**Reflecting on 25 years of teaching, researching,**

**and textbook-writing for Introduction to Management:**

**An essay with some lessons learned[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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When I first heard about this Special Issue I was excited; for most of my over 25 years of teaching I have been thinking about and developing new approaches and materials for teaching introduction to management courses. In this essay I will describe changes and innovations I have made in the classroom, with an emphasis on the development of course content that teaches two approaches to management, one that is consistent with conventional management thinking and practice, and the other that promotes a view that is more consistent with Principles for Responsible Management Education (e.g., Laasch & Conaway, 2014). The essay will highlight a dozen “Lessons” I have learned from teaching and writing about Introduction to Management courses. Of course, these lessons are not intended to be normative, but rather they describe insights that I have found to be valuable for myself, and which I offer in the hope that they may also be valuable to readers as they reflect upon their own approach to teaching.

To begin, while I have found teaching introduction to management courses to be rewarding and meaningful, I know that some of my colleagues do not. And, to be honest, at the beginning of my career I also did not fully appreciate this course. It was the first course I had been assigned to teach as a new faculty member. At the time I was warned that it is a challenging course to teach, and not well-liked by students. My colleagues explained that students prefer other courses like “Organizational Behavior” because their content is more “hands-on" (“Students can take the ideas they learn in OB courses and try them out on their mom at home”). In contrast, the management course is more abstract and conceptual in nature.

I’m not sure whether these expectations from my colleagues affected my classroom experience, but I do distinctly remember that after a year or so of teaching I decided that I needed to embrace the course more fully in order to enhance both my students’ and my own experience in the classroom. In the first years I had been providing students with what I thought was excellent course content, with a focus on conveying knowledge. (As I will describe below, I have since learned the importance of understanding education as involving a troika of components: knowing, doing and being). Even though the course may have had very strong content, I’m not sure it was making much difference to students. I believe that my improved attitude to the course improved it for both myself and my students, as indicated in my first “lesson.”

**Lesson Learned #1**: *Ensure that you have a positive attitude when you teach an Introduction to Management course; it’ll be more rewarding for yourself and for your students.*

My improved attitude was manifest in two pedagogical changes. First, I started to develop what I call “live cases.” This involves finding a local business, interviewing the manager, and writing a short (around 1000 word) description of the company and an issue that it is facing. I try to write the cases in a way that engages students.

“Imagine that at a recent family gathering your aunt was thrilled to hear that you were a business student, and she told you out about a situation she was facing at a firm where she was a manager. Several days later your aunt contacted you to see if you might be interested in doing some consulting work for her, which would require you to prepare a short report and provide advice for her firm.”

Students are asked to analyze the case using relevant concepts from the course (500 words), and then make a recommendation based on their analysis (500 words). On the day when the cases are due, I invite the manager into class to listen to the students’ analysis and advice, and then to provide feedback to the students.

Students love it. They feel like they are helping a real manager. And more importantly, they are learning how to apply course concepts to a real world situation (the “doing” part of the “knowing, being, doing” troika). Students often tell me that this is a highlight of the course, and the moment in the course where everything starts to make sense. Writing a new “live case” each term requires some work on my part, but it is well worth it, and I have done it most years since then. As a bonus, writing a case is also rewarding for me personally because I get to know a local organization and manager – it’s good for us academics to talk to and learn from practitioners!

**Lesson Learned #2**: *Live cases enhance learning because they provide an engaging opportunity for students to apply course content to real world problems*.

Next, I found myself becoming evermore aware of and concerned about what others have since identified as troubling “self-fulfilling prophecies” embedded in management theory and textbooks (e.g., Ferraro, Pfeffer, & Sutton, 2005; Ghoshal, 2005). I wouldn’t have articulated it this way at the time, but I was feeling uncomfortable with the built-in assumptions that expect people (and firms) to be self-interested profit-maximizers. Consistent with these self-fulfilling assumptions, research shows that as business students go through their programs of study they are socialized to become more materialistic and individualistic (e.g., Frank, Gilovich, & Regan, 1993, 1996; Krishnan, 2003; Pfeffer & Fong, 2004) and less benevolent (e.g., less likely to find it important or desire to care for the people around them) (Arieli, Sagiv, & Cohen-Shalen, 2016).

