD students as they socialize themselves to the doctoral program and the academic world: Can I do this? Do I want to be a graduate student? Do I want to do this work? and Is this the right choice? The remaining two stories, that deal with the interpersonal relationships and support networks built while students show ways in which students deal with the isolation and confusion of the candidacy stage of their education (Gardner, 2008).

There can be no doubt that conflict exists in the high pressure, high stakes world of doctoral programs. It is interesting that people in our study chose to gloss over interpersonal conflict within the program, and also to remain silent on their possible conflict with individuals external to the program, spouses, family, and friends, who were not part of the intense experience of this doctoral program, and yet who were integral to the students’ doctoral experience (as evidenced in the acknowledgments written for dissertations). Conflict is not totally absent from these stories, however. After all, “conflict is to storytelling what sound is to music” (McKee, 1997, p. 210). Where conflict appears in the stories of these students, it is portrayed in terms of an internal struggle to re-shape individual identity and to belong to a culture, the broader group composing the program, as well as the broader academy. Rindfleish et al. (2009) illustrate the way conflict in storytelling is used for specific purposes. In this case, internal conflict is used to illustrate the success of individuals in becoming full members of a new profession.

As authors, we lived the experience of the doctoral program under examination; we co-created it with other participants in the study and with the broader population of the program as a whole. We created frames for analysis of these experiences that corresponded to our own experience. We challenged each other to broaden our perspective of the program. We could not easily disregard dissonant stories from other participants nor privilege similar stories that may have come from a co-author because we could not distinguish the stories based on the teller’s identity. This context reduces the risk inherent in autoethnography of privileging one version or interpretation over another.
The paper itself is a story—a story of discovery. We used stories to help us understand and to reflect on aspects of discovery on the path to becoming an academic. We also need, as participants in the academic organization, to portray stories of success. The epic story of hurdles overcome and victory achieved is evident in not only the data collected, but also in our interpretation and analysis of the data. Although we have chosen to explore our own professional development as academics, this approach could also be useful in any other organization or occupation that requires a formative phase and stages of acceptance.

From a methodological perspective, we illustrate the power of the terse story when both the storyteller and the audience are deeply embedded in the storytelling space. When both teller and listener draw on shared experience, a terse story contains considerable amounts of plot, character, emotion, and problem-solving. Our discussion of the noted glossing over of interpersonal conflict in the stories also illustrates that it is possible to uncover much hidden as well as overt meaning in terse stories. We have broadened the use of terse stories in research by exploring written stories and by including an autoethnographic approach to the study.

Humphreys (2005) calls for autoethnographic vignettes in all qualitative research texts. We have woven our own texts as research participants into the study, and into the analysis of that data. By so doing, we extend the notion of the autoethnographic voice to one that interacts with the other voices in the storytelling space of the study, and provides context to the terse stories found there. Coming full circle to an organization studies perspective, this final terse story shows how the terse story itself becomes woven into the fabric of the organization: “We have certain jokes that keep cropping up in conversation” (P5).

The joke to which the participant refers relates to one person’s difficulty in grasping the punch line of jokes told during seminar discussions, and the reaction of classmates and colleagues. Classmates made a small sign that read “joke” which they raised anytime they thought their colleague might miss the punch line of a subsequent story. This sign has taken on a life of its own in the program, and is used repeatedly in classroom, conference, and social settings, beyond the originating cohort. It becomes a reminder of those PhD moments that involved camaraderie and laughter.

The value of the terse story lies in the fact that people are telling stories all the time, and when they are telling these stories to others who are embedded in the same context, the stories are often terse.
For researchers who are also embedded in the context, and who understand the untold aspects of the terse story, there is suddenly a myriad of stories available to be analyzed. While our stories were solicited, think of a research situation in which stories are being observed, or overheard, if you will. Researchers embedded in the world as it is lived by those being studied can recognize and understand unsolicited terse stories as they are told in the course of everyday life. In this way researchers learn what stories are important to the individuals being studied, rather than what stories the researcher thinks will/should be important. While some terse stories are terse because they have lost significance over time (Gabriel, 2000), others are terse for the exact opposite reason—they hold such import and emotion that all it takes is a sentence or two for that meaning and emotion to be shared (Boje et al., 2004). Some of these stories help to hold together the very organization. The terse story “office chats” (P3) refers to incredible bonding and intellectually rich exchanges between students in their early days of the program, memories of which sustain students through much lonelier times in the dissertation writing stage. We can learn much about an organization through the terse stories that are told, and a researcher who is embedded within the context has a much greater ability to understand the full significance of the stories—including the stories themselves, and the context around when and why they are told at a specific time. Researchers become a bridge between cultures with their ability to parse and explain the significance of terse stories.

Future research could include the use of terse stories in ethnographic research, where the researcher is deeply embedded in the environment and is hearing the stories in their natural context. Specific to the area of doctoral student socialization, but applicable to many organization settings, the stories told by authority figures such as faculty could be analyzed in terms of the reason for faculty telling the story, the ways in which students absorb and use the stories, and the stories that are not told. Individuals in positions of authority can use stories to create and sustain a hegemonic discourse (Gabriel, 2004b). In what ways do the stories we hear as PhD students begin embedding us into the discourse of being an academic, and how do we in turn change the nature of the academy though our storytelling once we are admitted as full members?

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teaching, he is also a PhD candidate, a feet-first runner and hands-on father to some extremely active kids.

Appendix A. Storytelling Guides

1. Why did you choose to become a PhD student?
2. Who were some of the key players in your PhD journey?
3. At what point in time did you feel you were truly a PhD student?
4. Could you describe the key events or transition moments that you experienced within your PhD cohort?
5. Could you tell me about one important success you have had as a PhD student?

References


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Endnotes

1 Comprehensive exams, or comps, are undertaken by North American PhD students, following their course work and preceding their dissertation work.
Critical Thinking in the Globalized Business Classroom: The Existential Imperative

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Abstract: This paper examines today’s globalized business school classroom and connections between critical thinking skills and existential philosophy. The development of critical thinking skills has historically been a core objective of higher education and it is more important than ever with the increasingly diverse international classroom of the millennial generation. Critical thinking is requisite for the individual to have an existential awareness. Moreover, this awareness is foundational to understanding the self in the workplace, and allows the individual to “go against the herd” and challenge conventional wisdom of the day. We argue for a broader view of our teaching of critical thinking, set against the backdrop of an increasingly global classroom environment.

Key Words: critical thinking, existential awareness, international students

Introduction

Most scholars and lay people alike would agree that a business degree should prepare a young person for the challenges of the work world in an increasingly globalized society. The Conference Board of Canada’s Employability skills 2000+ lists the following as core skills needed in the workplace: to be able to communicate, manage information, use numbers, think and solve problems, demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours, be responsible, be adaptable, learn continuously, work safely, work with others, and participate in projects and tasks. Tacitly identified and yet explicitly missing from the list is critical thinking. Critical thinking is defined as “the
art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving it” (Paul & Elder, 2008, p. 2). It is arguably a key component of most, if not all, of the employability skills listed above. Most scholars and lay people alike agree critical thinking is or should be the primary objective of higher education (Katsioloudes & Tischio, 2001; Pfeffer & Fong, 2004; Willingham, 2007). “Understanding critical thinking is essential since it touches many aspects of our lives, and many of these aspects are interrelated” (Flores, Matkin, Bubach, Quinn & Harding, 2012, p. 213). Counterpoised with this objective is the nature of the university classroom in the 21st century. The typical Canadian business school classroom is now largely composed of the Millennial generation, and these students come from all over the world, and with a wide variety of backgrounds. They are constantly bombarded with a near excess of information and live in a world that provides an abundance of opportunity and therefore choices. Informed and aware choice is at the heart of critical thinking, decision making and existential philosophy.

Adding to the challenges faced by both the Millennial generation and their educators is the apparent paradox of progress currently taking place in Western society. Technology has changed our lives incredibly, we live much longer, and life for many people is far more comfortable and with more choices. However, at the same time, we have increased levels of anxiety, depression, use of medication, and suicide. We also seem to have a trend toward superficiality (materialism, celebrity worship, internet obsession), and there are indications that people are hungering for a more meaningful existence (Cottingham, 2003; Easterbrook, 2003; Myers, 2000; Seligman, 2002; Wattanasuwan, 2005; Whalen, 1999).

The modern era has produced a qualitatively superficial but quantitatively staggering knowledge of the world. In these terms, human beings have sought to understand themselves through external images provided by the scientific and technological society and have consequently dehumanized and despiritualized their essential being (Bowles, 1989, p. 409).

Allan and Shearer (2012, p. 21) note that, “considering existential issues and making sense of one’s existence may be important for optimal human functioning. However, people differ considerably in how often they contemplate these core issues.” In this article we argue that existential questions naturally arise when a person has strong critical thinking skills, in turn leading to enhanced existential thinking. We suggest that this has the likely consequence of empowering contemporary university students to understand the self in the workplace, to “go against the herd” and to challenge conventional wisdom. We first characterize aspects of today’s globalized business classroom, and then consider the linkages between critical thinking and existential philosophy. We then conclude with some recommendations and future directions for this line of reasoning.

**Today’s Globalized Classroom**

Students are flocking to college because the world is more complex, turbulent, and more reliant on knowledge than ever before. But educational practices invented when higher education served only the few are increasingly disconnected from the needs of contemporary students. (Greater Expectations, 2002, p. viii)

From a demographic perspective, today’s Canadian university business classroom is a very different one than it was thirty years ago. In the 1980s the student body consisted predominantly of white males. The classroom is now increasingly diverse, in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, and nationality (AACSB Business School Data Trends, 2013; AUCC Trends in Higher Education, 2011; Gudrais, 2011; Statistics Canada). The majority of students are the Millennial generation or Generation Y, usually defined as those born between 1982 and 2000 (Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008). Millennials are also referred to as the Net generation, Echo boomers, the Nexters, the Nintendo generation, generation N, and the Digital generation (Feiertag & Burge, 2008; McHaney, 2011; Partridge & Hallam, 2006).

The Millennial generation is defined by technology as they have grown up with computers. They are called the ‘connected’ generation and the most “techno-savvy” generation (Feiertag & Burge, 2008; Fogarty, 2008; Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008). While Millennials are very tech-savvy, their effective communication skills, both
writing and verbal are questionable (Feiertag & Burge, 2008; Turkle, 2012). This may be related to the emergence of the smartphone where information is readily available and texting is the main method of communication (Tapscott, 2009).

Millennials are socially embedded and they greatly value teamwork and the opinion of their peers (Fogarty, 2008; Smith & Clark, 2010). Most enjoy collaborating with others and working in groups. They have been brought up with a value of positive self-esteem (Fogarty, 2008): “The power of positive thinking appears to have won out over the school of hard knocks” (Fogarty, 2008, p. 370). Many argue that Millennials have been overly valued and over-protected by their parents (Fogarty, 2008; Smith & Clark, 2010; Winograd & Hais, 2011), and this approach may render the Millennial less able to analyze situations and to come up with workable solutions independently. Parents of Millennials are described as “helicopter parents” since they tend to swoop in to help solve their children’s problems (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Smith & Clark (2010, p. 1) note that, as a result, students may still be reliant on their parents to deal with problems and challenges they face at university.

This does not mean however, that Millennials live stress free or without expectations (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Many students have stressful, long days and are more likely to have a part-time job than previous generations (Marsh, 2007). They are very busy and university may be only one of their priorities at the moment. According to Statistics Canada almost 16% of teens label themselves as workaholics, 39% feel under constant pressure to accomplish more than they could handle, and 64% get less sleep in order to get what they want done in a day (Marsh, 2007). These reported challenges seem indicative of the origins of Millennials reported expectations for their career to offer a reasonable work/life balance, good pay and benefits, opportunity for rapid advancement, meaningful work experiences, and a nurturing work environment (Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010). In recent years universities have created a variety of programs to help students deal with stress, notably during exam periods. Dalhousie University in Halifax now has a “petting room” where students can interact with animals to relieve stress.

Many, if not most Millennials, tend to regard the purpose of university as getting a needed credential, i.e., job training (Pfeffer & Fong, 2004). They are highly focused on grades, which is logical given the societal importance placed on university marks and GPA. However, university faculty members note that today’s students
tend to be “either very good or very poor performers” (Stewart & Bernhardt, 2008, p. 597).

Not surprisingly, networked and highly technologically capable Millennials are also said to be more narcissistic than previous generations (Stewart & Bernhart, 2010; Twenge & Campbell, 2009). In fact, Stewart and Bernhart (2010) found empirical support for increases in narcissism and impulsivity when comparing 2004–2008 undergraduates versus pre 1987 undergraduates. The ability to regard a concept or situation from outside of one’s own perspective and apply concerted and sustained effort in doing so is a hallmark of critical thinking. Consequently, increases in narcissism and also in impulsivity are likely detrimental to pursuing an agenda of teaching critical thinking as a practice.

An increase in narcissism also appears to be further supported by the substantial time spent maintaining social networking identities:

When asked why they are so strongly drawn to a “virtual” world, millennials explain that it enables them to live out their wildest dreams and achieve a high level of skills appreciated by their peers. While many of them excelled in high school and college, they don’t seem attracted to the current structured world of work. Many of them seem to explore their options, waiting for the right moment or opportunity to come along, and are not in a hurry to proactively chase it. (Holt, Marques & Way, 2012, p. 81)

Consequently, some describe them as the “entitled” generation, and this has implications for educational situations (Twenge & Campbell, 2008). For example, Millennials don’t seem to relate well to their university professors believing that the professors are “out of touch” with their generation (McCabe & Trevino, 1995):

Business school faculty often find that their students are cynical, responding with disbelief when their professors argue that business is built on trust and ethical conduct, or that good guys get ahead. Many students view their professors as ivory-tower types who do not know what it is like in the trenches. (McCabe & Trevino, 1995, p. 213)

This characterization of professors as detached from contemporary concerns is compounded when combined with inattentiveness in the classroom. Millennials are easily bored (Tapscott, 2009) and
they are used to being entertained (Partridge & Hallam, 2006). This puts pressure on professors to “entertain” students in class, a role which many faculty undoubtedly do not agree with. In some cases this pressure to entertain has resulted in interactive teaching where the teacher acts as a “game-show host” throughout the class (Tapscott, 2009, p. 131).

Perhaps useful in aiding understanding of the Millennial Generation is Arnett’s (2010) proposal of a new lifestage, “emerging adulthood”, which goes from the late teens to at least the mid-twenties. This new theorized lifestage may help to explain the situation of the Millennial Generation which in effect, argues that Millennials are delaying becoming adults (Stewart & Bernhardt, 2010). “Instead of entering adult roles of marriage, parenthood, and stable work shortly after high school, as most young people did in 1976, today most wait until at least their late 20s to make these transitions” (Arnett, 2010, p. 89). As a result, the Millennial generation are going through a new period of adulthood which may possibly become the norm. “Generations—and glib generational generalizations—may come and go, but emerging adulthood is here to stay” (Arnett, 2010, p. 91).

Additionally, most business schools now attract a growing number of international students, particularly from China, the Middle East, and the Caribbean, but increasingly from all over the world. According to Statistics Canada, international enrollment increased from 36,822 in 1992 to 87,798 in 2008 with the majority going into business programs (Statistics Canada). These students come from a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds and life experiences. For many of them, English is their second language (and one that they are still improving upon), which makes higher education an even greater challenge. Many international students hope to go onto graduate education or work in Canada after completing their degree.

