Copenhagen
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Benchmarks in Tacit Knowledge Skills Instruction:

The European Undergraduate Research-Oriented Participatory Education (EU-ROPE)

At Copenhagen Business School

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"T*o grasp the contemporary issue and to meet its challenge calls for collective effort.*

It is not the individual but the group that transforms culture."[1]

- Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.

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[1] Lonergan Institute (30 October 2006). From the website home page.

Abstract

While the knowledge management literature has addressed the explicit and tacit skills needed for successful performance in the modern enterprise, little attention has been paid to date in this particular literature as to how these wide-ranging skills may be suitably acquired during the course of an undergraduate business school education. This paper presents case analysis of the research-oriented participatory education curriculum developed at Copenhagen Business School because it appears uniquely suited, by a curious mix of Danish education tradition and deliberate innovation, to offer an educational experience more empowering of essential tacit knowledge skills than that found in educational institutions in other national settings. We specify the program forms and procedures for consensus-based governance and group work (as benchmarks) that demonstrably instruct undergraduates in the tacit skill dimensions of knowledge thought to be essential for success following graduation.

This paper offers research and reflection that suggests, despite globalization, business schools are not at all identical in essential educational dimensions – dimensions that resist journalistic national and international ranking efforts. As we shall see, differences can, on one level, be documented by the subjective perceptions of students involved in exchange programs (Kragh & Bislev, 2005). The significance of these subjective differences suggests, inferentially, that business school programs differ substantially (some possibly being better than others, in the normative sense) in curriculum goals, designs, and aims. These differences may present competitive advantages to schools that have a reflexive and reflective competence in fostering development of personal competencies, or the acquisition of tacit skills, deemed essential for success following graduation.

In particular, the information reported is a blueprint for an approach to higher education that empowers graduates for the global labor market of the "symbolic analyst" or the "knowledge manager". This approach, exemplified by the Asian Studies Program of Copenhagen Business School and detailed within, has developed, over time, from the Danish educational tradition into what may be termed a "European Undergraduate – Research Oriented Participatory Education" (EU-ROPE).

The paper has several goals. First, we claim that educational programs grounded in experiential learning, embedded in a supportive social environment, lead to the development of reflective practitioners who are skillful at applying tacit knowledge.[2] Accordingly, we review the epistemology, educational theory, knowledge management, and Danish educational sources that have brought CBS to its current approach to undergraduate education. Second, we summarize a recent study by CBS colleagues supporting the view that contemporary students, despite widely

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[2] We wish to thank an anonymous reviewer at the Eastern Academy of Management for the clarity of this formulation.

varied national backgrounds, share certain subjective perceptions and judgments about educational programs found in different national settings. Third, we highlight aspects of the Asian Studies Program at CBS that exemplify the pedagogic principles which ensure student acquisition of a wide range of tacit knowledge skills. We conclude by considering whether or not these principles may serve as comparative standards to specify the competitive advantage of a Scandinavian educational experience. In a word, higher education is in the knowledge business, educational institutions are competing in a global market, and comparisons of tacit knowledge management instructional competencies may provide compelling benchmarks for judging the efficacy of different educational institutions.

2.0: Knowledge, insight, and instruction: explicit and tacit skills acquisition

To begin this exploration of comparative educational approaches, we first clarify what education is, and what it is not. This is, fundamentally, an epistemological issue. Clarification of the issue involves a thorough understanding of the nature of insight, and how it is acquired. This is central to a proper understanding of teaching: how students are taught and how knowledge is comprehended. The process is considerably more mysterious than we (that is, we instructors) usually allow ourselves to notice in the day-to-day business of higher education. The aim is to understand the challenge that must be faced by an educational commitment to "teach" or "skill" students in explicit and tacit dimensions of knowledge, both aspects of knowledge management.[3]

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[3] This paper is not an attempt to *comprehensively* review epistemological alternatives to Lonergan (as Lonergan's approach to knowing has been applied during six years of Program development), nor are we intending a comprehensive review of the educational / experiential learning literature. Our task is more constrained – we wish to specify the adaptive appropriations of an extant Asian Studies Program at Copenhagen Business School, with a view to establishing comparative merits, grounded in Danish educational tradition, for a global labor market in search of competent knowledge managers.