At the time I did not yet know that many colleagues were experiencing similar misgivings, and that many of them used a similar approach to mine to address their uneasiness. The metaphor I used at the time was to provide “windows” that allowed students to breathe in “different air” than being offered in the conventional course content. For example, I might tell students about research suggesting that money does not necessarily buy happiness (e.g., Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2008), or provide them with examples of how specific managers or firms lauded in their textbooks also had a less praiseworthy side (e.g., O’Boyle, 1998). Every term I added new “windows” so that, after a few years I was feeling pretty good about the course. I even started to develop “live cases” about non-business organizations—such as soup kitchens or thrift stores—and in this way brought additional “different air” into the classroom. For example, one case asks students to design a soup kitchen that would treat patrons with dignity, in contrast to the structures and systems common in most soup kitchens that often make patrons feel like a “charity case” and undermine their sense of self-worth (Dyck & Neubert, 2010, pp. 348-49).

Sometimes I ask my students to think about the role models in their personal lives, to identify people they look up to, and then I invite students to anonymously write down a piece of paper what they think are the three most important things in life. I collect and analyse their responses, which we discuss the following class. Students value a happy family life, having friends, and health. Financial success is usually in fourth or fifth place. We discuss what management practice and theory would look like if it were based on what people generally consider to be important in life, rather than on the assumptions about “success” and “effectiveness” that characterize conventional business theory and practice.

Another thing I started to do, and have continued since, is to develop “study questions” for exams that require students to think *both* inside and outside of the box. By providing these questions beforehand, of which a subset appears on the exam, I give students time and reward them for thinking about pros and cons associated with conventional wisdom. For example:

“Cooperativeness, not competitiveness, brings out the best in humankind.” Provide at least three reasons why you agree, ***and*** three reasons why you disagree, with this statement (2 x 30%). In your response, provide two examples that illustrate why you agree with this statement, and two examples why you disagree (2 x 20%).”

**Lesson Learned #3**: *Don't be afraid to find creative ways that give voice to your misgivings about the dominant assumptions embedded in conventional course content.*

The pedagogical zenith of this “era” in my teaching was the development of a “follow-a-manager” exercise (inspired by Mintzberg, 1973) that involved me video-taping three different managers for several hours of their day, and then asking students to work in groups and analyze every minute of a manager’s video-taped day according to three different conceptual frameworks: 1) Henri Fayol’s four management functions of planning, organizing, leading and controlling; 2) Henry Mintzberg’s various managerial roles; and 3) Aristotle’s four cardinal virtues: courage, justice, self-control and wisdom (for a fuller description of this exercise, and results, see Dyck & Kleysen, 2001). From my perspective, this assignment offers students two benefits. First, it enables students to observe a practitioner in action, and thereby vicariously experience the messy and fast pace of managerial life. Second, it rewards students for thoughtfully thinking about the meaning of management through several different “lenses,” most notably Aristotelian virtue theory.

Some readers may be scratching their heads as to why I would choose an ancient framework based on Aristotelian virtues, and they may wonder how relevant and applicable it is. In terms of applicability, even I was surprised to find out that students were able to categorize a greater percentage of the managers’ day using the Aristotelian framework (89%) than using Mintzberg’s roles or Fayol’s functions (80% and 82% respectively) (Dyck & Kleysen, 2001). And with regard to relevance, it turns out Aristotle actually has a lot to say about management (Dyck, 2013), and virtue theory provides a wonderful basis for developing alternative management thinking (e.g., Dyck & Neubert, 2010; see also Donaldson & Walsh, 2015; Neubert & Dyck, 2014).