In short, today’s globalized classroom is not a homogenous group but composed of a diverse group of students with varying backgrounds and abilities. As a result, Minter (2010) argues that we need to pay much greater attention to the individual student—learning styles, biases, etc. Tapscott (2009) states that the teaching model needs to change from “one size fits all, to one size fits one” (p. 139). It is clear that today’s globalized classroom is a very different one than the past and these differences make the teaching of critical thinking more challenging, yet simultaneously more needed than in the past.
Critical Thinking

Critical thinking came before schooling was ever invented, it lies at the very roots of civilization. It is a cornerstone in the journey human kind is taking from beastly savagery to global sensitivity. (Facione, 2011b, p. 11)

Critical thinking is viewed from a variety of perspectives, defined in many ways, and the term itself can be misleading (Facione, 2010a; Katsioloudes & Tischio, 2001; Krupat, Sprague, Wolpaw, Haidet, Hatem & O’Brien, 2011; Lipman, 1988; Minter, 2010). The concept of critical thinking (CT) can be traced back to Socrates’ famous quote, “the unexamined life is not worth living” (Anderson, 2008, p. 176). Socrates argued that everything, how we live and how society develops, should be questioned. Elder (2007) defines critical thinking as “self-guided, self-disciplined thinking which attempts to reason at the highest level of quality in a fair-minded way. People who think critically consistently attempt to live rationally, reasonably, empathetically. They are keenly aware of the inherently flawed nature of human thinking when left unchecked” (p. 1). Giancarlo and Facione (2001) describe critical thinking as “purposeful, self-regulatory judgment, a human cognitive process. As a result of this non-linear, recursive process, a person forms a judgment about what to believe or what to do in a given context...a person engaged in CT uses a core set of cognitive skills—analysis, interpretation, inference, explanation, evaluation, and self-regulation—to form that judgment and to monitor and improve the quality of that judgment” (p. 31). Others note that critical thinking involves getting people to ‘think about their thinking’: “Part of the process of getting students to become critical thinkers involves getting them to practice meta-cognition, that is, they must become aware of not only what they are thinking but also how they are thinking” (McGlynn, 2005, p. 16). Lipman (1988) describes critical thinking as, “skillful, responsible thinking that facilitates good judgement because it (1) relies upon criteria, (2) is self-correcting, and (3) is sensitive to context” (p. 39).

In addition to describing the process of critical thinking, some definitions emphasize that critical thinking requires an attitudinal or dispositional component (Browne & Keeley, 2007; Halpern, 1996; Lampert, 2007). Facione (2011) uses the term, the “critical spirit” to describe such an attitude. Browne and Keeley (2007) state, “lis-
tention and reading critically—that is, reacting with systematic evaluation to what you heard and read—requires a set of skills and attitudes” (p. 2). Thus, in order to teach students to think critically, educators must teach the key skills of questioning and also foster a critical thinking attitude, i.e., encourage them to want to be critical thinkers. This encouragement should be against a backdrop of desirability, as strong critical thinking skills are related to numerous factors including creativity, empathy, lifelong learning, engaged citizenship, and simply being able to navigate life successfully on a day to day basis (Browne & Keeley, 2007; Minter, 2010; Moon, 2008; Terenzini, Springer, Pascarella & Noura, 1995).

One of the debates on critical thinking concerns whether or not it is a general skill or if it is domain specific (Mingers, 2000; Mulnix, 2012). Domain specific means that critical thinking is specific to one area and therefore is not a transferable skill. Others believe that critical thinking is a general skill; one that can be applied to any area. This relates back to the disposition required for critical thinking. A person with a “questioning attitude” is probably far more likely to embrace critical thinking across many domains.

It has been said that we are “drowning in information but starved for knowledge” (Naisbitt, 1982, p. 24) and Paul, Elder & Bartell (2004) note: “Human thinking left to itself often gravitates toward prejudice, over-generalization, common fallacies, self-deception, rigidity, and narrowness” (p. 2). The cost of weak critical thinking is great, as poor thinking skills have been linked to lost revenue, patient deaths, job loss, ineffective law enforcement, gullible voters, poor communication, combat casualties, leadership problems, imprisonment, bad decisions, financial mismanagement, academic failure, drug addiction, and other problematic behavior (Facione, 2011; Flores, Matkin, Bubach, Quinn & Harding, 2012).

Unfortunately, at the very time that educators recognize the overwhelming importance of teaching higher-order thinking skills, it also seems that it is not being done effectively (Doherty, Hansen & Kaya, 2005; Flores, Matkin, Bubach, Quinn & Harding, 2012; Reid & Anderson, 2012; Willingham, 2007). Teaching critical thinking to students has always been a challenge for university educators and many argue it has historically been done poorly (Pfeffer & Fong, 2004): “Although higher education has been tasked with producing critical thinkers, the results have been unsatisfactory to date” (Flores, Matkin, Bubach, Quinn & Harding, 2012, p. 227). The nature of critical thinking and approaches to teaching and assessing it in tertiary education are debatable.
The often unstated assumptions seem to be that students will develop as critical thinkers by osmosis, and that critical thinking will be assessed predominantly in written assignments. Some students may be able to enroll in stand-alone critical thinking subjects, while others may receive little overt instruction in critical thinking. (Tapper, 2004, pp. 199-200)

Business students are well-served by a broad curriculum that emphasizes careful, responsible, and reflective thinking about discipline specific knowledge (such as management strategies), as well as about the actual social and economic conditions they might face in the workplace (Katsioloudes & Tischio, 2001, p. 48). Millennials have remarkable access to information, which makes strong critical thinking skills more important than ever in order to allow them to sift through and evaluate information (Doherty, Hansen & Kaya, 2005; Hood, 2012). The juxtaposition of having large volumes of information available and needing to be able to navigate and evaluate such information is at the heart of the identity of technologically embedded Millennials.

Jaime S. Fall, a vice president at the HR Policy Association puts it well when he states that young employees “are very good at finding information, but not as good at putting that information into context”. He goes on to state that, “They’re really good at technology, but not at how to take those skills and resolve specific business problems.” and says that “colleges can’t be either/or anymore—a trade school or a liberal arts college. We need skilled people with well-rounded backgrounds and the ability to think constructively.” (Tugend, 2013, p. 1)

Strong critical thinking skills are not only a goal in itself but are also a necessary pre-requisite in order to study most business subjects, for example ethical behavior, strategic management, and Human Resource Management. How does one discuss complex global problems with students if they don’t have at least a basic ability to think critically? Understanding complicated and multi-faceted issues requires an ability to appreciate and analyze different points of view. These needs dovetail exceptionally well with the needs of the modern business student, but “business professors too often forget that executive decision makers are not fact collectors;
they are fact users and integrators. Thus, what they need from educators is help in understanding how to interpret facts and guidance from experienced teachers in making decisions in the absence of clear facts” (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005, p. 101).

There have been a wide variety of methods proposed to effectively teach critical thinking including using meaningful discussion topics, professors modeling critical thinking, encouraging and providing time for students to engage in thinking, showing examples of critical thinking, and assessing on critical thinking (Browne & Keely, 2007; Halpern, 1996; Moon, 2008; Paul, 1992; Terenzini et al, 1995). Unfortunately, no one seems to be quite sure how to teach critical thinking to today’s globalized Millennials classroom. Feiertag & Burge (2008) note: “It should come as no surprise that university administrators, faculty and students do not necessarily see eye to eye on how Gen N learns” (p. 466). And perhaps the bigger question is “how do we engage the international Millennial classroom in higher education?”

We argue that the answer to many of the dilemmas graduates are facing today stem from a lack of an existential perspective. The management philosophy and pedagogy literatures recent forays into existentialist philosophy (see MacMillan, Yue & Mills, 2012, 2013; and Yue, 2010) and compatible critical perspectives on work and career (e.g. MacMillan, 2009; Yue & MacMillan, 2013; MacMillan & Yue, 2012) may add insight into the need for critical thinking and especially important, how we might frame teaching it.

The Existential Imperative

Existential Philosophy

Existentialism is a philosophy of human existence focused on the individual Self and how the Self is continually transformed (Bagnini, 2005; Breisach, 1962; Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Cotkin, 2003; Grene, 1959; Kaufmann, 1989; Reinhardt, 1960; Reynolds, 2006; Schrag, 1977; Tanzer, 2008; Tillich, 1952). It is a school of thought dating back to Søren Kierkegaard in the 1800s, however it did not come into prominence until after World War II when Europeans were experiencing anxiety and despair, and seeking a philosophical direction (Allen, 1973; Barrett, 1962; Breisach, 1962; Cotkin, 2003; Kierkegaard, 1956; Reynolds, 2006; Tanzer, 2008). Existentialism has been viewed in many ways as various philosophers (and psychologists) have contributed to our understanding (Nietzsche,
1999; Beauvoir, 1983; Sartre, 1956, 1963, 1970; Heidegger, 1967; Camus, 1967, 1972; Tillich, 1952; Yalom, 1980). However, despite the varied views, there are key Existential themes (such as freedom, authenticity, choice, death, contingency) which provide insight into understanding the dilemmas and challenges of human existence.

Existentialism is based on the premise that “existence precedes essence”—that we have no predetermined essence but that we create our essence through the lives we choose (and subsequently experience) (Sartre, 1970). Existentialism argues for the “authentic life;” the consciously chosen life which is meaningful to the individual. “Meaning in life is obtained through an authentic existence. The conditions for achieving this kind of existence are commitment to actualize one’s possibilities to choose and decide about the possibilities and to act on them” (Orbach, 2008, p. 284). Therefore, the onus is on the individual to create meaning by his/her choices, the resulting experiences, and the reflection (reflexivity) upon those lived experiences. “The Existential philosopher insists that what I really know is not the external world as such, but my own experience; for him the personal is real” (Roubiczek, 1964, p. 10).

The opposite of the authentic life is the unauthentic (or inauthentic) life, known in existential terms, as living in Bad Faith. “All the existentialists accept authentic vs. unauthentic modes of existing as a basic distinction which divides men [sic] at the root of their very being, and is manifested at every level of their concrete existence” (Wild, 1966, p. 126). To live in Bad Faith is to live the “unexamined life,” the life that is not questioned and therefore not consciously chosen. “We say indifferently of a person that he shows signs of bad faith or that he lies to himself... [we] shall willingly grant that bad faith is a lie to oneself, on condition that we distinguish the lie to oneself from lying in general” (Sartre, 1956, p. 48). However, Bad Faith is difficult to avoid as authenticity is a dynamic state of existence and is thus a continual challenge for the individual.

Many existentialists consider humans to be a “tortured” species, living in an absurd world and unable to comprehend life (Camus, 1967; Sartre, 1956). The world and ourselves are a mystery to us, but despite this, we must somehow navigate through life and try to make sense of that life. Sartre (1956) tells us that we are thrown into this world, and Barnes (1959) reminds us that “One has to play the game, but one is never given a book of rules” (p. 49).

Existentialism also highlights the contingent nature of human
existence, the fact that many factors are out of one’s control. Since little of life can be predicted with certainty, the future self is a mystery to the individual and contingent upon unknown factors, which therefore results in a state of anxiety. Each day we are faced with a variety of choices and possibilities; many of which we are fearful of, since the results could be positive or negative. Moreover, while aspects of our daily existence are predictable, an existentialist perspective highlights the uncertainty that is simultaneously present in our daily lives (Thompson, 1995, p. 504). To exist contingently also means that how we view our lives (and past experiences) will probably change with new circumstances of life and as the Self changes. Therefore, what may be meaningful at one point in time, such as one’s career, may have little meaning at a different point in time.

Ultimately, the most significant contingent factor that we face is death and the end of our existence. Death is arguably one of the most important themes of existentialism. The recognition of our inevitable death causes “anguish” as it ends all choices and possibilities, and we rarely know when it will occur. We may live to an old age or we may die at a very young age from an accident or fatal disease. From an existential point of view, the fact that we know that we will some day cease to exist, provides incentive to ignore the trivial aspects of life and gives us the freedom to live the authentic life. Awareness of one’s mortality is a precondition of a life of meaning (Heidegger, 1967; Stokes, 2002).

Existential philosophy gives us insights into the nature of the individual self, the circumstances and dilemmas of everyday life, and in particular, it gives us a way to view the creation of individual meaning, i.e., the authentic life in existential terms. Golomb (1995) notes, “the existential question today is not whether to be or not to be, but how one can become what one truly is” (p. 200).

**Critical Thinking & Existentialism**

There are many connections between the ideas of the self, anxiety, choice, and authenticity that link existentialist thought to the context of the globalized millennial student. Existential thinking is defined as “the tendency to engage with ultimate concerns and the capacity to carry out a meaning-making process that locates oneself in relation to these existential issues” (Allan & Shearer, 2012, p. 22). Minimally, the existential search for meaning and the authentic good life are seemingly similar to the hopes and expectations of the
modern millennial student. Existentialism emphasizes the question of “how is one to live,” a difficult question to answer in contemporary times given the abundance of information Millennials have (literally) at their fingertips. Strong critical thinking makes it possible to understand how choices, experience, and reflexivity continually transform the self—the impact of the choice of work, the transformative experience of work each day, and accept the benefits of going “against the herd”.

For the Millennial generation the risks of falling into the inauthentic trap of living up to the expectations and roles offered by others are especially poignant in a heavily evaluative and coercive socially networked world. In order to live authentically, the individual must freely and consciously choose the importance of work in one’s life and the type of work itself. But Millennials are faced with a very different work landscape than previous generations, which makes choosing work a more onerous task. In order to recognize and evaluate the many choices they have about work they need to be able to critically evaluate the vast amounts of information in their individual world. “The issue of critical thinking cannot be separated from how students view their information universe” (Weiler, 2004, p. 47)

Above all else, existentialism is about awakening or rebelling from the “ordinary person” syndrome, the routine pattern of existence that society can inadvertently or overtly place on people (Olson, 1962; Reynolds, 2006; Wild, 1966). Breisach (1962) contends that, “Existentialists have asked for a life in which man [sic] continuously questions his purpose and accepts responsibility for his actions, one which truly reflects man’s special position in this world” (pp. 4–5). From birth, different societies engrav in individuals an imperative to live a certain way, and so one may become continually dependent on “getting along”. However, citizens in an increasingly globalized world have the opportunity (and we believe responsibility) to speak up against injustices of the day, whether they are domestic or international. For example, the divide between the haves and have-nots has become greater in recent decades and governments seem unwilling to address the growing inequality. Market capitalism itself has proven to be problematic as the belief that increased wealth and materialism would be the path to fulfillment and happiness has not materialized. “The great self-confidence of the Western technological nations, and especially of the United States, was in large part because of the belief that materialism—the prolongation of a healthy life, the acquisition of
wealth, the ownership of consumer goods—would be the royal road to a happy life” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, pp. 822). Moreover, many are arguing that the increasing emphasis on wealth and materialism is resulting in a “meaning deficit” for the individual and society (Fox, 1994; Fromm, 1976; Maslow, 1971; Needleman, 1991).