<u>2.1: The occasion and role of individual and group insight in education: epistemological foundations</u>

Insight is essential for understanding. And, as the theologian, philosopher and economist Bernard J.F. Lonergan famously noted, an understanding of understanding itself can be profoundly rewarding; "Thoroughly understand what it is to understand and not only will you possess the broad lines of all there is to be understood but you will also possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern opening upon all further developments in understanding" (Lonergan, 1958, Introduction). Yet, what thought processes are essential for insight? We ought to first review its structure and process, due to its great importance in higher education. In <u>Insight: a Study of Human Understanding</u>, Bernard J.F. Longeran (1958) wrote that insight:

1. comes as a release from the tension of inquiry,

2. comes suddenly and unexpectedly,

3. is a function not of outer circumstances but inner conditions,

4. pivots between the concrete and the abstract, and

5. passes into the habitual texture of one's mind (pp. 3-4).

A teacher can present facts to be memorized and subsequently tested. This process tests retention, which is an essential, if fundamental, educational dimension. Should the instruction and subsequent testing oblige the student to assert the likelihood of reliable and valid causal connections between or among stated facts, or the inspired use of metaphor, the educational process will have moved to a different level or levels. The former inclines towards science, the latter to literature, although these boundaries are hardly rigid.

Yet, regardless of academic genre, these further educational steps oblige the student to reflect on facts or data. This reflection seeks to elicit a capacity for insight. But insight, of itself,

cannot be taught. <u>It can, at best, be properly and fairly evaluated – but only in circumstances that presume a clearly explicated educational philosophy for such an evaluation</u>. In this, the initial educational and organizational burden firmly lies with the educational institution and its form of governance. And, in this precise respect, educational institutions – everywhere – retain the inherent capacity to develop a curriculum that elicits, even encourages, the accumulation of insight, broadly defined, by able and willing students, working alone or in groups.

By university, basic student retention skills are presumed; the ability to demonstrate insight is now properly expected to occur, and with some frequency - given exemplary instruction. Here, the teacher and student mysteriously interact; teachers, at best, only offer signs, hints, and suggestions. Again, Lonergan, "For a teacher cannot undertake to make a pupil understand. All he can do is present the sensible elements in the issue in a suggestive order and with a proper distribution of emphasis. It is up to the pupils themselves to reach understanding, and they do so in varying measures of ease and rapidity" (p. 5).

Thus, the good instructor is both forever limited, while dramatically challenged: "All he can do is present the sensible elements in a suggestive order…" Furthermore, while Lonergan's epistemological analysis of insight is focused on the individual student, he recognized the importance of insight at the group level. As quoted in the title page, Lonergan wrote, "To grasp the contemporary issue and to meet its challenge calls for collective effort. It is not the individual but the group that transforms culture."

It is, perhaps, those decisions regarding the presentation of essential sensible elements and the precise suggestive order that offer a possible criteria to distinguish comparative competencies in courses, programs, and higher educational institutions throughout the world.

And the significance of these institutional decisions may become evident in how students view programs they experience on an exchange basis, which we shall see in a later section.

3.0: Educating the Global Manager: the Role of Higher Education

A considerable literature has developed regarding the type of person needed for successful organizations in the modern world and the educational skills they are expected to possess. In 1991, for example, Robert B. Reich wrote of the three categories of work services emerging in the global labor market: routine production services, in-person services, and symbolic-analytic services. Of these, he identified the symbolic-analytic service, and the educational training to enable successful service performance, as an emerging category of critical importance. For this service, "The bulk of the time and cost (and, thus, real value) comes in conceptualizing the problem, devising a solution, and planning its execution" (p. 179).