The follow-a-manager assignment led to an “aha moment” that shaped my subsequent approach to teaching management, which took place while talking with a student who had completed my course, and whom I had hired as a Research Assistant. Let’s call her Julie. I knew Julie to be exceptionally bright, and I knew that she had come into the class primed to breathe and seek the sort of “different air” that I had built into the course. So perhaps I was somewhat smug when I asked her what she thought about those “windows.” Her response was deflating and telling: she gave me a blank and then quizzical look, as if to ask what I was talking about. She had been so focused on trying to understand the course’s conventional material that she had not even noticed the critical “windows.”

I thought long and hard about that interaction. If Julie, whom I considered to be a prime candidate for soaking up the alternative views I had sprinkled throughout the course, did not pick up on them, who would? In retrospect I understand that my pedagogical approach to opening “windows” for my students had been naïve, though well-intentioned. Even for me, someone with a PhD in business and years of experience in researching and teaching management theory, it would take several years to develop a *comprehensive* alternative approach to management.

**Lesson Learned #4**: *Providing “windows” that critique conventional management course content is not particularly effective for getting students to think deeply about alternative approaches to management.*

My interactions with Julie (and other students and colleagues) prompted me to develop course content that comprehensively presents *both* a conventional and an alternative approach to management, which for present purposes can be called Management 1.0 and Management 2.0 respectively (drawing from Hamel, 2009). At that time I was doing research that involved interviewing managers who had been nominated for “marching to the beat of a different drum.” These managers’ stories, together with Weber’s (1958) writings about the iron cage, inspired the 2x2 framework depicted in Table 1 that identifies four “ideal types” of management (Dyck & Schroeder, 2005; Dyck & Weber, 2006; Dyck & Neubert, 2010). The vertical dimension of the Table describes the relative emphasis management places on materialism (e.g., profit-maximization, the financial bottom-line), and the horizontal dimension describes the relative emphasis placed on individualism (e.g., self-interestedness, getting ahead). As depicted in the Table, Management 1.0 places relatively “high” emphasis on materialism and individualism, whereas Management 2.0 seeks to balance multiple forms of well-being (financial, ecological, social, spiritual, physical, aesthetic) for multiple stakeholders (owners, customers, employees, suppliers, neighbors, competitors, future generations).

-- insert Table 1 about here --

I still remember the first time I showed this 2x2 Table to MBA students. Their response was palpable. About one-third of the students sat forward in their seats, and their facial features relaxed and some even broke into a relieved smile, as if to say: “This means that I *can* be a manager without being a self-interested profit-maximizer.” Another third of the students leaned back and crossed their arms over their chests and gave me a disconcerting look, as if to say: “I thought this was a business school – who let in this left-leaning professor to teach my class?” (The final third offered no visible reaction, possibly because it was an evening class and they were tired.)

The students’ visceral responses told me that I was onto something important. So, informed by my interactions with students (like Julie and my MBA students), my interviews with managers (especially those who march to the beat of a different drum), and my awareness of on-going and emerging themes in the literature (e.g., Weber, 1958; fore-runners to the PRME movement), I committed myself to developing comprehensive course content that presents both Management 1.0 and 2.0 in each lecture. This process involved writing supplemental hand-outs for my students, whose ongoing feedback and encouragement was crucial to the process. It took several years for the Management 2.0 approach to be developed to a level that was comparable to the conventional materials associated with Management 1.0.

**Lesson Learned #5**: *Develop new approaches to teaching management based on feedback from students and input from practitioners and scholars.*

To ensure fair and comprehensive coverage of Management 1.0 theory and practice, I performed a content analysis of six top-selling management textbooks, and include all the material mentioned in at least four of these books. I retain the same basic structure found in most management courses (e.g., I organize my lectures around the planning, organizing, leading, controlling format), but for each lecture I first present Management 1.0 theory and practices, and then follow this with parallel Management 2.0 theory and practice (Dyck & Neubert, 2010).

For example, my lecture on goal-setting begins by describing Management 1.0 “SMART1” goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-based, and Time-specific). I tell my students that there may be no topic that is considered as important or has as much empirical research support as SMART1 goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 2013; Miner, 2003), but that even its champions acknowledge that it is not very useful for goals that are significant and meaningful but difficult to quantify (Locke & Latham, 2002, 2009; see also Ordòñez, Schweitzer, Galinsky, & Bazerman, 2009). Then I describe Management 2.0 “SMART2” goals (Significant, Meaningful, Agreed-upon, Relevant, and Timely), and we discuss the pros and cons of both approaches.