The very pragmatic need for critical thinking in an information rich, and yet meaning poor situation is precisely what is seen as having spawned contemporary existentialism post World War Two. This is especially relevant to a generation of young people who highly value relationships and who may be especially susceptible to peer pressure. Heidegger says that we “fall” (fallenness) into inauthenticity and become what is expected of us in the “public arena” and behave according to the norms and rules of society. We escape from our true selves into an organized life, which is untrue or false. In effect, one becomes an actor at work and plays a role that may not be in line with one’s true self. The Millennial generation’s challenge is to “discover” themselves in a vastly different world, a more complex one, peopled with many demands and new work options. Strong critical thinking is necessary to understand the pressure to conform to others, and to accept going “against the herd”, a key existential concept (Heidegger, 1967). Failure to go against the herd can result in bad faith decision-making, unethical behavior, and complacency about important societal issues, and how society evolves.

Towards a Broader View of Critical Thinking

Current critical thinking development is too narrow and with a broader perspective, improved opportunity to meaningfully teach critical thinking opens up. To frame critical thinking attitudes and skills as being of personal importance and relevant to more concrete aspects of one’s life helps situate the subject within the Millennial generation’s quest for meaning. What might this look like? To encourage consideration of our argument, we offer a few specific suggestions.

Recommendations

How to marry the needs and characteristics of the millennial student in the globalized classroom with the requirements for critical thinking and the insights from existential thought? Our thoughts
on the challenges and the opportunities in considering this question arise from our work as teachers and as philosophers.

We are convinced that the universal nature of the topics that existentialism broaches is an important part of the answer. This contention is underscored by our earlier discussion about how issues of meaning in life are predicated upon a consideration of the contingent nature of our existence and that we enter our lives against a backdrop of the social, which is already in process. Thus we already possess a lived sense of entering a game for which we do not know the rules. We as individuals have already had the experience of trying to understand the conditions under which we live our social existence with nothing but observation, thought, and consideration as our touchstones. With this in mind we first propose that educators openly discuss issues of meaning and choice in the classroom, being that every individual has some lived experience of having to practically manage the unknowable, even if this experience is buried in the past of one’s own childhood. To expose students to the idea that they have choice at the most basic of levels (that of identity and self) is both seemingly trite and quite radical at the same time. We can present the university as a place where students realize the impact of their choices, and “discover themselves” through chosen experiences.

Second, we suggest that the business school curriculum incorporates a critical perspective on global problems such as poverty, racism, conflict and inequity. In a sense this second suggestion is two-pronged in conception. The first suggestion above is to make use of self-interest and self-knowledge on the part of the student to galvanize a sense of radical empowerment around choice. This second suggestion is to then situate this self-determination, at the most basic and experiential levels within a real world of consequences. Business students need to understand the world they live in, and in particular how self-interests at times conflict with the greater good of society. As earlier discussed, Millennials have many preconceived notions of work and the world, and they would benefit from the ability to challenge these beliefs. Such challenging, when grounded in a sense of capability in terms of choosing meaning in one’s life, results in an individually grounded authenticity.

Third, we maintain that courses that deal with workplace interaction such as Organizational Behaviour, Leadership, and Human Resource Management are the obvious locations in which to focus on how daily choices, subsequent actions, and reflexivity transform the individual Self and others in the workplace. This becomes es-
especially poignant when working in a multicultural workplace composed of a wide assortment of people with varying backgrounds, beliefs and values.

Overall, we believe that business schools need to take a much broader approach to the curriculum, and challenge students beyond the traditional business school model. Universities need to be a place where students can make choices on how they will live and in what kind of society and world they wish to live.

Conclusion

We have characterized the millennial student as living in an information rich, well connected, and yet meaning poor social context. The vexing problems and challenges faced by Millennials are similar to the sense of restlessness, of ennui, that lead to a modern resurgence in interest in existentialism post World War II. We have argued that the development of strong critical thinking skills is a necessary prerequisite for the development of the existential self and the self’s ability to live the authentic life.

We live in strange times, in which we have more easily accessed knowledge than ever before and thus have many more choices. From an existential perspective, critical thinking is the most basic and necessary life skill needed in order for the individual to freely choose his/her life. Educators have ample opportunity to work with students to develop critical thinking in business schools as we have some existing courses, content and structures that support good decision-making. Applying these techniques to matters of individual importance, such as career planning and development, has the potential to build a sort of applied credibility that may resonate more effectively with the millennial generation. This has the consequence of providing a lived example of the utility of adopting a critical thinking attitude, surely fertile intellectual ground for critical thinking skills enhancement.

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Emotional Intelligence, Team Learning Effectiveness, and Academic Performance: A Quantitative Study of Middle Managers Attending Corporate Education Programs

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Abstract: This paper empirically examines the correlation between Trait Emotional Intelligence and team performance and individual academic performance in a corporate training setting. Findings suggest a strong, significant, positive relationship between Trait Emotional Intelligence and team performance. The significant yet moderate correlation between Trait Emotional Intelligence and individual academic performance supports previous research that suggests EI has a moderating rather than direct effect on academic performance. Implications for educators are discussed.

Key Words: trait emotional intelligence, team performance, academic performance

Introduction

Valuing Emotional Intelligence (EI) skills in organizational settings for selection, performance management, and promotional purposes is on the rise and has been of interest in a variety of industries including educational, clinical, health, and social environments. Emotional Intelligence as an area of research, however, is relatively young and the literature examining the impact of emotional intelligence on performance is largely contradictory. This study provides empirical evidence to support the correlation between emotional intelligence scores and organizational outcomes such as team effectiveness and performance. Data were gathered and analyzed from surveys of mid-level business managers of a consumer goods company to investigate the relationships between trait emotional intel-

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Intelligence, team learning effectiveness, and academic performance. Although this study is not based on traditional post-secondary pedagogy, the results of corporate-based training and team performance should be generalizable to the mature students and continuing education environments.

Literature Review

The literature review section is comprised of four subsections: history and definition of Emotional Intelligence (EI) as well as a discussion around the main constructs and methods for measuring Emotional Intelligence.

History of Emotional Intelligence

The concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) has a long history in psychology. According to Sharma (2008), the roots of EI could be traced back to the seventeenth century when in 1677 Spinoza suggested that cognition should be measured by considering emotion and intellect together. In the 20th century, Thorndike (1920) introduced the concept of ‘Social Intelligence’ as the ability to understand and manage people in human relations. In the following decades, many researchers contributed to the development of the theory of Social or Emotional Intelligence (Gardner, 1983; Lee, 1948; Lum, 1960; Mangus and Woodward, 1949; Mower, 1960; Sharma, 1977; Tomkins, 1962; Wagner and Sternberg, 1985; Wechsler, 1940). By the end of the 20th century, EI had evolved to a two-dimensional construct comprising multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983): “Interpersonal intelligence” or “a person’s capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people and, consequently, to work effectively with others”; and “Intrapersonal intelligence” or “the capacity to understand oneself, to have an effective working model of oneself, including one’s own desires, fears, and capacities, and to use such information effectively in regulating one’s own life” (Gardner, 1999, p. 43).

Despite significant theoretical contributions to the development of the construct of EI in the latter half of the 20th century, there was a dearth of empirical research, that is, until the introduction of Salovey and Mayer’s (1990) scientific EI model and Goleman’s (1995) practitioner model. After these seminal works were published, SCOPUS publications with the keywords “Emotional Intelligence” in their title or abstract grew from 14 in 1998 to 145 in
2006 and an estimated 1,300 publications by 2010 (Stough, Saklofske, & Parker, 2009). This flurry of academic interest in EI did not help the construct cohere. On the contrary, the plethora of EI frameworks, definitions, and models led to controversy about the credibility, validity, and ambiguity of the construct (Caruso, 2008). Murphy and Sideman (2006) believe that disagreements over definition, validity, and impact of EI reflect of a clash of cultures between the science-based academics, who emphasize precision, empirical confirmation, and scientific caution; and the practice-driven business practitioners, who emphasize practicality and solving real-world problems. The works of Salovey & Mayer (1997) and their colleagues could be characterized as following the science-driven culture, whereas the model of Goleman (1995) and his colleagues represents an example of the practice-driven culture. This clash of cultures has led to significant differences in how the Emotional Intelligence construct is defined (Locke, 2005) and in which theories it is grounded (Caruso, 2008).

Perez, Petrides & Furnham (2005) argue that, in the majority of cases, the correspondence between EI models and empirical data has been weak, and, that most of the models are not based on a strong theoretical foundation. Researchers are also split on their opinions about the compatibility of existing models. While some researchers purport that some of the generally accepted approaches to the definition and measurement of EI are fundamentally dissimilar and measure very different things (Bracket & Mayer, 2003; Caruso, 2008), others claim that various models and definitions of EI tend to complement, rather than conflict with one another (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000).

**Definition of Emotional Intelligence**

With respect to defining EI, according to Caruso (2008), the term Emotional Intelligence has become ambiguous. Mayer and Salovey (1997) for instance define EI as, “the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (p.10). Ghini, Freedman, and Jensen (2005) provided a more general description by defining emotional intelligence as “the capacity to integrate thinking and feeling to make optimal decisions” (p. 5). Moreover, Goleman (1995) articulated EI as the ability to motivate oneself despite frustration; to control impulses by delaying gratifica-
tion; to regulate mood by thinking rather than responding immediately, and the ability to feel empathy.

One of the main criticisms to Emotional Intelligence has been the scope and instability of its definition. Locke (2005) argues that the definition of EI is too broad and changes continuously. Moreover, researchers argue that some definitions of EI are attempts to embed the construct in a moral discourse (Matthews, Emo, Roberts and Zeidner, 2006), i.e. “there is an old-fashioned word for the body of skills that EI represents: character” (Goleman, 1995, p. 34).

Caruso (2008) asserts that the confusion associated with the definition of EI arises from the existence of multiple generally accepted approaches to EI and its measurement (i.e. ability EI, trait EI, and competency EI). Further, Murphy and Sideman (2006) believe such arguments over definition, validity, and impact of EI are a reflection of a clash of cultures among its proponents and opponents. Murphy and Sideman (2006) define these two groups as: (a) a science-driven culture that emphasizes theory, precision, empirical confirmation, and scientific caution; and (b) the praxis-driven culture, in which the main focus is on practicality and attempts to solve real-world problems. Given this ongoing debate, gaining a better understanding of how to define Emotional Intelligence requires deeper examination of underlying differences among existing models and constructs of EI. To this end, the succeeding section provides an overview of the existing constructs and associated models for measuring EI under each construct.

### Main Constructs and Measures of Emotional Intelligence

Given the debate in the literature about the multiple interpretations of EI, it is wise to distinguish between various approaches to defining and measuring Emotional Intelligence (Petrides, Furnham, & Frederickson, 2004; Warwick & Nettlebeck, 2004). According to Caruso (2008), there are three generally accepted approaches to the definition and measurement of EI:

1. Competency models that comprise a set of emotional competencies defined as learned capabilities based on EI (e.g. Goleman, 2001);
2. Ability models that define emotional intelligence as a conceptually related set of mental abilities to do with processing of emotional information (e.g. Mayer & Salovey, 1997); and
3. Trait models that define emotional intelligence as an array of socio-emotional traits such as assertiveness (e.g., Bar-On, 1997).

The model type determines the appropriate type of measurement method. For instance, the use of self-report measurement method in trait EI versus maximum-performance measurement method employed by ability EI poses significant implications for the operationalization of these constructs. The following paragraph introduces brief descriptions of the most prominent examples of measures for competence EI, ability EI, and trait EI models.

The Competency Model

The Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI) is based on competence model and was designed to assess emotional competencies and positive social behaviors (Goleman, 1995; Boyatzis, Goleman and Rhee, 2000; Sala, 2002) and is available in both self-report and 360-degree formats. The two major criticisms of the ECI are its lack of empirical evidence of psychometric properties in peer-reviewed, scientific journals (Conte & Dean, 2006; Perez et al., 2005; Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2002) and its lack of discriminant validity with several personality dimensions.

The Ability Model

Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS; Mayer, Caruso and Salovey, 1999) and its successor, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso, 2002) are arguably the most salient measures of Ability EI. The MEIS includes 402 items and produces four subscales of perception, assimilation, understanding, and managing emotions (Mayer, Caruso and Salovey, 2000). As the successor of MEIS, the MSCEIT is also based on Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) EI Ability Model. The MSCEIT provides a total EI score as well as four Branch scores, including: (1) perception of emotion, (2) integration and assimilation of emotion, (3) knowledge about emotions, and (4) management of emotions. The main challenge that both MEIS and MSCEIT have to overcome is the inherent subjectivity of emotional experience and the absence of scientific standards for objectively determining the correct answers (Watson, 2000; Conte, 2005; MacCann et al., 2003).
The Trait Model

In practice, the questionnaire (or trait approach) is more popular than the ability test approach for measuring Emotional Intelligence (Matthews et al., 2006). The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue), based on “Trait EI” theory, is a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies (Perez et al., 2005; Furnham & Petrides, 2003; Petrides, Frederickson, & Furnham, 2004; Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007; Petrides, 2009a). Trait EI is purported to be the only operational definition in the field of EI research that recognizes the inherent subjectivity of emotional experience (Petrides, 2010).

The long form of the TEIQue measures 153 items, providing scores on 15 subscales, four factors (Emotionality, Sociability, Well-being, and Self-control), and a global trait EI score (Petrides, 2009a). With respect to reliability of TEIQue, the internal consistency of its 20 variables, including 15 facets, 4 factors, and global Trait EI, are satisfactory for both male and female samples (e.g. alpha value for global Trait EI of female sample (N=907) was 0.89 and for male sample (N=759) at 0.92 (Petrides, 2009a). In addition to the full form of TEIQue, five other TEIQue instruments are also available. These include; (1) TEIQue-SF (a 30-item short form that includes two items from each of the 15 facets of the TEIQue, generating a global trait EI score); (2) TEIQue 360 and 360-SF (available for both the full form and the short form of the TEIQue, these forms are used for collecting observer ratings); (3) TEIQue-AFF (similar to the TEIQue full form, but targeted at adolescents between 13 and 17 years); (4) TEIQue-ASF (consisting of 30 short statements, this is the simplified version of the adolescent full form of the TEIQue, targeted at adolescents between 13 and 17 years); (5) TEIQue-CF (consisting of 75 items, this instrument is for assessing the emotion related facets of child personality, based on sampling domain that is specifically developed for children between 8 and 12 years) (Petrides, 2009a).

Since researchers suggest that the operationalization of trait EI construct is congruent with the subjective nature of emotional experience (Petrides, 2009a), it is in a better position to avoid the conceptual and psychometric challenges facing competency and ability EI. Thus, a measure of trait EI was selected for this study. The full form of the TEIQue may be considered too long at 153 items and may lead to fatigue bias. Therefore, the 30-item short
form (TEIQue-SF) was chosen due to its success in research designs with limited experimental time.

Methods and Sample

This study employed a quantitative research strategy comprising a pen-and-paper, self-report questionnaire to measure Trait Emotional Intelligence (TEIQue-SF), a peer-rated questionnaire to measure team effectiveness, and biographical data. Actual final course grades were also used to measure academic performance. The convenience sample consisted of 56 mid-level managers of a consumer goods company, 30 of whom were male and 26 of whom were female. Response rate was 100 percent. The 30-item TEIQue—SF comprised two items from each of the 15 facets of the long-form TEIQue to generate a global trait EI score. The survey items included a 7-point Likert response scale ranging from completely disagree, for the score of one; to completely agree, for the score of seven. The global trait EI score of each respondent was generated by reverse scoring 15 of the question items (out of 30) and then summing up all responses. Respondents were also asked to provide demographic information such as their age, gender, and country of origin.

