



Leaders as Teachers

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I have spent my career working in the worlds of education and business. In teaching university courses I have often translated the mission from one sector to another. In conversations with business and industry leaders, they often chose to point out differences between themselves and their education counterparts. As a college dean, I needed to form partnerships with business and industry partners and the longer I worked developing these relationships, the more I saw the similarities between the two. Preparing MBA students in management courses that focused on organizational development and change management, I recognized that all organizations dealt with these topics. Like it or not, colleges and universities are in the business of educating individuals. They focus on human development through skill and thinking development – a commodity that business uses to develop products and services. Education focuses on motivation and business focuses on marketing. The end goal for both is to change minds and behaviors, to believe in concepts or to believe in products and services.

In co-authoring the book *Designing Effective Teaching and Significant Learning*, I put what I have learned into practice for others. Though, the book's primary focus was to provide strategies for faculty to improve their course design, advance department and institutional mission, vision, and values, and to grow in their professional development, the book has received recognition by business leaders and managers as a way to explore business design.

During a recent workshop with managers of auto centers, one participant voiced the need for better workers to employ in the business. "We aren't getting employees like we used to have." I thought about how many times I heard teachers voice the same need. What do you do when students aren't college ready or employees aren't work or career ready? In the past, we had enough students and employees to not worry about each individual's growth as there were plenty of others who were ready. However, with the number of positions that need filling from expanding industries and a retiring workforce, we need to train more workers in ways than we may have needed to in the past.

As a university professor and college dean I saw the same situation happening in preparing students to graduate in a program of study. I was fortunate to teach an organizational development course that was usually taken in the first semester of the MBA program. I was also part of a team of faculty who taught the capstone course for this program. It was amazing to see the growth in these students as they progressed through the curriculum. Much of the same improvement is seen in work performance, as employees have the opportunity to broaden their careers through new challenges, expanding their skills, communication, and leadership abilities.

Business leadership faces the same situation. Losing an excellent employee due to department transfer, advancement or retirement leaves a gap. Transitions would be easier if all the new employees had the knowledge and experience that the former employees had possessed. You can't always find a new worker that has the skill set of the others in your department. As a manager, you need to lead, in fact, teach, all employees to deliver the outcomes necessary to create a successful business. Most managers don't have a



lot of experience in teaching. Designing an new employee orientation process and knowing that the new employee is going to need to time to learn the expectations and procedures will help you be a less-frustrated leader. Relying on others to mentor managers to become teachers takes a design plan for succession. Having a design plan in place minimizes manager frustration and provides a process to orienting and engaging all employees. If you aren't getting the type of employees you want, then you may need to teach them to be the type of employees you need.

As students move from being supervised and taught by faculty in the classroom, they enter the workplace as employees supervised and mentored by managers and leaders. If you change out the titles of faculty and students to leaders and employees in *Designing Effective Teaching and Significant Learning*, you can begin to see the similarities between what can happen in university courses to company workplaces.

In a review of the book, Constantine McKenzie, a Greek shipping entrepreneur, states:

“Throughout the book, the authors emphasize the overlapping nature of these stages in the actual practice of teaching and learning since at any point in time during the teacher-student interaction, planning, implementation and evaluation are happening simultaneously to achieve the set didactical objectives.

I believe that the authors’ stated motivation for writing the book was firstly to provide a practical background in understanding the process of teaching and learning not only for educators but for industry leaders as well, and secondly to tackle the subject of success, both how people obtain it and what contributes to extraordinary success as opposed to everyday success.

What I find more appealing about this book is the manner in which it relates a teacher to a manager-employer-leader of a business and a student to an employee. In this way the book distinguishes itself as an indispensable reference for businesses and organizations, while encouraging a critical approach to the study of management and serving as a definite launching pad for future developments.

As a business owner and entrepreneur I recommend it highly as an introduction to the field of business management and leadership, a constant reference for practicing managers and policy makers in the field of industry markets, and a trusty compendium of the foundational principles of the field, for those who would aspire to a more specialized training.”

Fast forward to Adobe, Inc. in California where Manuel Castellanos Raboso, an engineering manager shares:

“I am a believer that building oneself as an educator goes beyond the academical environments. While reading *Designing Effective Teaching and Significant Learning*, I could identify countless applicable connections with my leadership work as an engineering manager for a creative software company.



This book comes at a pivotal moment in the evolution of learning to offer us a better understanding of the current landscape and what can be done better. We have access to more information than ever, and technology is rapidly evolving. This means we need to be more strategic about what we learn and how transferable that is to the next task/job/industry.

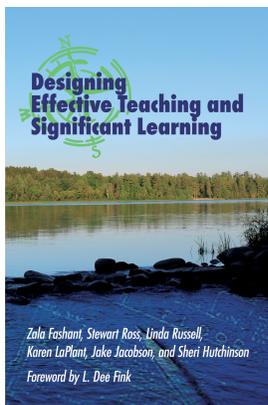
I see in my daily practice, individuals struggling to switch responsibilities as well as learning just enough about a topic to move forward and iterate on tasks – unfortunately you don't have the luxury of exhaustive learning of a topic before applying it anymore. It is very encouraging to see the academia moving towards more pragmatic educational models that would close the gap to what is expected in the fast pace rhythm of the industry. I see a lot of good parallels with people management and ensuring they are on track for their career growth.”

McKenzie summarizes,

“Books, like meals, come in two forms: they could either come as ordinary servings, prepared by ordinary cooks or they could be extraordinary culinary works of art from a top chef. The former will do the basic job of satisfying your hunger; the latter will leave you craving for more, possibly sending you to look for the recipe so you can repeat the experience. *Designing Effective Teaching and Significant Learning* is the work of top chefs.

I think that the title could easily be *Designing Effective Leadership and Significant Performance*, this book is the recipe for guidance, as the ideas presented help organizations improve their performance and efficiency. It analyzes the basic fundamentals of learning and teaching and creates solutions while also helping companies reevaluate their strengths and meet their goals.”

I would invite you to read the book for yourself and share your thoughts. As the Chief Design Architect of Encore Professional Development, I am ready to work with you and your administrative team of leaders and managers. Through individual coaching and team-based workshop opportunities, I can help you advance your organization's vision and meet your goals.



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