For an example of macro content, when teaching about generic strategy I begin by presenting Porter’s (1980, 1985) Management 1.0 “cost leader” and “differentiation” strategies, and then I compare these to two parallel Management 2.0 strategies. First, a “minimizer” strategy seeks to reduce not only financial costs (akin to “cost leader”), but also seeks to reduce negative externalities associated with a firm’s actions, which might include reducing a firm’s ecological footprint (e.g., via use of solar panels, decreased waste) and reducing social ills (e.g., via reducing economic inequality and thereby the social ills it is associated with; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). Second, a “transformer” strategy can be seen as analogous to “differentiation,” but rather than focus on additional features and services that clients are willing to pay extra for, the transformer strategy seeks to create positive externalities by adding value to resources (firm and/or societal) that have been underutilized or deemed as “waste” (Bell, Dyck, & Neubert, forthcoming 2017). Examples include firms like Greyston Bakery that hire and train ex-convicts, and organic farmers who sequester carbon from the atmosphere and return it to the soil (Stokstad, 2008).

It has always been important to me to present *both* Management 1.0 and Management 2.0 as being ethical and good according to their own specific underpinning moral-point-of-view. In other words, no approach to management is value-neutral; rather, educators would do well to make explicit the specific ethics that underpin different approaches to management (e.g., Blasco, 2012; Painter-Morland, 2015). I show students how Management 1.0 is consistent with consequential utilitarianism, and Management 2.0 is consistent with virtue ethics.

Consequential utilitarianism, which was originally developed by Jeremy Bentham, David Hume, John Stuart Mill and others, has often been simplified to suggest that ethical management strives to maximize a firm’s financial outcomes. This view sees financial well-being as sort of a proxy or shorthand for overall well-being, and assumes that the “invisible hand” (Smith, 1986 [1776], 2004 [1759]) will ensure that something that is good for a firm is also good for larger society. I offer Milton Friedman, the Nobel prize winning economist, as a popularized champion of Management 1.0 ethics (Friedman, 1970).

In contrast, Aristotelian virtue ethics draw attention to the folly of *maximizing* financial wealth (*chrematistics*), and focuses instead on how communities flourish (*eudemonia*) when virtues are practiced in organizations. Thus, rather than focus on “outcomes,” virtue ethics emphasizes virtues and character; rather than the firm level, virtue ethics focuses on the larger community; and rather than maximizing financial well-being, virtue ethics emphasizes holistic well-being. The idea that it is foolhardy to seek more than “enough” profit (Leshem, 2016) is particularly jarring for students, because it challenges the conventional emphasis on *maximizing* the financial well-being of a firm (though, upon careful inspection, even conventional management theory recognizes the importance of “enough”; e.g., Child, 1972). By the end of the year, in-class surveys show that students much prefer being managed according to virtue theory than consequential utilitarianism. My colleagues and I have a series of books and papers that apply a virtue ethics moral-point-of-view to a variety of topics, including goal-setting theory, strategy, accounting, marketing, and other areas (e.g., Bell & Dyck, 2012; Christie, Dyck, Morrill, & Stewart, 2013; Dyck & Neubert, 2010; Neubert & Dyck, 2014).

**Lesson Learned #6**: *It is possible to present students with two parallel approaches to management, each based on its own moral-point-of-view and supported by scholarly research.*

It has been heartening to see that teaching two approaches to management has helped students think about how their values influence the kind of the manager they wish to become. By teaching each topic so that students learn about a Management 1.0 and then a Management 2.0 approach, I had hoped that students would go beyond simply “knowing” about different approaches to management, but also to think deeply about where they are along a Management 1.0/2.0 continuum, and also what sort of manager they aspire to become (“being”). My students no longer see management as a “value neutral” phenomenon. Instead, they recognize that Management 1.0 is based upon and consistent with a specific moral-point-of-view, and Management 2.0 based upon another.