In addition, team learning effectiveness scores were measured through a peer-report questionnaire. Subjects of the study were involved in five different team assignments as part of a series of corporate education training program. Each candidate was asked to assess team effectiveness of other team members by completing a questionnaire that evaluated teamwork based on nine criteria: (1) Preparedness (research, reading, and assignment complete); (2) Attendance (on-time and stayed for duration); (3) Participation (contributed best academic ability); (4) Demonstrating dignity, respect, and listening (present and respectful); (5) On task (conducted like a professional business meeting); (6) Rotate tasks (willingly offered and accepted new tasks); (7) Conflict resolution (to resolve potential disputes); (8) Decisions by consensus (lead or follow appropriately); (9) Communication during and between meetings (initiated and responded appropriately).

Each respondent was asked to rate other team members on each criterion using a Likert scale ranging from one to five: one being not at all effective and five being very effective. The final team effectiveness score of each individual was calculated by averaging the scores of peer-ratings for various team assignments.
To measure academic performance, respondents’ final course grades in the corporate education program were also taken into consideration. The intra-relational aspects of each candidate’s emotional intelligence score were examined against his/her peer-rated team learning effectiveness score as well as the course grade achieved in the corporate education program. Score calculations and data analysis were conducted using the SPSS statistical software.

Results

Statistical analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between global trait EI scores, team learning effectiveness score, and course grades of respondents. Descriptive statistics indicated that respondents’ global trait EI had the mean value of 156.36 with the standard deviation of 14.74 (N = 56). Moreover, respondents’ team learning effectiveness scores had the mean of 31.61 with standard deviation of 6.45. Pearson correlation between global trait EI and team learning effectiveness (r = 0.693) indicates a strong positive correlation. The coefficient of determination indicated that 48 percent of the variation in global trait EI scores could be explained by the variation in respondents’ team effectiveness score. Further, the reported p-value of 0.000 suggested that the correlation between global trait EI and age was strongly significant.

The Pearson correlation coefficient is only appropriate for data that are approximately normally distributed with no existing outliers. A scatterplot indicated normal distribution and a distinct positive relationship between respondents’ trait EI and team learning effectiveness score. As a contingency, a nonparametric correlation measure was also employed. Spearman’s rho also indicated a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between global trait EI and team learning effectiveness with a correlation coefficient = 0.797 (p < .000).

Statistical analysis was conducted in order to examine the relation between respondents’ trait EI and their academic performance (course grades) in the corporate education program. Descriptive statistics indicated that respondents’ course grades had a mean value of 83.42 (out of 100) with the standard deviation of 9.93 (N = 56). The Pearson correlation between global trait EI and course grade was significant (p < .01), positive, and moderate (r = 0.338). The coefficient of determination was of 0.114 thus 11.4 percent of the variation in respondents’ course grades could be explained by glob-
al trait EI scores.

With such a low coefficient of determination, it is not surprising that a scatterplot diagram indicated a number of outliers and generally did not depict a clear linear relationship between global trait EI and course grade variables. As with the Pearson’s correlation coefficient, the Spearman’s rho reported a significant (p < .000), positive, yet small monotonic relationship between global trait EI and course grade (correlation coefficient = 0.464).

Discussion and Conclusions

Research on Emotional Intelligence in educational, health, organizational, and social science is on the rise but is largely controversial and contradictory. Existing studies on EI and team performance are not as widespread as individual performance studies. More importantly, these studies have reported contradictory results. Some studies have found no relationship between EI and team performance (e.g. Day and Carroll, 2004; Rapisarda, 2002). On the other hand, some research confirms the performance potential of EI in teams. For instance, Jordan, Ashkanasy, Hartel and Hooper (2002) examined the link between EI and team effectiveness in a longitudinal study and reported the existence of such relationship. Due to the steadily increasing use of EI measures in work settings juxtaposed with the existing disconnect in the literature, there is a need for more empirical evidence to examine potential impacts of factors such as team effectiveness and performance on EI scores.

This study attempted to address the call for more empirical research by quantitatively assessing the impact of EI on team effectiveness and academic performance using data from mid-level business managers of a consumer goods company. Pearson’s and Spearman’s rho correlations indicated a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between global trait EI and team learning effectiveness. These findings both conflict with studies that have found no relationship between EI and team performance (Day & Carroll, 2004; Rapisarda, 2002) and confirm studies that have identified a link between EI and team effectiveness or performance (Jordan, Ashkanasy, Hartel & Hooper, 2002; Jordan & Troth, 2004). Further, the results of this study confirm previous research that there is a significant link between emotional intelligence and performance, particularly EI and team performance research (Jordan, Murray & Lawrence, 2009). However, more empirical research and evidence are required before we can make strong as-
sertions. This study adds to the plus side of the argument that there is empirical evidence of a strong, positive, significant relationship between EI and team performance.

With respect to the link between global Trait EI and individual academic performance, research findings have been contradictory. Petrides et al. (2004) found Trait EI to have a positive relationship with performance but only in low-IQ students. On the other hand, Parker, Creque, Barnhart, Harris, Majeski, & Wood (2004) reported modest correlations between Trait EI and academic performance in high school and university samples. The findings of this study provide support for previous research that Trait EI is positively (although moderately) associated with academic performance. Pearson’s and Spearman’s rho correlations indicated a significant, positive yet moderate relationship between global Trait EI and academic performance. According to Petrides (2011), such contradictory findings may point to the possibility that Trait EI effects may vary based on educational level and subject of study of the samples. Further, trait EI could have a moderating and indirect impact on academic performance by affecting students’ capability to network, socialize, and communicate with their peers.

Overall, there are still many unanswered questions with respect to group and individual performance and EI. This study, however, took an incremental step forward by showing a positive relationship between Trait EI and both team performance and individual academic performance. Further research is needed in order to confirm/improve findings, particularly with regards to the relationship between EI and individual academic performance.

Implications for Educators

Based on the findings of this study, there are three areas that pose significant implications for educators: using groups / teams to maximize EI’s moderating role in academic performance; offering EI training programs; and creating awareness of EI differences and their potential impact on the learning environment.

By assigning group work, educators can exploit the impact of peer learning by students who have low trait EI from students who have high trait EI. The students with high EI are better able to deal with the stress of an intellectually demanding environment and typically have larger social networks (Petrides, 2009b). Thus, by example and experience, students with low trait EI can learn coping skills and gain access to valuable social networks from high trait
EI teammates. The caveat for educators is that they need to balance teams with members both high and low EI in order for this learning to take place. More research is needed to provide educators with tools to assess the EI levels of their students.

With respect to offering EI training programs, trainability of EI has been among the most significant promises made within the field of EI research. Goleman (1995) claimed that unlike academic intelligence, EI can increase throughout the life span of individuals through training and development. For instance, Salski and Cartwright (2003) used lectures, group discussions, role plays, and one-on-one sharing to develop students’ EI by recognizing their own emotions, the emotions of others, and the impact that their behavior had on others’ emotions. If Emotional Intelligence can be enhanced by training, educators can improve individual learning, team effectiveness, and academic performance of their students by implementing activities aimed at increasing the EI level of students.

With respect to acknowledging the existing differences in the EI level of students, educators could attempt a custom-designed pedagogical approach whereby students’ specific strengths, weaknesses, and learning objectives are taken into consideration. For instance, educators could modify grading criteria as well as the mix of individual versus team-based learning modules in culturally heterogeneous learning groups. For instance, students with high trait EI are likely to have a superior performance in the participation and presentation components of a course, whereas students with low EI are more likely to succeed in individual components such as tests and essays.

Limitations of the Study & Directions for Future Research

There are a number of limits to this study. First, the findings of this study were generated based on a self-report response method, rather than actual observations in the workplace. Second, the relatively small sample size (N = 56), the restricted sample range, as well as the sample composition may pose limitations with respect to generalizability. Third, data were gathered from middle managers of a consumer goods company with offices in four different countries. Several researchers have warned against the potential of culture bias, and have raised concerns regarding the universalizability of findings from measures such as the Emotional Intelligence surveys across different cultures (e.g. Van de Vijver and Leung, 2001). Research into the cultural underpinnings of EI would be
useful since latent presence of culture bias could potentially interfere with correlations in the underlying traits of respondents. Hence, longitudinal research with larger and more homogeneous samples would be valuable to confirm/improve findings of this research.

The final limitation of this study is related to the calculation of the variable of course grade. As discussed in the methods section, academic performance was defined as the grade each respondent achieved in one corporate education course. This may pose a limitation with respect to the narrow scope of measurement of academic performance. Conducting further research with a longer perspective on academic performance (i.e. taking into account additional course grades, or in case of student samples considering respondents’ GPA scores) may be valuable to generate a clearer picture of the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and academic performance.

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21st Century Pedagogy in Open Society: 
Is it a Shadow Pedagogical System with 
Social Media as a Pedagogical Tool?

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Abstract: This paper examines why it is important and how it is possible to provide equal access to post-secondary, tertiary education for people of all demographics and nations. The brick-and-mortar type of university education is contrasted with alternative forms of pedagogical delivery and the shadow pedagogical system. The final hypothesis is that social media is a viable medium for providing ubiquitous access to higher education.

Key Words: technology, tertiary education, internet, social media, pedagogy, open society

Introduction

The enduring pedagogical question addressed in this paper is “How can we provide universal (or at least increased) access to post-secondary, tertiary education”? This question is particularly pertinent now given the forecasted skilled labour shortage. In this decade, more than 60% of the jobs in the USA will require post-secondary, tertiary education. Yet, as of 2006, less than 40% of the US population between the ages of 25 and 34 had more than a high-school education (US Dept. of Ed., 2011). In Canada, it is projected to be a total of 6.5 million job openings due to economic growth and replacement needs over the next 10 years. Over two-thirds (66.5%) of these job openings are expected to be in occupations that usually require postsecondary education (college, university or vocational) or management occupations (HRSDC, 2011). Less than one-third of these forecasted job openings (around 2.2 million) are expected to be in occupations requiring only a high school education or on-the-job training.
These statistics indicate that the demand for more educated individuals continues to exceed supply. Yet, despite this need for increased access to higher education, we are faced with dwindling government financial support for universities and colleges and increased tuition costs (Johnson, Oliff, & Williams, 2011; McGuire, 2013). I propose that this concern about access to education is not new and that it has dominated pedagogical thinking throughout the classical era to the present. Regardless of whether we examine physical access (through brick and mortar institutions) or technological access (through online learning platforms or social media), the goal is to understand the impact that the lack of access to education or pedagogy has on society. The examination of unequal access to education begins in approximately 350 BC.

**Access to Pedagogy in the Classical Greek Era**

During the classical antiquity era, Alexander III of Macedon, more commonly known as Alexander the Great, was a student of Aristotle who in turn was a student of Plato. Given the combined wisdom of two great philosophers, the pedagogy that Alexander the Great received was of undeniably high quality and arguably the best education opportunity of the time. Military genius aside, Alexander the Great’s access to such a superior pedagogical system helped shape his advanced global thinking and vision. For example, he demonstrated the ability to see positive humanistic possibilities by assimilating the vanquished (those of different races, cultures and religions) with the victors through his support of inter-racial marriages and other actions. Such acts did not sit well with his soldiers and a society that preferred to disassociate the vanquished.

Unfortunately, the chasm of understanding between Alexander the Great and his soldiers was so vast that assimilation was not sustainable. To paraphrase the inspirational words of Chinua Achebe (1958): “Alexander the Great’s kingdom fell apart”. Alexander the Great’s ideas were so far ahead of their time that after his death, the Macedonian Empire was divided up among his generals. It appears that Macedonian soldiers could not assimilate among themselves let alone with the vanquished. If we fast forward over two thousand years to 1948, we see Alexander the Great’s vision materialize with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Our point is that Alexander the Great was so great because he had access to a higher quality of pedagogy than did his soldiers. Although access to pedagogy will not guarantee greatness,
I hypothesize that universal access to tertiary pedagogy will facilitate positive global growth and evolution.

Access to Pedagogy in the Contemporary Era

I now turn the focus to the 21st century and posit the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as a hallmark and reflection of current-day outcomes of pedagogical access and its derivative questions. In its Education at a Glance report of 2013, the OECD identified a strong positive correlation between lack of tertiary / post-secondary education and unemployment. The relative earnings premium (or the salary gap between those with a tertiary education and those without) has increased in most OECD countries over the past ten years. In 2000, American workers with post-secondary education earned 76% more than workers without higher education (the OECD average was 49%). Ten years later, the earning gap had widened to 77%. The report goes on to say that Americans without post-secondary or tertiary education were hit the hardest by the recession that started in 2007 (OECD, 2013). For example, the unemployment rate in the United States of America for people who had not attained tertiary / post-secondary education increased by more than 6 percentage points between 2008 and 2011 while the average increase across all OECD countries was lower than 4 percentage points. Given the rising post-secondary tuition costs, the following aphorism is appropriate: “The rich get richer and the poor get poorer”.

The OECD is also concerned about accommodating the changing demographics and increased diversity of the working population (Marin & Heckmann, 2013). Their bottom line is that:

Tertiary institutions not only have to meet the growing demand for university education by expanding the number of places they offer, they also have to adapt programmes and teaching methods to match the changing needs of a more diverse generation of students (Marin & Heckmann, 2013, p. 4).

Given the systematic imbalance in access to education, perhaps it is time to listen to the voices of the silent majority and develop innovative, economical ways to provide ubiquitous access to education. For example, on-line technologies such as social media may be ide-
al economical vehicles to increase access to tertiary education, engage younger generations, and fuel pedagogical growth.

The Shadow Pedagogy System

Concern about type of access to education, particularly on-line access and its derivatives, has influenced, shaped and reconfigured contemporary traditional pedagogy. Questions such as: “Who has the right to provide pedagogy?” and “Should pedagogy be limited to traditional brick and mortar access?” have laid the groundwork for collaboration, contestation, and accommodation among educational institutions, non-government organizations, and corporations. Further, questions such as these have instigated the rise in social media mega-corporations (i.e. Twitter, FaceBook, Youtube, Instagram, and Google) and new technologies such as online platforms that provide a virtual learning environment (i.e. Khan Academy, Carnegie Mellon’s Open Learning, and CK-12 Flexbook). These two interdependent trends have transformed the traditional spheres of pedagogy, society, and everyday life through a shadow pedagogical system. The term “shadow pedagogy system” has several underpinnings and will be analyzed in two distinct ways: the shadow pedagogy system as a form of non-traditional education, and the shadow pedagogy system as a feedback medium.