Individuals with such service skills are presumed in the literature to be university graduates, at a minimum. They are expected to possess team-work competencies, advanced mathematical skills, and a talent to "solve, identify, and broker problems by manipulating symbols" (p. 178). Yet, despite the need for formal education, Reich noted that the successful education of such an analyst necessarily breaks the mold of "traditional" education; "Rather than teach students how to solve a problem that is presented to them, they are taught to examine why the problem arises and how it is connected to other problems" (p. 230). Reich wrote that America's best schools empower students by providing such instruction. Yet, other national schools may reach the same end, and perhaps exceed the American model. The comparative educational propensity to efficiently and effectively train such individuals becomes a challenging empirical question in higher education.

The "knowledge management" literature, inspired by the work of Ikujiro Nonaka and others, is a comprehensive, theoretical and methodological path to begin evaluating personal competencies that are expected in the skills education of a symbolic analyst. This is because the knowledge management genre clearly distinguishes between explicit and tacit skills dimensions. The bulk of knowledge management writings are directed at issues related to the workplace, whether corporate or public sector.[4] To date, the literature appears to have overlooked how the successful knowledge manager is herself or himself educated to these skilled levels.

Knowledge management appears theoretically robust to ground assertions of comparative educational values even at the tacit level, and against history as well as national educational tradition. Steyn (2004), for example, wrote, "Instead of inventing a new paradigm, the significant level of KM activities in higher education institutions, which should be used as foundation for further development should be acknowledged".

3.1: A knowledge management place: Ba (場), shared educational context in space-time

Nonaka (2005) wrote, "the theory of knowledge creation is based on the assumption that humans are not just imperfect parts of such an information-processing machine, but are existences who have a potential to grow together through the process of knowledge creation. Instead of being static, human nature and action evolve through environmental dialectics" (p. 378). Nonaka uses the Japanese noun of "place" (場, ba) to locate the "site" wherein knowledge-creating activity occurs; "The essence of ba is the contexts and the meanings that are shared and

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[4] For example, the eight articles collected and published in Harvard Business Review on Knowledge Management (1998) focus on knowledge management and the organization. The skills needed for success are specified to varying degrees, but nothing is said how these skills are conveyed in higher education.

created through interactions that occur at a specific time and place, rather than a space itself" (p. 380).

In such a place, individuals transcend strict subjectivity through human interactions. Nonaka describes knowledge acquisition as a continuing upward spiral of:

a. Socialization

b. Externalization

c. Combination, and

d. Internalization (Nonaka, 2005, p. 384).

Significantly, the socialization step obliges, "empathizing with others and the environment" (Ibid.). This inter-subjective exchange contributes to acquisition of knowledge – explicit as well as tacit; "By discarding preconceived notions and "living in" or "indwelling" the world, individuals accumulate and share tacit knowledge about the world about them" (p. 383). Leadership, in turn, becomes an improvisational, dynamic outcome, inhering in certain individuals or particular groups, arising from human interactions within bounded environments and the accumulated insight of intelligent, inspiring individuals.

3.2: Subjective Recognitions of an Educational "Ba": Exchange Student Perceptions

Between 2001 and 2004, Kragh and Bislev (2005) conducted in-depth interviews of nearly 800 students and exchange students at Copenhagen Business School (CBS). The primary research interest and working hypothesis was, "business school teaching is deeply rooted in institutionalized cultures" (p. 2). The questionnaire they developed, having more than 50 questions, sought to gather data comparing a student's subjective experience of instruction at CBS with that experienced at another school in a different country. The students surveyed were

either registered CBS students with previous exchange program experience (416) or exchange students who had studied at CBS for a period of time (380).[5] There were 26 nations represented in their useable data sample, which aggregated both student groups when a minimum of seven responses for a given location were available.

