RETHINKING UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS EDUCATION: LIBERAL LEARNING FOR THE PROFESSION

Teaching Business with Ethics-Based Cases

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Rethinking Undergraduate Business Education: Liberal Learning for the Profession

TODAY’S SPEAKERS

**Tom Ehrlich**, Visiting Professor at the School of Education, Stanford University; former Senior Scholar, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

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Be inspired. Be inspiring.
Learning Outcomes

You should be able to:

• Identify where the following are emphasized in your curriculum and teaching:
  – Analytic Reasoning
  – Multiple Framing
  – Reflective Exploration of Meaning
  – Practical Reasoning

• Determine the relative balance of these modes of thinking in curriculum and teaching.

• Teach cases so as to bring all the modes into play to achieve liberal learning objectives.

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Liberal Learning and its Central Dimensions

The purpose of liberal learning is to enable students to make sense of the world and their place in it, preparing them to use knowledge and skills as a means to engage responsibly with the life of their times.

Liberal learning includes three modes of thinking plus practical reasoning:

• Analytical Thinking
• Multiple Framing
• The Reflective Exploration of Meaning
• Practical Reasoning
Activity: Liberal Learning and the Aims of Business Education

• To what extent does the definition of liberal learning reflect aims in business education?
Analytical Thinking

Analytical thinking abstracts from particular experience in order to produce formal knowledge that is general in nature and independent of any particular context. It is methodical and consistent, beginning with a particular set of assumptions or categories and proceeding to develop the implications of these concepts through deduction. Examples of such discourses range from mathematics and logic through theories in various disciplines such as economics.
Activity: Analytical Thinking

• What are the strengths of Analytical Thinking in achieving the goals of liberal learning in case teaching – or in business education more generally?
Multiple Framing

Multiple Framing is the ability to work intellectually with fundamentally different, sometimes mutually incompatible, analytical perspectives. It involves conscious awareness that any particular scheme of analytical thinking or intellectual discipline frames experience in particular ways.
Activity: Multiple Framing

• Are there ways to enhance the teaching of facility with multiple framing in business cases – or in business education more generally?
The Reflective Exploration of Meaning

The Reflective Exploration of Meaning encompasses the most self-reflective aspects of learning. It involves the exploration of meaning, value, and commitment. It raises questions such as what difference does a particular understanding or approach to things make to who I am, how I engage the world, and what it is reasonable for me to imagine and hope. This is the traditional heart of liberal education, the focal point of humanistic learning.
Activity: Reflective Exploration of Meaning

• This mode is often weak in the teaching of business, including case teaching. How could it be developed there?
Practical Reasoning

Practical Reasoning represents the capacity to draw on knowledge and intellectual skills to engage concretely with the world. Practical Reasoning allows the individual to go beyond reflection to deliberate and decide on the best course of action within a particular situation. Such thinking is characteristic of professional judgment, including that of business leaders, as well as being a key capacity of citizens and statesmen.
Activity: Practical Reasoning

• Case teaching often includes this mode of thinking. How can we ensure an ethical framing of such teaching? Could anything from the C.A.T. Scan model of the previous session be helpful?
More Information

Rethinking Undergraduate Business Education: Liberal Learning for the Profession
Learn more about the book and authors at: www.carnegiehighered.org

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The Consortium is housed at the Aspen Institute Business and Society Program and sponsored by the Teagle Foundation. To learn more information about the program and the application process, contact Claire Preisser, Senior Program Manager of the Aspen Institute Business and Society Program at: claire.preisser@aspeninst.org.