The Shadow Pedagogy System as Non-traditional Education

As a metaphor, a “shadow” only exists as a manifestation of an entity: In our case, the entity is mainstream education (such as elementary, high-school and traditional university education), and the shadow represents all non-traditional forms of education (such as homeschooling, tutoring, and online learning). As the entity shifts, so does the shadow. And, although the entity (mainstream education) may justify the existence of the shadow, sometimes the shadow looms larger than the entity. Despite the recent growth in online learning, home schooling, and tutoring in the West, these shadow pedagogy systems are not receiving adequate attention from educational policy-makers (Bray, 2009). As costs of mainstream education rise, the gap between the educated and uneducated will increase unless we can focus on more cost-effective ways to deliver pedagogy. We propose that the answer may lie in the shadow pedagogy system.
The Shadow Pedagogy System as a Feedback Medium

Shadow systems or networks can also be explored through the lens of complexity theory (Stacey, 1996). Essentially, when the entity is rife with details and clutter, we may be better off examining the shadow. The term “shadow system” was coined by Stacey (1996) to denote the intrinsic, creative value of informal networks in organizations. We can easily see the entity through its structure, mission statement, actions and so on. What is not as obvious is its shadow: the insights gained from subcultures, the intrinsic knowledge gleaned through the grapevine, and the innovations that arise from conversations at the water cooler. Researchers have discovered the power of shadow networks or systems to provide insights that enhance learning and pedagogy (Hansen, 2013). By listening to the unregulated and even unauthorized opinions and needs of the students, educators are able to design more innovative learning environments. This shadow pedagogical system plays a central role in producing collective intelligence, collective narratives, collective collaborations, metaphors, and images that can inform critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2004).

I wholeheartedly support the notion of examining the shadow pedagogical system to provide equal access to education and to gain valuable feedback for pedagogy. Further, I propose that on-line technologies such as social media (which is currently in the shadows) may be a useful vehicle for tapping into the unspoken words of learners and providing access to pedagogy for the silent majority. Before moving on, it is important to define and frame social media.

Social Media

Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 60). We embellish this definition of social media to include multiple platforms of the virtual learning environment such as Twitter, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), Facebook, YouTube, MIT OpenCourseWare, Instagram, Khan Academy, Google, Carnegie Mellon’s Open Learning, and CK-12 Flexbook. Given that more than half of the American young adult population uses some form of social media (Correa, Hinsley, & De Zuniga, 2010), I propose that social media has the potential to impact, in-
fluence, and transform pedagogical principles and philosophical practices. Further, social media, in all of its various on-line gyrations, can provide a platform for collective collaboration, collective thinking, and collective support. I now turn the attention to contemporary pedagogical issues that impact access to education.

Alternative Forms of Education

The concept of “deschooling” was introduced in the early 1970s (Illich, 1971) whereby people could opt out of traditional educational institutions in lieu of other pedagogical methods such as “educational webs which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his [sic] living into one of learning, sharing, and caring” (p. 2). John Holt (1977) supported Illich’s views with his concept of “unschooling” in his newsletter “Growing without Schooling” (Holt, 1977). Like Illich, Holt rejects the tenets of staying in school, defined curricula, and standardized testing and supports the idea that students should decide what, when, where, how, and why they should learn.

At the peak of this debate, the claim was that the only way to experience unschooling or deschooling was to drop out of school and create one’s own learning environment. At that time, alternatives to traditional education were limited to private schooling and homeschooling. Today, forty years later, social media and open source textbooks (i.e. CK-12 Flexbooks), make it much easier for students to practice the pedagogy of unschooling or deschooling. As well, students can take on-line courses at their leisure through a program like MIT Openware, Carnegie Mellon’s Open Learning, or MOOCs.

Pedagogical videos such as those from Khan Academy are used at an early age by unschoolers or deschoolers to learn complex mathematics skills such as calculus. Rather than follow a strict curriculum (as in the traditional brick and mortar pedagogical system), unschoolers or deschoolers can exercise their intellectual curiosity and increase both practical and critical learning skills by creating their own interactive story, game, animation, or simulation with Scratch, a MIT programming language, or Museum Box.

Further, motivation is likely to increase if students are able to choose the pedagogical topics they want to pursue. For example, because of the flexibility of social media tools, students can learn division before mastering addition if they so choose. As such, social media and virtual learning online platforms have made it easier for
unschoolers and deschoolers to practice their pedagogical philosophy.

Homeschooling (which is considered by many to be a branch of unschooling) has also been facilitated by social media technology such as Khan Academy, Youtube, and Twitter. The reason for this belief is that homeschoolers now has pedagogical tools at their fingertips to achieve their pedagogical objectives. Case studies and exercises are only a click away. As a result homeschooling (or unschooling) is gaining momentum, attention, and acceptance in the United States and around the world. According to the U.S. Department of Education Office, 1.5 million students were homeschooled in USA in 2007, which represents an increase of 36% since 2003 (ONPE, 2012).

Pedagogy Before and After the Advent of Social Media

Before the advent of social media, it was difficult for philosophers to garner international support, and it was easy for critics to argue, given the lack of empirical evidence. For example Julius Nyerere (1967) made a significant contribution in the area of pedagogy of the oppressed when he argued

Man [sic] can only liberate himself or develop himself. He cannot be liberated or developed by another. For man makes himself. It is his ability to act deliberately, for a self-determined purpose, which distinguishes him from the other animals. The expansion of his own consciousness, and therefore of his power over himself, his environment, and his society, must therefore ultimately be what we mean by development. (p. 27)

These words ring true for our current pedagogical system and its purpose to liberate humans from the restraints and limitations of ignorance and dependency. A pedagogical system should increase our physical and mental freedoms and give us control over ourselves, our lives, and the environment. The ideas imparted by the pedagogical system should therefore be liberating ideas: Nothing else can appropriately be called a pedagogical system (Nyerere, 1967).

Nyerere’s (1967) comments such as: “Pedagogy that induces a slave mentality or a sense of impotence is not pedagogical at all—it is an attack on the minds of men” (p. 28) raised the dander of many
critics who labelled his words as ill-defined and socialist or communist. Had social media been available to academia and the general public, we may have recognized the similarities between Nyerere’s proposition of a neo-colonial pedagogical philosophy and the assimilation strategies of other great philosophers such as Paulo Freire, Malala Yousafza, and Alexander the Great.

Before the advent of social media it was easy for critics of critical pedagogy to play the game of divide-and-conquer. By localizing the issue of oppressed pedagogy, particularly during the Pinochet era in Chile, Videla era in Argentina, and the various Brazilian dictators’ eras (from Branco to Figueiredo), political leaders were able to oppress and suppress the majority of their countrymen. Exposure to social media and globalization at the end of the 20th century helped society understand the irony of the confrontations. Proponents of critical pedagogy in Latin American countries rallied against dictatorship and communism. In short, they strove for the good of the majority: sociological, political, and economic freedom. These goals are similar to those of feminist and gender equity movements, equity legislation, or affirmative action for protected groups.

In the absence of social media in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, most of these great movements in the realm of critical pedagogy were isolated and detached from one another. The advent of social media has facilitated the increase in collective thinking, collective responsibility, and collective support (Kellner, 2000). What were once considered racial attitudes are now better understood as cultural differences. Because of free and ubiquitous access to social media tools, critical pedagogy is becoming more universal, liberal, and secular rather than localized, isolated, and detached.

In the new millennium, information technology has given rise to a new knowledge economy where critical pedagogy and education play key roles (Kellner, 2000). According to Kellner (2000): “Critical pedagogy considers how education can strengthen democracy, create a more egalitarian and just society, and deploy education in a process of progressive social change” (p. 1). We propose information technology, and in particular social media, as an ideal conduit for critical pedagogy. Social media has the potential to become a virtual town crier platform whereby social agents can work in harmony with others to educate each other, strengthen democracy, foster critical thinking, and create a less repressive society. By accepting these responsibilities, reactors can become actors, the objective can become subjective, and it becomes possible to
end cultural domination through a better understanding of different interpretations of ethnic, gender, political, and class distinctions.

Learning Theories

Several 20th century theories about learning and knowledge integration laid the groundwork for mainstream pedagogical design. Although authors used different terms and emphasized different areas, the common message was that the integration of knowledge requires a complex set of mental processes (including recognition, organization of ideas, and evaluation) that are embedded in and influenced by the learner’s sociocultural environment (Vygotsky, 1962).

Originally these learning processes and theories were geared toward mainstream education that required brick and mortar access. Attempts have been made to apply these theories to the shadow pedagogy system (the non-traditional forms of education).

However, the sociocultural environment has changed drastically over the past few decades, which, according to theory, influences the learner’s experience. Current day theorists are calling for a transformation in pedagogy by utilizing information technology to develop and deliver engaging and authentic learning experiences for multiple constituents (Kellner, 2000).

I propose that social media may facilitate such a transformation. Given the number of people that require access to pedagogy and the physical and economic limitations of mainstream higher education, social media may be the only viable solution.

Conclusion

This paper attempted to answer the question: “How can we provide universal (or at least increased) access to post-secondary, tertiary education”? I hypothesize that social media is a viable source of access to education for the public and a source of pedagogical feedback for educators. I concur with researchers such as Kellner (2000) that access to education is a critical component of the current technological revolution. Just as the application of mathematics was a primary catalyst in the industrial age, the use of social media may be a primary facilitator during the transition to the contemporary digital age. As part of the current shadow pedagogical system, social media can provide economical and ubiquitous access to pedagogy and can help to narrow the gap between the educated
and undereducated. This increased access to education could in turn facilitate positive global connectedness and democracy.

Social media is also an appropriate vehicle to reach and engage the growing population of homeschoolers and unschoolers. In addition, social media is also an ideal conduit for critical pedagogy by providing the space for developing harmonious relations and solving critical problems among nations. Further, ubiquitous access to social media gives a voice to the silenced and can ultimately lead to development “for Man [sic], by Man, and of Man”. By giving everyone equal access to higher education each human being has the opportunity to experience the: “expansion of his [sic] own consciousness, and therefore his power over himself, his environment, and his society” (Nyerere, 1967, p. 27).

Finally, the increasing diversity of the world’s population in terms of age and culture dictates the need to adapt our pedagogical tools as well as the manner in which we deliver education. Education should operate as an open system with its external environment, rather than in a vacuum.

In the inspirational words of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, it will take a “suspension of disbelief” for some mainstream academics to consider social media as a useful pedagogical tool. However, I believe it would take a “suspension of disbelief” to say that social media is not a force to be reckoned with in the area of pedagogy. It is up to us as educators to decide whether social media is an albatross around our necks or a golden goose that can lead us to a universally educated open society.

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References


When You Really Don’t Mean it: A Model of Plagiarism Behaviour and its Correlates

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Abstract: This paper examines the possible correlation between the rise in plagiarism and the rise in international student enrollment in post-secondary education. A model of plagiaristic / academic integrity behaviour is developed based on perceptions of the significance of plagiarism. Four categories of plagiaristic behaviour are discussed in terms of their underpinnings and possible remedial strategies. The underlying message is that the solution to the rise in plagiarism in the third Millennium is complex and requires multicultural empathy and fluency by educators.

Key Words: intentional plagiarism, unintentional plagiarism, international students, culture

Introduction

The increase in academic dishonesty and its detection have become hot topics in academia and the media (Christakis & Christakis, 2012; Moore, 2014; Song-Turner, 2008). Coincidentally, there has been an increase in internationalization of education and an influx of foreign-born students to universities in Europe, Australia, and North America (Hayes & Intronra, 2005). The simultaneous increase in both plagiarism and international student enrollment inspired us to investigate the possible connection between the two. Even before conducting a literature review, we were acutely aware of the complexity and inherent problems in this line of research (i.e., divisive stereotyping and accusations of bias). Despite these and other hurdles identified in the literature review, we are committed to increase understanding of why students plagiarize and to
Providing insights to help future researchers address the burgeoning plagiarism issue.

The goals of this theoretical paper are to synthesize extant theory and empirical research to generate a better understanding of the antecedents or preconditions for plagiaristic behaviour and to provide academia with knowledge about intervention or remedial strategies to reduce the incidence of plagiarism. In this regard, we examine the differences between intentional and unintentional plagiarism, and the impact that culture-based educational philosophy, ideology, and epistemology have on ethical perceptions of academic dishonesty. In short, we propose that not all ethical or unethical behaviours are equal. We develop a model that helps to identify patterns of student plagiaristic behaviour. We then conclude with recommendations for dealing with plagiarism in each of the categories of deception proposed by the model. Our underlying message is that academic integrity is not necessarily a “one-size-fits-all” endeavour. The intention with this model is to instigate more interest and empirical research into the causes and solutions of academic dishonesty in a situational context.

**Plagiarism Defined**

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines plagiarism as: “the act of using another person’s words or ideas without giving credit to that person” (2006–2007). In China, plagiarism dates back over a thousand years and evokes such concepts as: “piaoqie” (to rob and steal someone else’s writing) and “cao xi” (to copy and steal) (Liu, 2005, p. 235). In the Colonial world, the word plagiarism was derived from the English word “plagiary” meaning: “one who wrongfully takes another’s words or ideas” and the Latin word “plagarius” meaning: “kidnapper, seducer, plunderer, [or] literary thief” (Barnhart, 1999, p. 801). However, the Western / Colonial treatment of plagiarism as literary theft is only a few hundred years old. Up until the end of the 16th century, playwrights and authors regularly borrowed ideas from others without identifying their sources (Mallon, 1989). It was only after the emergence of 17th century English constructs of private ownership, individual property, and pillars of western economic ideology that plagiarism became a force to be reckoned with (Pennycook, 1996).

Hundreds of years later, in the second Millennium, the interpretation of plagiarism is problematic in that it defies clear definition or consensus. Park (2003) conducted a thorough discussion of
the various underpinnings and meanings of plagiarism and reported several interpretations ranging from poor practices such as “a disease of inarticulateness” to malpractice and sins against humanity (p. 472). Across cultures, and within universities themselves, there are differing interpretations of academic integrity and plagiarism (Martin, 2011). Perceived severity of acts such as submitting someone else’s work as one’s own or cutting-and-pasting direct quotations into one’s paper without a proper citation also vary with socio-cultural and individual differences.

Perhaps one of the key distinctions that divide perceptions of plagiarism is the issue of intent: i.e. did the student knowingly plagiarize or was the behaviour unintentional? Students who intentionally plagiarize do so for individual reasons that differ from those of students who unintentionally plagiarize. Martin (2011) found that students with inadequate foreign language skills, poor time management acumen, and derisory moral values were more likely to create willful acts of dishonesty or intentional plagiarism. Unintentional plagiarism, on the other hand, is more likely to occur when students do not understand the western significance of plagiarism and / or were raised in a culture that placed a low priority on academic integrity on the moral hierarchy scale relative to other inequities such as abandoning one’s family.

We concur with researchers that intentional plagiarism, in its all-encompassing form, is difficult to generalize because of the complexities of individual differences (Martin, 2011; Martin, Rao, & Sloan, 2011). Perhaps this type of willing plagiarism can be curbed by increased use of detection tools, prevention tactics such as student-initiated plagiarism checkers, and university commitment to serious consequences for plagiarists. However, intentional plagiarism is not the focus of this paper. This hot topic is riddled with debate over issues, such as who is responsible for ethical education (Giacalone & Thompson, 2006) and whose ethics are right (Trevino & Brown, 2004).