Data analysis led the authors to identify several quantifiable constructs: authority, critical discussion, and group work. A factor analysis led to specification of "student empowerment" as a construct to measure "democratic" teaching styles. The results were then linked to the nations where the schools were located. Kragh and Bislev report, in reference to expressed student preferences, "students do appear as a globally homogeneous group in contrast to their professors and business schools as such" (p. 28). That is, "the students share a common set of values related to authority and participation as expressed in teaching, while their professors differ widely across countries" (Ibid.).

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Insert Figures 1 and 2 about here.

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The diagrams provided by Kragh and Bislev starkly illustrate national variance in student perceptions of "authority" related to "group work" and "critical discussion". As is evident in both diagrams, exchange students find the Danish school (Copenhagen Business School) extremely high.[6] The factor analysis construct of "student empowerment," when plotted against

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[5] Respective response rates were 30 and 50%. CBS had approximately 12,000 students at the time. Some 700 CBS students annually go to other schools under exchange agreements, while some 800 students come to CBS from other institutions of higher education throughout the world.

[6] Such findings are obviously pleasing to the two researchers, as both are employed by CBS. Regardless, the paper was found sufficiently robust in blind, peer review to be accepted by the Academy of Management and – afterwards – to be nominated for best conference paper in the Division to which it was submitted.

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national business school sites, invites an institutional specification of how instruction in

knowledge is, indeed, "managed" in the Danish educational site: the "ba".

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Insert Figure 3 about here.

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In the next sections, we will provide an overview of the Danish undergraduate curriculum

as it is found at CBS. The overview is a selective effort to identify Program aspects –

benchmarks, if you will - that contribute to the exchange student's strong, if subjective,

perceptions of greater student empowerment. In this overview, we use the epistemological

strength of knowledge management to "name" the precise manner of instruction at CBS that

encourages accumulation of insight in tacit dimensions of knowing and knowledge.[7]

3.3: Copenhagen Business School and the European Undergraduate Research-Oriented
Participatory Education (EU-ROPE)

Course instruction at any of the 20 or so Programs offered at CBS is grounded in the

overall educational philosophy of the Business School. In general, this philosophy can be traced

to what is termed "Problem-oriented project work". As stated in a recent English translation of a

standard Danish educational text on the subject [Problemorienteret projektarbejde], "Lectures

and seminars used to be the norm in Danish educational institutions. This is no longer the case.

Project work has become the norm at almost all Danish educational institutions, from primary

schools to universities" (Pedersen, 2005, p. 9).

Pedersen distinguishes between "subject-oriented project work" and "problem-oriented

project work" (Ibid, p. 10-11). The latter is different "from subject-oriented project work mainly

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[7] In methodological terms, we are attempting to identify the objective correlates (factors objectively evident in the
Program) to the subjective student perceptions.

in that is more focused on knowledge" (p. 11). In particular, the knowledge focus concerns a

specific research issue, obliging definition, analysis, and the selection of an appropriate method

to resolve the issue.

Roskilde University was at the forefront of educational innovations in Denmark

regarding "Problem-Oriented Project Work" (Illeris, 2002).[8] Illeris wrote that this experiential

pedagogy emerged in the 1970s and, after about 1980, it crystallized. The common slogan was to

"use the experiences of the participants as a starting point." Citing his 1984 Danish text on the

subject, Illeris wrote, "ideal experiential pedagogic processes must be about the pupils' important,

subjectively perceived problem areas, that are to be elaborated in a continuing experiential

process based on their existing patterns of experiences and governed by a forward-pointing

action perspective" (Illeris, 2002, p. 156). Implementation of this experiential pedagogy required

attention to

> fundamental principles of problem orientation, participation direction, exemplarity and
> solidarity – and when it was to take place within the framework of institutional education
> it could typically be done through the application of the pedagogical work pattern
> developed under the name *project work* (Ibid., p. 156).