My favorite moments in the course often occur towards the end of the term, when students approach me—sometimes proudly, sometimes a bit sheepishly—and explain: “After taking the course I’ve learned that I’m not a Management 1.0 or a Management 2.0 manager.” Instead, they thank me and tell me that they are a “Management 3.0” manager. They don’t actually use “Management 3.0,” but what they are saying is that the course has taught them to reflect on their own values and on how this informs who they want to become as a manager. Even as I write these words, remembering such interactions with students sends goose bumps down my back.

To be clear, this is not a case of simplistic relativism, where each student “picks” the moral-point-of-view appropriate for them and disregards alternative views. Far from it. My experience is that, when students think deeply about how their personal values influence the kind of manager that they aspire to become, they simultaneously become more *understanding* and *accepting* of others who are different from them. A metaphor I use in class is that each approach is like a different “language” of management, and that it is important for managers to become multi-lingual, since they will be managing a variety of people and in a variety of settings during their careers. Students who are multilingual tend to have higher levels of cultural empathy, open-mindedness, tolerance of ambiguity, and creativity (Dewaele, 2015), and tend to have a deeper understanding of their mother tongue and enhanced ability to learn and understand additional languages (Cenoz, 2013). Consistent with this, business students who are taught two approaches to management indicate that this definitely (68%) or probably (23%) improves their ethical thinking more than a course where only one approach is taught. Moreover, 95% of such students believe that teaching two approaches is more ethical than teaching only one approach (Dyck, 2013).

**Lesson Learned #7**: *When students learn two different approaches to management, they recognize that management is not value neutral – all management is value laden – and students are compelled to think about how their own values will inform what sort of manager they want to become.*

I’ve also been encouraged by research findings that contrast and compare students in courses that explicitly teach more than one approach to management, versus courses that emphasize a conventional management approach. In particular, I am encouraged by how much change can take place within the span of a three-month course. For example, one study found that students who are taught two approaches to management tend to become less materialistic and less individualistic from the beginning till the end of the term, thus (at least for awhile) reversing the trend of business school programs generally (Dyck, Walker, Starke, & Uggerslev, 2011).1 In other words, when exposed to alternative ways of managing, many students do not align themselves with conventional management theory and practice. Indeed, teaching two approaches may be seen as providing permission for students to re-embrace personal values that they had “parked at the door” when they entered their business school. For example, Grant (2013) describes a study of Harvard freshman where students ranked “compassion” as being one of their top personal values, but ranked it low in terms of the values they expected to find in their business education.

**Lesson Learned #8**: *When students learn two different approaches to management, they tend to adopt a less materialistic and less individualistic understanding of management.*

A second research finding is equally striking. Compared to introduction to management courses where students are taught conventional management theory and practice, students in courses where they are taught two approaches tend to have higher critical thinking skills based on three empirical measures: 1) questionnaire items drawn from Tsui (2006); 2) student interviews; and 3) a case-analysis completed by students designed to test their critical thinking abilities (Dyck, Walker, Starke, & Uggerslev, 2012). These findings are especially noteworthy because some previous research suggests that students’ critical thinking skills may not improve even after four years of university education, and that business students may lag behind other university students on factors related to “outside of the box” thinking (e.g., Facione, Giancarlo, Facione, & Gainen, 1995; Giancarlo & Facione, 2001).2

**Lesson Learned #9**: *Students who are taught two different approaches to management have higher critical thinking scores than students who are taught only one approach.*

Some colleagues have told me that they find it difficult enough to teach only one approach to management in a term-long course, never mind two. I don't recall it being more difficult to teach two approaches than to teach only one approach (except for my work to initially develop the course content for Management 2.0). Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, my students tell me that, even if it seems more challenging for them, they also find it more rewarding to learn two approaches than simply a conventional approach. Indeed, after completing such a course, when asked which of two management courses they would recommend their friends to enroll in (both taught by the same instructor), the majority of students (76%) recommend the section that teaches two approaches to management versus just one approach (Dyck et al., 2012).