To help navigate the plethora of plagiarism interpretations, we advocate research that distinguishes between different types of plagiaristic behaviour such as intentional versus unintentional plagiarism (DeLong, 2012). The focus in this paper is the unwitting, unknowing, or unintentional type of plagiarism behaviour. We propose that unintentional plagiarism, cases where students are fully not aware that they are breaking rules, may be impacted by cultural differences, i.e., differences in learning styles; epistemological un-
Culture Defined

The construct of culture is difficult to comprehend let alone define (Eagleton, 2013). Up until the end of the 17th century in Europe, culture was an adjective or “a noun of process [whereby] one would describe the culture of something—crops animal, minds” (Williams, 1977, p. 41). In the early 18th century, culture (or cultivation, as it was referred to at the time) was considered to be synonymous with civilization, as in ‘cultured people are civilized’. Over the course of the 18th century, the term culture became associated with intrinsic, spiritual development primarily within the arts and literature. The term culture “thus charts within its semantic unfolding humanity’s own historic shift from rural to urban existence, pig farming to Picasso” (Eagleton, 2013, p. 1). Near the end of the 18th century, the construct of ‘identity culture’ or ‘class’ began to emerge to describe “a social, populist, and traditional way of life, characterised by a quality that pervades everything and makes a person feel rooted at home” (Hartman, 1997, p. 211).

Here we see a shift in culture from a subjective stance to an objective observation of a society’s way of life. By the end of the 19th century, the concept of culture had evolved to include the “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor, 1871, p. 1). By the end of the 20th century, the term culture had advanced to include a degree of social unification or socialization as: “a dominant and coherent set of shared values” (Peters & Waterman, 1982, p. 103) or a “collective mental programming [that is] part of our conditioning that we share with other members of our nation, region, or group” (Hofstede, 1983, p. 76).

The later depictions of culture are understandably open to dispute by researchers who are wary of using diversity to foster ‘culture wars’ (Gitlin, 1995), oppression (Anderson, 1999), or stereotyping (Liu, 2005; Sowden, 2005). While we are cognizant of the potential to use differences in a divisive way, our focus is on understanding a collective, shared values system of a society so as to expand mutual recognition and improve education for the growing population of international students whose set of shared values may not be consistent with the western collective mental programming.
In this paper, we use Hofstede’s definition of culture as a “collective mental programming; [that] is that part of our conditioning that we share with other members of our nation, region, or group” (Hofstede, 1983, p. 76) to analyze patterns of unintentional plagiarism student behaviour.

**Literature Review**

The rate of international student enrolment in North American, European and Australian post-secondary institutions has increased dramatically in recent years. The percentage of international students enrolled in Canadian post-secondary institutions has more than doubled in the past two decades (Statistics Canada, 2013), with a record-setting 98,000 international students enrolled in Canadian post-secondary schools in 2011 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2102). In the 2012/13 academic year, another record was broken as 819,644 international students enrolled in colleges or universities in the United States (OpenDoors, 2013). In Australia, the number of international students rose by 98% between 2001 and 2010 and now represents the third largest national industry (Adiningrum & Kutieleh, 2011). This influx in international students undoubtedly provides positive economic and immigration benefits for the host institutions and countries. However, these benefits come with costs and responsibilities: The onus is on educational institutions to provide infrastructure and pedagogy to support the diverse needs of these international students.

Despite mounting university sanctions and social pressure to act responsibly and morally, plagiarism and academic dishonesty in post-secondary institutions are on the rise (Abdolmohammadi & Baker, 2007; Powell, 2012). The ubiquitous nature of media and technology in the second decade of the new millennium has likely fuelled the growth in both incidence and detection of plagiarism (Baruchson-Arbib & Yaari, 2004; Parker, Lenhart, & Moore, 2011). A recent CBC survey of more than 40 Canadian universities indicates that over 7,000 students (1% of the university student population) were caught and punished for academic integrity (Moore, 2014). Front-page articles about forced resignations of deceptive school board directors (CBC News, 2013) and two ministers of the German government (Pidd, 2011; The Guardian, 2013), as well as suspension of dozens of Harvard University students for cheating (Christakis & Christakis, 2012; Perez-Pena, 2012; The Guardian, 2012; The Times, 2013) are indications that the media
and society are disgruntled with plagiaristic behaviour in Canada and abroad.

Plagiarism is problematic on many levels. At a micro level, students who submit the work of others as their own or patch together various texts without synthesizing the contents fail to develop critical thinking and cognitive skills (Abdolmohammadi & Baker, 2007; Vardi, 2012). At the meso level, rampant plagiarism can wreak havoc on a university’s reputation (Lupton & Chapman, 2002), damaging the career prospects of its graduates and limiting its potential to attract quality students and faculty. At the macro level, plagiarism negatively impacts society’s opinion of higher education in general. In the wake of scandals such Enron and Arthur Andersen, universities, and in particular business schools, have been criticized for sidestepping ethical education and graduating unethical business leaders (Swanson, 2004). If universities continue to allow plagiarism to go unchecked, they will eventually dilute the value of post-secondary education (Lawson, 2004).

Interestingly, what was described as an endemic plagiarism problem in the Global South 15 years ago (Pulvers & Diekoff, 1999) has not materialized as a global issue. On the contrary, research suggests that the increase in plagiarism may be due to a clash between Eastern and Western ideologies and epistemologies (Liu, 2005; Song-Turner, 2008). The Eastern ideology posits that the words of masters or sages are sacrosanct and are to be preserved exactly as they are for future generations. Since everyone knows the word of the masters, there is no need to make a formal reference when citing them. By contrast, Western ideology posits that new knowledge is created by reconstructing or expanding upon existing knowledge. Each author along this path of reconstruction is to be given credit (referenced) for her / his contribution. Despite the consequence that this clash in ideologies likely has on citation practices, there is a lack of empirical evidence to support a correlation between international students and plagiarism (Martin et al., 2011). If anything, it is domestic student participation in plagiarism that is attracting media attention (CBC News, 2013).

We propose that the lack of correlation between the increase in plagiarism and international student enrollment may be due to an overgeneralization of the construct of plagiarism. As indicated by the literature, plagiarism is complex and riddled with individual, psychological and cultural undertones. We propose that a differentiation between intentional and unintentional plagiarism may add clarity by exposing different motivations for plagiaristic behaviour.
We concur with Martin et al. (2011) that “racial identity is a poor proxy for individual differences and psychological differences” (p. 94), thus we are careful not to attribute intention to plagiarism to race or culture. Rather, we propose that students who grow up in non-western cultures may have differing values and views about plagiarism and may be more prone to unwittingly or unintentionally plagiarize. Although we recognize that culture is a nebulous topic (Williams, 1977) and are loathe to reopen the debate between Sowden (2005) and Liu (2005) about stereotypes, we propose that attributing intentional plagiarism to individual / psychological differences allows us to examine possible cultural reasons for unintentional plagiarism (DeLong, 2012).

In summary, intentional plagiarism and unintentional plagiarism are distinct with respect to antecedents and consequences. By highlighting the differences, we are able to focus on unintentional plagiarism and its possible cultural correlates. We now describe a way to distinguish between intentional and unintentional plagiarism based on individual- versus socio-cultural-based perceptions of academic integrity.

**Individual Recognition of the Severity of Plagiarism**

Notions of what is ethically right or wrong, moral or immoral, correct or incorrect exist in all cultures, albeit in different ways. This is evident in studies with international students who realize that it is wrong to represent others’ ideas without referencing, as if they were your own (e.g. Adiningrum & Kutieleh, 2011; Song-Turner, 2008). However, academic dishonesty is not an exclusive international student phenomenon: There are several instances of plagiarized work knowingly submitted by domestic students (CBC News, 2013). On one hand, we have students who are aware of the severity of plagiarism and that stealing someone else’s words is morally wrong. We identify this as ‘ethically intentional behaviour’ that is motivated by individual perceptions and values of morality (Martin, 2011). On the other hand, we have students who lack ethical self-awareness and fail to recognize plagiarism as a serious act of theft or as an ethical dilemma. We identify this as ‘ethically unintentional behaviour’ by students who were not adequately sensitized to the Western notion of academic integrity during their formative years. We now turn our attention to the differing levels of sensitivity to plagiarism in the students’ home culture.
Social Recognition of the Severity of Plagiarism

Research indicates that international students have a basic understanding of what plagiarism is but are not always clear about its limits, applications, or significance (Adiningrum & Kutieleh, 2011; Martin, 2011; Song-Turner, 2008). We have argued that plagiarism is recognized as an immoral act if it is performed wilfully or intentionally. However, the lack of clarity and inconsistent practices among institutions, such as different rules and practices in citation and referencing, lack of agreement among professors about what constitutes plagiarism, and ambiguous definitions of plagiarism in the institution’s academic integrity policy, may add to the confusion about what plagiarism means or entails.

Different cultural interpretations as to the seriousness of plagiarism can also cause confusion. Research indicates that cultural differences are among the most common causes for plagiarism (Adiningrum & Kutieleh, 2011; Martin, 2011; Martin et al., 2011; Song-Turner, 2008), which include differing ideologies about what constitutes plagiarism (Bloch, 2001; Pennycook, 1996), language issues (Adiningrum & Kutieleh, 2011; Introna, Hayes, Blair, & Wood, 2003), skill deficiencies and learning styles (Introna et al., 2003), and lack of understanding of the construct of plagiarism (Park, 2003). In her qualitative analysis of international students’ definitions of plagiarism, Song-Turner (2008) found that the main reasons for unintentional plagiarism were lack of understanding of western academic writing / referencing styles and poor English language skills. Due to lack of explanations, adequate time management skills, or academic support, and under pressure from foreign-context-transition problems, international students may use plagiarizing as a coping mechanism to deal with (too many) academic demands.

Although we concur with Liu (2005) and others that Asian students are no more prone to intentionally plagiarize (for individual reasons) than students from other cultures, we propose that students coming from non-Western cultures may be unaware of the deep-seated significance of the western notion of academic integrity. In some Asian cultures, copying, verbatim, the words of masters is considered humble, wise, and dutiful (Watkins & Biggs, 1996). Ironically, on the other hand, in Western ideology, embellishing the words of an original author while simultaneously acknowledging the author’s initial efforts is considered to be wise and dutiful. Educators and their institutions need to recognize that the Western
concept of paraphrasing original authors’ words may seem presumptuous or rude in some non-western cultures. Further, it is extremely difficult for a student to improve upon an expert’s words when the expert’s language and discourse are foreign to the student.

With respect to ideological values of academic integrity, some sceptical international students went as far as to say that plagiarism is yet “another form of Western ‘superiority’ being exercised over other cultures” (Adiningrum & Kutieleh, 2011, p. A-93). While this argument may come across as a vain attempt to justify a wrongdoing, it gives us pause in the West to think more deeply about cultural sensitivity regarding the plagiarism issue. Some students come from cultures where plagiarism is neither a serious ethical issue nor part of their common vernacular (Introna et al., 2003). We label this end of the spectrum ‘low significance of academic integrity in the socio-cultural environment’.

With respect to language issues, the performance pressure on international students who are dealing with English as a second language is immense. Reading and writing in English as a second language (ESL), and expressing oneself in the expected academic style, depth, and quality constitute significant challenges for international students. The added difficulty of communicating in English on a day-to-day basis to carry on life in a brand-new cultural context adds to the stress experienced in the academic setting, particularly for ESL students (Yang & Lin, 2009). Students generally fall into one of two categories: either they are subservient to their parents for footing the bill for their education, or they are tasked with the responsibility of providing financial assistance for the family in their home countries. The motivation that drives the educational process for these students is rooted less in academic integrity than in financial pressures, respect for family, and peer recognition (Introna et al., 2003; Yang & Lin, 2009). These social factors can put pressure on students to focus on the ends (completing their degrees rapidly) rather than the means of education. These students may be conflicted between a perceived waste of time on the seemingly insurmountable task of paraphrasing the words of an English master, and the need to finish their education, get a job, and serve the needs of their families (Introna et al., 2003; Song-Turner, 2008). Given these higher order social and familial obligations, plagiarism may appear to be permissible in certain cultures and situations as the lesser of two evils. For instance, how many of us feel conflicted between telling the truth and telling a white lie when
our spouse asks us: “Do these jeans make me look fat?” We propose that students who fall into this category are at the low end of the ‘socio-cultural environment’s significance of academic integrity’ spectrum (Introna et al., 2003).

Research suggests that learning styles and skills also play a major role in unintentional plagiarism. In Western educational institutions, students are encouraged to interpret and express theory in their own words and context (Martin, Reaume, Reeves, & Wright, 2012; Sowden, 2005; Zimerman, 2012), and critical thinking and citation skills are two of the most valued and assessed skills (Vardi, 2012). However, not all countries encourage critical thinking in their classrooms. In many Asian cultures, rote learning is the norm (Nguyen, 2011) and critical thinking and experiential learning are considered inferior to rote learning (Valiente, 2008). Students are taught to honour their elders and masters by memorizing their adages and theories rather than critically analyzing their words (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991). It is believed that memorization is a worthwhile stage of learning because it helps develop and deepen understanding (Liu, 2005; Song-Turner, 2008; Yang & Lin, 2009). Only after the foundation of knowledge is laid are students confident enough to challenge the masters. There is great wisdom in this logic; perhaps Western institutions could benefit by listening to this and other wisdoms of our international students’ cultures.

Socio-cultural epistemological differences also play a role in the lack of consensus on the significance on academic integrity / plagiarism. Rooted in Confucianism, many Asian cultures consider knowledge to be common heritage or a collectively owned property (Martin et al., 2012; Nguyen, 2011). Knowledge already exists and should be conserved and reproduced by students (Yang & Lin, 2009). Hierarchical relationships, obedience, and respect are cherished values for maintaining the status quo in knowledge acquisition and harmony in society. By contrast, in the Western / colonial world, knowledge is created and/or extended through critical thinking and analytical abilities, rather than preserved. We hypothesize that students raised in cultures that encourage critical analysis and citation skills fall into the high end of the socio-cultural spectrum where academic integrity is given a high priority. We propose that students raised in cultures that encourage rote learning and memorization fall into the lower end of this spectrum.

In summary, we hypothesize that students coming from cultures that do not uphold the same values as western cultures regarding the severity to the significance of plagiarism or academic integrity
fall into the low end of the socio-cultural significance of plagiarism spectrum. In other words, academic integrity does not necessarily supersede or take priority over other socio-cultural values or ethical obligations, such as obedience to family. Students from these cultures have not been acclimated to plagiarism or academic integrity in the same way as have students from colonial western cultures.

A Model of Plagiarism Behaviour

To provide educators with a tool to navigate the complex array of antecedents of plagiarism, we introduce a model comprising patterns of academic integrity behaviour. Using a matrix structure, we plot individual values about academic integrity and capacity to recognize plagiaristic behaviour on the X axis. Students who place no or low significance on academic integrity for individual reasons are positioned on the left side of the model. Depending on their cultural upbringing, these students may either know that plagiarism is wrong and chose to do so anyway or they may not recognize that an ethical dilemma is being presented to them because they have not been sufficiently introduced to the Western concept of plagiarism as unethical.

On the Y axis, we plot the significance that the student’s home culture places on academic integrity relative to other social and ethical obligations. Students who come from cultures that place a low priority on academic integrity, relative to other values, are placed in the lower half of the socio-cultural significance of academic integrity spectrum. For these students, “plagiarism is a breach of disciplinary decorum not a breach of the moral universe” (Fish, 2010, p. 2). Students who have been raised in cultures that place a high priority on academic integrity are placed in the high end of the socio-cultural significance of academic integrity spectrum. These students are well aware of the requirements and consequences of plagiarism.