Copenhagen Business School (CBS) took up the *project work* approach about 20 years

ago. Three particular adaptations from the Roskilde University origins appear particularly

significant:

> 1.   CBS-sourced research oriented participatory education (ROPE) is explicitly
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>   grounded in business school thematics, although these remain comparatively

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[8] The Danish educational tradition enjoys a fascinating history of what is best termed "reciprocal borrowings" throughout the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-reformation – centered, even then, on excellence in education and proper care of students. The 16th century Jesuit instructional plan for its many schools was published in 1592, known as the "Ratio studiorum" ("The Course of Studies"). It emphasized humane treatment of students, along with individual and student-based group review of taught material. Jensen wrote, "If the Jesuits had learned from the Melanchthonian schools, the Lutherans were just as quick to learn from the Catholic competitors" (Jensen, K. March, 1990) . By 1619, Christian IV obliged substantial Danish university reforms, "perhaps as a result of the much-feared but hopelessly abortive Jesuit missio Danica" (Ibid.).

broad; that is, student groups are expected to address carefully delineated research issues of an external, pragmatic nature.[9]

2. The *project work* experience at CBS occurs within explicit social science methodological parameters. Thus, while student perceptions remain important, and they themselves have sole responsibility for all dimensions of project work, they are not themselves the object of study and there is a degree of methodological rigor.

3. Some CBS Programs make an explicit effort to include foreign language acquisition as part and parcel of the overall *project work* educational experience.

Group project work takes up most of the spring semester experience for students in all undergraduate years of study. Fall courses are intended to inform and enhance each year's effort and may include lectures, case-based exercises, and guided discussions. Thus, the defining feature of an undergraduate education at CBS is its research oriented participatory education.

In terms of educational theory, the theoretical grounds for this defining feature may be traced to the Danish educational tradition. Illeris (2002) summarized the basic conception; "Learning always consists of two integrated processes of interaction and internalization, respectively, and that *learning simultaneously comprises a cognitive, an emotional and psychodynamic, and a social and societal dimension" (p. 19).* In his text, Illeris relates the respective points – cognition, emotion, and society - to the works of Piaget, Freud, and Marx.

Illeris then reviews many contributors to educational theory, situating them within a triangulation of "Positions in the learning theoretical tension field". Acknowledging similarities

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[9] The range of potential student research themes at CBS is broader than that found in many business schools, especially those in the U.S. See the list of Programs: http://uk.cbs.dk/uddannelser/bachelor/alle_bacheloruddannelser

to the "reflective practitioner" and "reflection-in-action" constructs developed by Donald Schön, for example, it becomes apparent that the Danish educational approach (of which the CBS EU-ROPE is one variant) departs from Schön's emphasis on apprentice and internships. We see, in contrast, within the ROPE model, the student group (each individual bearing sharing collective responsibility) is the functional unit and, as we shall see below, the teacher/mentoring role is deliberately restricted to that of a "mere" Project Advisor. While a comprehensive review of the educational theory literature is beyond the scope of this paper, Illeris' learning theory model approximates the approach taken by Peter Jarvis. Illeris wrote,

> Without making a clear distinction between inner acquisition processes and social interaction processes, Jarvis strives to put it all into a social perspective with emphasis on the active role played by the learner. In this way he represents a trend to incorporate the internal processes into the perspective of the social processes….while imitation has more or less slipped out of sight (p. 124).

A reflexive view of Illeris' work as it has become adapted to the CBS context might note that the EU-ROPE student experience more fully acknowledges inner acquisition processes – evidenced by explicit coursework and the need for both individual as well as group insight for a comprehensive education. It is comprehensive in the sense that all three dimensions of learning are valued: cognitive, emotive, and societal. Too, the role of imitation becomes essential in that each successive student group is obliged to "take on" the same challenges – producing competently researched, written, and publicly defended group projects that are consistent with social science methodological expectations. In this respect, EU-ROPE student educational experience finds parallels with work involving the studied, guided entry into specific discourse communities of practice (Pogner, 2005).