**Lesson Learned #10**: *Students who learn two different approaches to management recommend such courses to their friends.*

My course is changing along with my students and the challenges facing managers. For example, whereas ten years ago I often had to convince students that it was important for businesses to address environmental concerns, in recent years students have been begging me to teach them *how* businesses can better address ecological issues. My students today are also more concerned about social issues, such as the widening gap between the relatively rich and poor (within businesses, within nations, and among nations; Rees, 2002), and its negative effects on the overall quality of life for both the rich and the poor (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010).

Of course, students’ increasing recognition of the importance of socio-ecological sustainability is entirely consistent with what is happening among practitioners and in the scholarly literature. For example, most of the annual reports of the leading *Fortune 500* firms now provide measures of financial, environmental and social performance (Glavas & Mish, 2015). Moreover, most managers believe that their firms have “fully” or “largely” addressed ecological sustainability issues (51%) and social sustainability issues (53%) (Kiron, Kruschwitz, Rubel, Reeves, & Fuisz-Kehrback, 2013). If we are to prepare our students for key issues they will face in their careers, we must take seriously how they can help business to manage its socio-ecological externalities. This has become an important part of my teaching and research in the past few years, and has resulted in developing a variety of new readings that I use in class.

**Lesson Learned #11**: *In order to prepare students for their careers and for the key issues facing humankind, management courses must prepare students to help organizations reduce negative, and enhance positive, socio-ecological externalities.*

The past few years I have also become more deliberate in attempting to facilitate students’ knowing, doing and being (e.g., Datar, Garvin, & Cullen, 2010; Snook, Nohria, & Khurana, 2012). First, in terms of “knowing,” I believe that a strength of my teaching has always been to provide my students with relevant scholarly knowledge. Recently I have added knowledge about the socio-ecological issues facing humanity, and businesses in particular (e.g., only 5 percent of pollution happens at the household level, whereas 75 percent is at the industrial level; Leonard, 2013). In particular, I have added new course content on sustainability and the triple-bottom line, noting that much of the “cutting edge” sustainable business practice is focused on reducing negative externalities while simultaneously improving a firm’s financial well-being (which is consistent with the prominent Brundtland commission definition of sustainable development).

Always looking to enhance critical thinking, I ask my students whether a triple-bottom line approach is “good enough,” or whether it fails to address “the elephant in the room.” For example, the world’s 3000 largest corporations are responsible for over $2 trillion of negative ecological externalities each year, which amounts to about 7% of their revenues and which “costs” the average person on the planet about $300 per year (which further widens gap between rich and poor) (Mattison, Trevitt, & van Ast, 2010). I highlight specific businesses that enhance social and ecological well-being, including firms like *31 bits* (where single mothers in Uganda recycle posters to create jewelry sold in high-income countries; http://31bits.com) and BUILD (which hires and trains ex-convicts to install energy-efficient toilets; Wood, Loney, & Taylor, 2015).

Second, in terms of “doing,” I have begun to develop new assignments that go beyond “live cases.” My current favorite is one I call “Experiments with sustainability,” which asks students to change their behavior for a week or longer, based on what they have learned about sustainability. For some students this means walking to school for a week to reduce use of fossil fuels, for others it means volunteering in a soup kitchen, for others it means introducing Fair Trade coffee in their workplace, and so on. Students submit a 1,000-word written report where they reflect on their experience and discuss implications and insights for themselves and their careers. This assignment helps students go from merely acquiring *knowledge* about sustainability issues, to *doing* something based on their knowledge, and then reflecting on what this means for them (*being*). I have seen the substantial difference this often makes in students’ lives, with many saying that they will continue their “experiment” beyond the course. My colleagues and I have collected data and are working on a paper that shows that such “praxis” in the classroom has an effect on students’ worldviews and approach to management (e.g., consistent with Foster & Wiebe, 2010).