What follows is a description of each category in the model, as well as possible remedies for each pattern of student behaviour.
We label this category 'true deception' because, in this case, the student wilfully commits an act of plagiarism even though she knows that plagiarism is wrong. This student is well aware of the rules of academic integrity, understands what plagiarism is, and knows how significant it is to her education and society. These students likely know the system so well that their plagiarism may go undetected. This student's behaviour is most likely explained by individual rather than socio-cultural differences. The short-term remedies for this type of behaviour include enhancing the detection of plagiarism by using SafeAssign or Turnitin.com for all assignments; imposing strict sanctions on plagiarism for all students; and decreasing the temptation to plagiarize by providing assignments that encourage students to create rather than find information. In the long run, educators need to address the lack of ethical or moral sensitivity at an earlier age. By the time students get to university, their moral character has been formed and relearning moral ethics is difficult.

Lack of ethical character aside, there may be another way to reach these students by appealing to their need for self-expression. Elander, Pittam, Lusher, Fox & Payne (2010) recommend a proactive approach to motivate students to abide by the rules of academic integrity by teaching them to be authors. Students are encour-
aged to establish their own “authorial identity” and to become writers in their own right (Elander et al., 2010, p. 159). Inspired to make their mark on the world by sharing their unique ideas, students may be more willing to learn how to properly paraphrase and synthesize the thoughts and words of others.

*Hapless deception:*

We label this category ‘hapless’ because students who are torn between their home culture’s vision of success (duty to family) and their educational institution’s duty to academic integrity are in an unfortunate position. In a sense, they are caught between a rock and a hard place. We argue that this is the case where a student actually understands that plagiarism is wrong but lacks agreement about the hierarchical significance of plagiarism relative to other obligations or values. This student, possibly due to time pressures, family obligations, or lack of confidence to ask for assistance, may choose to hand in another’s paper rather than lose face in front of the class, instructor, or family. Although this student knows what s/he was doing was morally wrong, the severity may be lower in this case due to lack of socio-cultural agreement on the seriousness of the act of plagiarism. We propose that a deeper understanding and empathy for the student under these conditions is required. Rather than force our Western ideology of plagiarism on the students, perhaps we need to empathize with them to understand how we might address the problem in a restorative rather than a punitive way.

One innovative and restorative way to address the plagiarism issue for ‘hapless deception’ students is to engage and reward students for their intellectual curiosity and critique. In an Australian study, Vardi (2012) demonstrated that students of non-English speaking backgrounds were inspired to write without copying in an academic writing course if critical thinking was explicitly recognized and rewarded through the grading system. This finding suggests that the extent to which intellectual engagement is stimulated in the pedagogical process and included in the assessment methods can help reduce plagiarism rates more than punishment-focused approaches. In other words, communicating the importance of capturing and synthesizing information to create knowledge in the student’s own words is more powerful and positive for this category of students than sanctions for violation of academic integrity policy.
Naïve deception:

We label this category ‘naïve’ because the student unintentionally or unwittingly commits an act of plagiarism in spite of the fact that he/she is clear about the rules of academic integrity and understands what plagiarism is. These students are raised in cultures that prioritize academic integrity yet they fail to recognize the act of plagiarism or that the rules apply in a particular circumstance. It may also be a case of misunderstanding of “generalized knowledge.” It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between what needs to be cited and what is taken for granted in speech, i.e., do we really need to cite Shakespeare every time we say: “To be or not to be”? Although it is tempting to label these students as ‘privileged’ and throw them into the ‘True Deception’ category, we propose that these students are not deceitful but merely misinformed. How may academics fall into this category by copying pictures and videos from the internet for their lectures or public presentations? This is a situation in which the student (or professor) makes a genuine mistake, and believes he/she is not doing anything wrong. Remedies for this category of students include plagiarism education with actual examples of plagiaristic activity and workshops on appropriate citation and paraphrasing practices. The aforementioned strategies of intellectual engagement and authorial identity may also be relevant.

Clueless deception:

We label this category ‘clueless’ because these students have no idea what plagiarism means or that they have committed an unethical act. The student neither understands the significance of academic integrity nor the definition of plagiarism. We believe this behaviour is most likely to be explained by both individual and cultural differences. The student has not been adequately versed in ethical standards or morality with respect to academic integrity. Further, cultural patterns or preconceptions of academic integrity lead the student to think and behave in ways incongruent with the Western expectations. Remedies for this category of student include ethical education (i.e. on-line tutorials / tests on academic integrity) and concerted attempts to assimilate students into the westernized academic integrity culture (i.e. non-threatening discussions and presentations about plagiarism).
Conclusion

According to Minkov and Hofstede (2011): “the merit of any model should be based on the basis of its capability to predict interesting phenomena” (p. 18). We propose that our model of plagiaristic behaviour can be used by academia to focus research and remedial actions on each of the unique categories. For example, if a majority of students in a particular department or school are in the “True Deception” category, efforts are better placed in teaching ethics education or motivating students to establish “authorial identity” than in explaining the rules of plagiarism. Likewise, if the majority of students are in the “Hapless Deception” category, efforts are best geared toward education of ethics and integrity and assimilation of students into the westernized academic integrity culture.

We assert that plagiarism behaviour among international students is not always an outcome of deliberate acts. International students coming to Western educational institutions with different cultural backgrounds, pedagogical experiences, and learning styles face challenges of adaptation, not only to daily life, but to academic demands. Their collectivist and pragmatic cultural backgrounds may not be commensurate with the western notion of normative, ‘carte blanche’ academic integrity. Research suggests that level of international student acculturation, from marginalization to assimilation, has been empirically linked to plagiarism (Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989, cited in Martin et al. 2011). The assumption is that international students who study in Western post-secondary institutions must assimilate into the western culture to understand academic integrity and avoid plagiarism. However, perhaps the “one-size-fits-all approach to pedagogy” has run its course (Tapscott, 2009, p. 139).

Given the exponential increase in international students from Asia attending Western institutions, perhaps the time is ripe to consider effective ways to consolidate multiple perspectives and values in the assimilation process. We are not proposing that academic integrity is negotiable. Rather, we propose that an attitude of cultural relativism would help prepare all parties (students and educators) to communicate and understand diverse perspectives. Perhaps we can enhance our notion of academic integrity by incorporating ideologies and ideas from our global neighbours. We propose that university educators and support staff need to be sensitive to the unique needs and socio-cultural backgrounds of international students so as to appropriately design pedagogy.
Limitations

This paper did not take into account variables such as student age, experience with internet technology, or differences in academic discipline. Investigating how these variables impact plagiarism would be valuable future research. Further, we did not investigate the ratio of international students to domestic student with respect to plagiarism, which would be an interesting longitudinal or cross-section study. We also did not investigate the possible impact that decrease in scholarships or government subsidies may have on plagiarism. Finally, we did not investigate the possible relationship between advanced technology (the internet and software) and plagiarism detection. Empirical investigations in these areas would help to support or deny our hypothesis that there is a relationship between increase in international student enrollment and plagiarism activity.

We recognize that research on socio-cultural issues is riddled with complexity and criticism (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Interpretations of terms such as plagiarism and culture are subjective and lack universal acceptance. Nonetheless, we propose that examining our assumptions about (non)equivalency in significance of academic integrity across borders is a worthy endeavour—one that may help us incrementally resolve the plagiarism issue through cultural empathy and intercultural fluency.

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An International, Trans-disciplinary Graduate Student’s Journey through Academic Writing at a Canadian University: On the Intersection of Linguistic, Cultural, and Cross-disciplinary Challenges

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Abstract: The internationalization of higher education has been accompanied by a rise in interdisciplinary undergraduate/graduate degrees in universities worldwide. This report begins by examining the connection between the goal of internationalization and the goal of interdisciplinarity, at both the institutional and the individual level. Next, it outlines challenges for interdisciplinary international students, with particular reference to the experience of one of the authors, who completed a bachelor’s degree in Journalism in China, found work as a university coordinator and language teacher rather than as a journalist, and went on to pursue a Master’s in Education in a Canadian university. The ways in which her cultural background and prior disciplinary knowledge both helped and hindered her to adapt to the new discourse community identify the need for more awareness of international students’ individual profiles as writers, given their unique educational and professional life stories. This paper concludes with recommendations to improve international students’ learning, including active self-diagnosis, help-seeking, and coordinated efforts between faculty & peer mentors who are trained to provide individualized support.

Key Words: international students, interdisciplinary studies

Introduction

International graduate students at Western universities face chal-
Challenges in academic writing that include, but are not limited to, English proficiency. When instructors assess a student’s academic writing performance, they have difficulty teasing apart the factors that contribute to that performance: e.g. rhetorical conventions in the student’s native language (Connor, 1996; Kaplan, 1966; Ramathan and Atkinson, 1999); smaller-scale cultural factors such as family education and previous writing education/experience (Matsuda, 1997; Wei and Liu, 2012); familiarity with the topic; the writer’s emotional state; visualizations of the audience; and individual stylistic preferences (Uysal, 2008). Additionally, disciplinary (un)familiarity impacts student performance, as written conventions vary across disciplines (Hyland, 2003; Hyon, 1996; Johns, 2001, 2011) and both first and second English language writers face challenges in learning to write in a new discipline. Therefore, if a trans-disciplinary international student faces difficulties in her or his academic writing, are they discipline-specific? Linguistic? Cultural? Or do all these factors overlap and influence each other in ways that vary from student to student?

Much research on ESL writing in colleges and universities focuses on challenges that arise due to students’ limited English proficiency (e.g. Ferris, 2013; Kobayashi and Rinnert, 2013), different cultural backgrounds (e.g. Atkinson, 2004), or lack of explicit training regarding academic writing conventions and expectations (e.g. Abasi and Akbari, 2008; Abasi, Akbari, and Graves, 2006). Also, past research has largely been concerned with students’ struggles rather than their assets. In contrast, this present study examines how a graduate international student’s cultural background and prior disciplinary expertise both hindered and helped her to navigate the discourses of her new academic field at a Canadian university. It concludes with a discussion of what interventions could have been used to incorporate her past history as a writer of cultural topics to help her overcome interdisciplinary and transcultural challenges.

A Review of the Literature on International & Interdisciplinary Higher Education

In the past fifteen years, there has been an exponential growth in “multicultural collaboration” and partnerships among universities to enhance globalization (Stromquist, 2007, p. 87). In postsecondary study-abroad programs, the vast majority of students are travelling to English-speaking nations (e.g. the U.S., the U.K., Australia,
New Zealand, and Canada) from rising industrial nations in Asia (e.g. China and India) (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007). This imbalance in student migration may be explained by the nature of the international job market: These international students are striving to be among the first to be hired when jobs that require command of the English language become available in their home countries, as more and more white-collar jobs are outsourced to those countries by Western corporations through the Internet. Since possession of disciplinary knowledge often accompanies acquisition of English language skills, many international students are accomplishing both aims by pursuing Western postsecondary education. And, while the majority of these international students may return to their home countries after earning their degrees, they will have been inducted into the English language by communities that offer possibilities for a better future (Dagenais, 2003; Duff, 2008; Kim and Duff, 2012; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). These communities need not be defined by physical space but can constitute virtual or online communities of practice (Ardichivili, Page, and Wentling, 2003; Hildreth and Kimble, 2004).

Another trend in the international job market that has been reflected in international higher education is the pursuit of interdisciplinary degrees. Barker, Gilbreath, and Stone’s (1998) study of executives from twelve American Mid-Atlantic, Fortune 1000 companies indicates that managers believe interdisciplinarity to be linked to valuable employee assets, such as superior written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills, change receptivity, skill transferability (cross-functionality), and intercultural awareness. More recently, research suggests that in Western universities, students are encouraged “to pursue double majors or double minors, but with an emphasis on acquiring practical skills” (Stromquist, 2007, p. 99) in order to be prepared to change jobs “as economic fluctuations and downturns require” (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 3). In response to Western workers’ anxiety about potential layoffs, educational institutions advertise extensive opportunities for up-skilling and retraining, offered in every flexible format with regard to pace, distance, and mode of delivery.

A similar pursuit of inter-disciplinarity in higher education exists in non-Western countries, such as China. The expansion of academic programs at prestigious Chinese universities, such as Fudan and Shanghai Jiaotong (SJTU), has been accompanied by a rapid rise in student enrollment:
SJTU is moving toward a multidisciplinary approach. It is encouraging students to take courses, even majors, in fields outside engineering [the university’s specialty], such as business management. Fudan began to allow students to change their majors in 2002, a practice unseen in most Chinese universities until then. (Wu, 2007, p. 1082)

This statement is corroborated by Qiu’s (2012) survey of 101 third-year undergraduate students who decided to change their disciplines for prospective graduate school studies in China. A majority of these students (54%) attributed the reason for changing their major to an attempt to increase their competencies in the job market.

In some ways, interdisciplinary education bodes well for university students all over the world. First, it encourages balanced thinking: “The humanities tend to be concerned with particulars... the pure or natural sciences with universals... and the applied or technical sciences with [practical] know-how” (Frost and Jean, 2003, p. 122). Second, because different disciplines are built on different modes and processes of inquiry as well as different political and social orientations, interdisciplinary study allows students to distinguish facts from ideas, identify implicit value judgments, and exercise the rhetorical strategies most appropriate to each discipline (Newell, 1992). In addition, the practical problems faced by global communities require “problem-defining and solving perspectives that cross disciplinary and cultural boundaries” (Hudzik, as cited in Leask and Bridge, 2013, p. 85).

Interdisciplinary education is not without substantial challenges, however. Since different disciplines have different traditions of teaching and learning, to become a specialist in multiple disciplines one must learn to thrive under a variety of instructional methods (Bradbeer, 1999). In addition, different disciplines have distinct epistemologies, or ways of viewing the world, and discipline-specific vocabularies (Davies and Devlin, 2007). Deep knowledge is required before students can learn the skills that make them experts in a discipline and enable them to apply an expert’s understanding to discipline-specific oral and written communication. Experts perceive meaningful patterns of information in their own domain better than non-experts, understand the gaps in knowledge where more research and innovation are needed, and notice implicit meanings in communication between practitioners in the field. This claim is substantiated by Wardle’s (2009) study of a freshman year English composition course for students majoring in biology.
The course instructor, a graduate student in English Rhetoric, assumed that statements made in peer-reviewed biology journals were statements of fact, whereas her colleagues in biology (experts) recognized that these seemingly-objective statements were actually very subjective, and this subjectivity can be inferred by insiders from the citations and prefaces.

Many of us recall being taught that science writing is an objective statement of fact, not by scientists but by our English teachers. Regardless of English teachers’ high facility with the English language, only scientists with a deep knowledge of their subject can see the implicit argumentation in science writing. In addition to this ability to understand nuances in argumentation, domain specialists use “higher order principles to solve problems, work faster and with more accuracy, are better at self-monitoring, comprehend the meaning of data more readily, recognize the relative weighting of variables and have better domain-specific short and long term memory” (Johnson, as cited in Davies and Devlin, 2007, p. 6).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, achieving true command of any discipline requires that an individual master not only technical knowledge but also the art of self-presentation in the discipline. A quality education goes further than teaching students knowledge of a field; it teaches the communicative practices of the profession, especially those needed to promote one’s status among peers (Dannels, 2006). This requires a high degree of oral and written fluency in the language spoken by practitioners, including its subtle nuances.

To summarize, mastering one discipline, even in one’s native language, requires a substantial amount of work; being interdisciplinary, even in one’s native language, is an enormous undertaking. This begs the question of how aware international students are of the enormity of scholarly and professional commitment and the investment of time and social apprenticeship required to be truly interdisciplinary and multilingual. Indeed, international students pursuing composite degrees in English and one or more additional subjects are likely unaware of the real challenges ahead of them before they can master the language and disciplinary skills needed to be hailed as genuine global professionals. It may also be that educational institutions and instructors, even those with the best intentions, are not aware of the magnitude of international students’ challenges or the instructional reforms needed to initiate students into their imagined or ideal communities (Kanno and Norton, 2003).
To illustrate some of these challenges and the support systems needed to meet them, this study focuses on the experience of one of the authors as an international graduate student from China pursuing a Master’s degree in Education at a Canadian research university. She experienced substantial difficulties writing papers for graduate courses at the beginning of her program, partly because her undergraduate major had been in Journalism rather than her graduate level discipline. This study seeks to highlight that what appeared to be a lack of academic English proficiency or general writing skills was actually a lack of familiarity with the new writing culture and the discourse of her new field. At the same time, her familiarity with journalistic writing and her extensive experience as a language educator helped her to learn the nuances of English and the discourse of the new field quickly, but not quickly enough to avoid serious challenges.

**A Journalist’s Foray into Education: From Confusion and Misunderstanding to Help-Seeking and Improvement**

_The author reflects on her prior disciplinary knowledge and professional background_

As an undergraduate majoring in Journalism, I dreamt of working as an English journalist in China. English media in China serves the needs of not only expatriates, who are interested to know the daily news happening in China, but also Chinese audiences, who want to improve their English proficiency. However, because of the limited opportunity in this industry, after completing my bachelor’s degree in Journalism, I chose a career in education as a university coordinator and language instructor. Over several years, I greeted many applied linguists from other countries and coordinated their academic speeches in my university. When I listened to their speeches about language teaching and learning as an audience member, I found my passion to engage in such dialogues and contribute my perspectives. This passion led me to pursue a Master’s degree in Education in North America.

When I first arrived at my graduate program in Canada, I possessed confidence in my writing skills based on my practical experience in language education and my high English proficiency score of 8 in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Yet, after I had completed a few written assignments, some of my professors suggested that I had problems at all levels with my aca-
ademic writing and advised me to go to the academic writing center. However, I was not aware of what the specific problems were, how these problems originated, or how they could be resolved. It is difficult to ask for help with something when you don’t know what you don’t know. It took a great deal of time given the fragmented, non-systematic input from multiple sources before I gained awareness of the discourses of my new discipline, especially in terms of clear argumentation, secondary source use, and data triangulation.

On constructing a clear argument

A major problem with my initial graduate level writing was lack of clear arguments. In many writing assignments, I presented the data of one theme without sufficient analysis and then moved on to present the data of another theme. This was because I thought that I had already intertwined my arguments during my presentation of data and that there was no need to give further clear statements of my opinion based on data. Now, after reflection, I attribute my inability to state clear arguments to two main factors: previous disciplinary knowledge and cultural background.

First, my previous training in news writing impacted my understanding of arguments in academic writing. In news stories, journalists are reporters rather than commentators and they are generally discouraged from giving their own opinions. Even though they try to permeate data with their subjective interpretations, they are trained to do so strategically by carefully choosing nuanced words when presenting facts. For instance, in my news writing class, I was trained to distinguish the nuances between “someone robbed the shop” (accusation) and “someone took items from the shop” (fact).

As a result of this training, I learned to interweave my affect and argumentation with the data, rather than disclose my opinion in clear statements.

Second, I realized that my cultural background played a role in how I framed my arguments. Some arguments might be obvious for people from one culture, but not so obvious for people from another culture. Recently, I complimented a young Canadian neighbor by saying: “It is cherry blossom season now. And you wear a skirt with so many beautiful flowers.” I thought I had clearly implied within two sentences that the girl’s skirt matched the season. However, the little girl seemed confused by my comment until her mother clarified: “Your skirt matches the season.” Alt-
hough I felt that the mother’s comment was unnecessary, I learned an important lesson from this exchange. It is possible that in my culture people are socialized into making some default assumptions or bridges between concepts, such as the idea that flowers on people clothes reflect current flower blossoms in nature. In this case, my Canadian neighbors did not make the same assumption or bridge. Their inability to do so does not mean that my comment needed to be more direct (to me and my Chinese colleagues, my comment was sufficiently direct), but it does mean that a clarifying statement would have been helpful. In another hypothetical case, if I said: “I ate like a horse today”, the little girl and her mother would not need any additional explanation to understand what I meant, since in their language and culture this statement is an idiom, a conventional way of summarizing a specific phenomenon. However, within this conventional saying, there are hidden assumptions that are shared by people of the same culture and language. If I had made the same statement in Mandarin, it would sound indirect and unclear for Chinese people. In order to clarify, I would need to have extra explanations to bridge facts and comments to make a clear argument: 1) I ate so much food all at once today. 2) I know that horses usually eat a lot of food at each meal. 3) Therefore, I think I ate like a horse today. These assumptions that we make in order to understand what other people are saying may be intrinsically embedded in specific culture and language, rather than in communicative style, such that people of the same culture do not even realize that they are following certain unspoken connections.

I integrated this lesson into my academic writing in English by acknowledging that not every reader is from the same culture as the author. Therefore, rather than expect readers to share my default assumptions with me, it is better for me to clearly express my arguments along with the assumptions I made to arrive at the argument. For instance, I could have said: “Your lovely skirt matches the cherry blossoms outside; how nice to see that you are dressed for the season”.

In conclusion, both my previous repertoire of journalism and lack of shared cultural knowledge with my audience are most likely the key factors that led to the apparent lack of clarity or argumentation in my writing from a North American academic reader’s perspective. I now keep my specific audience in mind and make a concerted effort to explicitly state my academic arguments. I also
ask for culture-specific advice when I am not sure how another culture may frame its reasoning.

*On using secondary sources appropriately*

Initially in my graduate level writing, I frequently used quotes rather than paraphrasing. I was shocked by advice from my peers to paraphrase quotations whenever possible. However, as I reflected on my past education and culture, I came to understand my preference for using direct quotes.

Previous training in journalism taught me to prefer direct quotations over paraphrasing. If journalists paraphrase their interviewees’ comments instead of using quotation marks in their stories, the comments are more likely to be perceived as fabricated or modified by journalists. To avoid such accusations, journalists work hard to present the original quotations of their interviewees, and editors encourage journalists to avoid paraphrasing direct quotes. Thus indoctrinated, I believed that quotes, rather than paraphrases, were one of the key indices of quality and professional writing. I thought that providing accurate quotations along with their page numbers in my graduate essays would help to construct my identity as a high quality writer and an academically honest student.

Another challenge for me in terms of citation practice is that I could not find the English version of some of the theories or concepts that I had learnt in China. Since my previous high school and undergraduate courses were offered in Mandarin, what I learned about non-Chinese scholars’ theories and concepts had been translated to Chinese. Thus, when I tried to apply these theories and concepts to my assignments in Canada, I encountered problems obtaining the same or similar sayings or concepts from the same scholars in English: i.e., for one of my assignments, I wanted to include a famous Chinese quotation from Karl Marx on how animals and human beings were distinct, because the latter could make tools while the former could not. Although, I had seen the direct quotation in numerous Chinese textbooks and academic papers, I have seen few Western scholars citing its English version. Many Western scholars have cited Marx, in Russian-to-English translations of his writings, but they seem to focus on other aspects of Marxist theory about which I am unfamiliar. I felt uncertain about whether to translate the direct quotation myself from Chinese academic papers or to paraphrase it in English. I hesitated to do either out of concern of losing or twisting the original author’s
meaning during translation. In addition, using uncommon quotes or quotes from non-English sources might cause queries for further explanations from my Western professors.

Furthermore, the discourse communities in China and in English-speaking nations are likely to interpret the same scholar or adage differently. Although many international students learnt about seminal scholars and their theories in their home countries, the opinions of local academics in their native languages may not be validated in the Western context. Thus, international students are faced with relearning key theories from a different perspective. This process is both time-consuming and cognitively challenging. To overcome my challenges in secondary source use, I developed paraphrasing skills and socialized myself into current Western interpretations of key scholars and their theories. In an academic writing class, the professor trained us in summary exercises by making us read each paragraph aloud then summarize the central arguments. We then compared our summaries and discussed the various nuanced meanings that we had generated. I benefited from his teaching by learning how to paraphrase based on accurate summaries. Second, through class discussions and introductory books about key theories and scholars in my new field, I familiarized myself with current Western interpretations.

On understanding the need to triangulate data

Although my previous training in journalism created challenges for me with respect to paraphrasing, it gave me requisite skills to understand triangulation in research, for example, by seeking direct experience to confirm verbal statements made by interviewees. Since it is a professional expectation for journalists to investigate the same incident from different perspectives and to use various data collection methods in order to achieve objectivity in news reporting, I have transferred these skills to my research methodol-ogy and communication during my MA degree. For instance, if a journalist wants to expose a local merchant for passing mice meat off as lamb kebabs, she/he needs to verify the claim from several positions: e.g. disclose the backgrounds of informants who gave him/her the tip; interview the accused kebab sellers and give them an opportunity to respond; investigate and observe where the meat comes from; and obtain a variety of kebab samples for laboratory investigation. Only after completing such verifications is a journal-
ist deemed to be reliable when reporting to the public. Failure to do so may harm the livelihood of businesses and individuals.

Journalistic perspectives on seeking the truth from diversified sources and with various methods helped me understand the necessity of triangulating data in academia. After reading many research papers in education, I realized that interviewing is a widely used research methodology in academia as well as journalism. As a result of journalistic sensitivity, I paid special attention to whether researchers have investigated a broad enough range of stakeholders and how the stances of these stakeholders might have influenced research findings. In addition, I appreciated that research in education and other social sciences based findings not solely on interviews but also on other methodologies such as ethnography and quantitative studies. For me, ethnography is similar to the concept of journalists going into the field, buying kebabs from suspicious vendors and tracing the source of their meat supply. And, although it might not be a completely identical procedure, sending samples of the kebabs to laboratories for analysis may reflect a common mindset of quantitative researchers who value the objective analysis of samples. In summary, whereas some aspects of my previous training in journalism hindered me from achieving success in Western academic writing in my new discipline, other aspects actually helped me in terms of understanding triangulation research methodologies.

Conclusion: The Need for Individualized Diagnostic Assessments & Teacher/Peer Feedback

International, interdisciplinary students require tailored support based on their unique educational and cultural backgrounds. Due to the preference for interdisciplinary talent in the global job market, many international students strategically change their majors in their graduate programs when they choose to study in the West. Western educators and advisors need to acknowledge that not all students remain true to their specialization throughout their educational career, and students who change their specializations in graduate school face the additional challenge of learning a new discipline in addition to a new discourse. In other words, rather than treating international students as a homogeneous group or dividing them into heterogeneous nationality groups, educators and policy makers need to recognize the trend of changing disciplines in the international graduate student body and empathize with these stu-
dents who encounter challenges in terms of learning the idiosyncrasies of a new language and a new discipline.

To meet the growing needs of international, trans-disciplinary graduate students, universities could provide additional language support based on diagnostic assessments for each student. These assessments would take into account the impact of large culture (e.g. “Chinese writing”), small cultures (e.g. writing skills and beliefs about “good” writing acquired from past instructional settings), and conventions of other disciplines to which the student has previously belonged. In other words, a complex diagnostic tool would help to identify what specific skills are needed to socialize the trans-disciplinary international student into his/her new disciplinary discourses. Moreover, while some aspects of these backgrounds may serve as barriers to understanding the discourses of a new discipline, other aspects may actually be beneficial. Based on this case study, we feel that active self-diagnosis and help-seeking on the part of international students, combined with coordinated efforts between peer advisors, instructors, and writing centres to provide individualized assessments and instruction, would play a vital role in inducting international graduate students into their anticipated communities and the discourses of their disciplines.

We also recommend the implementation of thorough support systems for these students. First, instructor and peer-run workshops and department-made self-access materials could introduce seminal academic authors, theories and key terms of the new discipline so that students can grasp the general idea of the new field quickly. Second, as a pedagogical tool, instructors could identify seminal journal articles and names of key authors in their slides or presentations so that students can conduct additional research on their own. Third, instructors might give more explicit information regarding the positions of readings and how they relate to each other. They could explain which articles are reviews of the existing body of literature, which are seminal articles that sparked an intellectual revolution, and which texts embody the basic beliefs of a particular theoretical camp relative to another set of texts that represent the opposing camp. Further, faculty and other members of the discourse community need to acknowledge that it will take many years for most international students to gain a sufficient level of discourse and linguistic proficiency to process peer-reviewed articles and texts with the same degree of speed and understanding that their instructors do. International students’ ability to write argumentative essays that not only summarize source texts but defend
their own opinions using those texts as support, is contingent upon adequate previewing of the material as described above. We are not condoning spoon-feeding information. Rather, such instruction could allow the students to read with more comprehension and write with more critical acumen. Students also need to hear their instructors acknowledge that not everything that has been published in an academic journal is unquestionable, objective truth, and that students have rights as readers and writers to question what they have read.

When giving instructions for an assignment paper, instructors could provide specific details as to what they expect in each section of the paper. Further, they could give writing samples to cross-disciplinary students to help them establish a more concrete idea of what a high-quality writing assignment looks like. Alternatively, instructors could provide examples of the most common ways in which students have misinterpreted guidelines for assignments along with suggestions for correction and improvement.

For their part, peer advisors should be trained to assess the beliefs of incoming international students with respect to academic writing and oral communication. This assessment could help peer advisors design academic workshops and social events to scaffold students’ induction into the new discipline and its associated discourse communities. Finally, cross-disciplinary international students could form networks or organize study groups. In these study groups, they could discuss terms and theories that they don’t understand, rehearse presentations, exchange drafts of research papers, and exercise “think aloud” strategies as they give peer feedback to each other. In this way, they can support each other academically as well as psychologically.

To conclude, English as a second language writing instruction at the university level needs to incorporate more individualized diagnostic assessments and interventions based on international interdisciplinary students’ profiles as writers. This could lead to individually-tailored backstage support systems to complement academic writing instruction in the disciplines and significantly assist with the students’ discourse socialization. None of these reforms would require much restructuring or extra financial investment on the part of the institution. By spending extra time designing lectures that effectively introduce content-heavy material, and writing explicit guidelines for student papers, instructors can avoid having to spend a great deal of time later on correcting incomprehensible papers. By seeking help when they need it and self-diagnosing the
sources of their difficulties in academic writing, international students can inform their instructors and peers of appropriate methods of assistance. By forming peer workshops and study groups, both international and domestic students can gain insight into other cultures’ interpretations of key thinkers in world history and enhance their own academic performance. In short, it is this kind of individually-driven learning and problem-solving, rather than institution-wide calls for new teaching methods, new curricula, and new technology, which we feel are important for preparing interdisciplinary students from all cultures for global citizenship and business in the global economy.

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