As another variation *doing*, my students have always had a strong interest in entrepreneurship, and I have seen this interest grow stronger in recent years. The current cohort of university students—sometimes called the Millennials—has a particular passion for sustainable entrepreneurship that addresses the socio-ecological problems caused by their parents. Going forward I plan to develop on-going mini-assignments that encourage students to take what they are learning throughout course and apply it to intra/entrepreneurial ventures of their choice.

Finally, in terms of “being,” in addition to reflections on “Experiments with sustainability,” the new readings I have developed for my students include a “Question for reflection and discussion” on every page or so. These questions serve as “pause” buttons where students are explicitly asked to think about the “knowledge” presented in their reading, and whether it makes sense to them and, more importantly, whether it makes a difference to them. For example, after reading about the merits of place-based organizing (Shrivastava & Kennelly, 2013) and how “the local multiplier effect” results in a greater percentage of dollars spent in locally-owned business to stay in the local community (Carolan, 2014), I might ask students if this influences where they shop and want to work. Students are asked to submit a one-page response to two (or so) of the about five “Questions for reflection” I have included in each reading (last year I graded almost 1,000 such responses in one term—an overwhelming number, but also very rewarding, for both myself and the students). Another “being” activity I have used for several years is an end-of-term assignment that asks students to reflect on highlights of the course, with special emphasis on key insights about themselves or others, and implications going forward.

**Lesson Learned #12**: *The most effective way for me to teach an introduction to management course is to provide students with: 1) relevant knowledge (e.g., knowledge about different approaches to management, knowledge about the socio-ecological issues facing managers); 2) engaging opportunities to apply that knowledge (e.g., live cases, experiments with sustainability); and 3) opportunities to consider at a deep level what sorts of manager they want to become (e.g., self-reflection-based assignments).*

In conclusion, perhaps the most important “lesson” that I have learned over the past 25 years of teaching is that there is no “one best way” to teach an introduction to management course. I find this exciting, because it keeps the course dynamic and fresh, constantly evolving based on improved knowledge about pedagogical practices, changing expectations about the key issues facing business and students during their careers, and lessons learned from past experience.3 That said, while there may not be one “best” way, there can nevertheless be many “second-best” or “third-best” ways that await improvement. Hopefully, along with other articles included in this “special issue,” this essay can make a contribution to the improved teaching of introductory management courses.

**Endnotes**

1. This study involved students from six sections of an introductory management course, where three sections in the control group were taught using one of three different conventional textbooks, and three sections in the treatment group were taught using a textbook that lent itself to teaching two differing approaches to management (such as, for example, Aktouf, 2006; Dyck & Neubert, 2010; Laasch & Conaway, 2015; Linstead, Fulop, & Lilley, 2009). Student materialism and individualism scores were assessed using Likert-scale items from an earlier study, where each item began with: “To be an effective manager, I should …”. The four items that measured materialism ended with phrases like: “focus on maximizing productivity, efficiency, and profitability.” The four (reverse-coded) items that measured individualism included items like: “ … be a person who genuinely cares about the people around me.” The questions were administered to students at the beginning and end of the term. At the start of the year students in all six sections had similar scores for materialism and individualism (which were not correlated), but by the end of the year the scores for students in the treatment group had decreased (but not for the control group). Of course, in addition to the course content itself, students may have been influenced by other related factors. For example, it may be that students perceived instructors teaching two approaches to give more legitimacy to a less materialistic/individualistic approach than instructors who taught only approach, or that teaching two approaches lent itself to more class time for deeper critical thinking and self-reflection which may in turn be associated with a movement away from status quo conventional ideas about management theory and practice.

2. As with the study described in endnote #1, for readers who wonder whether different scores for students in the treatment versus control groups may be explained by other factors, note that all the course syllabi in these studies contained similar pedagogical features that have previously been associated with facilitating critical thinking, including: lectures, case studies, problem-solving activities, class discussion, higher-order questions, and welcoming students to apply and integrate ideas from other disciplines into the course. Note also that each of the four instructors in the study had taught this course for a minimum of five years, and that students’ evaluations of instructors in the three treatment groups was higher than for the three control groups.

3. I am currently co-authoring a management textbook that reflects and incorporates these ideas.

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