Acknowledging this Danish educational legacy and the central importance of *project work,* as a category of experiential learning, we can now turn to the goals, features, and

governance structure of one CBS educational program: the Asian Studies Program, in order to identify institutional benchmarks in explicit and tacit knowledge management skills instruction.

4.0: Benchmarks of Tacit Skills Acquisition: The Asian Studies Program

The Asian Studies Program (ASP) is one of the 20 or so Programs offered by Copenhagen Business School – a national university in the Danish system (Roskilde University is another). The ASP began in 1992 as a Japan Studies Program (termed JAPØK, an acronym formed by combining the first syllables of the Danish words for "Japan" and "Economics"). Initially, the language of instruction was Danish; the Program goal was to ensure the Danish national university system produced a sufficient number of graduates competent in Japanese and international business studies. Students were admitted to the Program only if they had already acquired an intermediate degree of Japanese language competence.[10] Otherwise qualified applicants were admitted to a year's intensive study of Japanese, taught in Danish, at Copenhagen University.[11]

The Program converted from Danish as the language of instruction to English in 2001. Prior to conversion there were about 57 students in the entire Program. As an intensive year of Japanese study was still to be offered, CBS began teaching this "Propedeutic Year" in 2001, in English. In 2003, a Chinese language track was begun at both Propedeutic and Program levels. Common courses in the integrated curriculum have been successively modified to first enable English language as the language of instruction, and then to accommodate a broader Asian focus.

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[10] Currently, admission standards oblige Japanese Language Proficiency Examination Level 3 (or equivalent). For Chinese, a grade of "A" in the HSK basic or a "C" in the HSK elementary test is required.

[11] Copenhagen University is the oldest national university in Denmark, with a long tradition of humanistic and classical Japanese studies.

Currently, approximately 250 students from 30 different nations are enrolled in the Program, ranging from Propedeutic Year to Master's level.

The educational goal of the Asian Studies Program (ASP) is stated in the first pages of the 2005 Asian Studies Program Study Guide; "The ASP uniquely qualifies graduates, through a Danish educational experience within the European Union, for professional international activity with a profound appreciation of an Asian language and a clear sense of East Asia and its relation to the global economy" (Asian Studies Program Study Guide 2005, p. 11).

The Program, aimed at an International Business degree, is interdisciplinary in nature, offering carefully integrated courses covering a range of academic disciplines and topics. The aim is their integration, in explicit student knowledge, with a progressive acquisition and refinement of Chinese or Japanese language skills, and these for business / organizational ends. The Program, grounded in Danish educational practice and recent reforms toward participatory education, clearly aims beyond the mere acquisition of explicit knowledge. The Study Guide states, "The ASP seeks this integration through an educational Programme that emphasizes the development of interpersonal skills, along with the ability to work independently, work with as yet unstructured material, assess and suggest solutions to problems, and most important, evidence these organizational skills effectively in English and Chinese or Japanese" (p. 10).

To achieve these educational goals, a knowledge management analytical perspective enables us to identify and highlight the salient benchmarks characterizing this unique, and uniquely Danish, educational experience.

4.a.: Tacit Skills Benchmark 1: the Study Board and Program Governance[12]

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[12] All benchmarks covered are summarized in Table 1.

Each of the approximately 20 educational programs at CBS is staffed by a Program Director and Study Board Chair. For smaller Programs, such as the ASP, one person will serve in both capacities. A Program Director is appointed by the appropriate Dean, following consultation with the relevant Head(s) of Department. The Chair of any particular Study Board, in contrast, is elected by the duly constituted Study Board itself. For student participation in academic governance, the role of the Study Board is a critical benchmark.

All newly admitted students, regardless of country of origin, are collectively and inclusively introduced to the CBS and ASP in an orientation period in late August. Here, these students are first made aware of this key feature of CBS academic governance: the Program Study Board. For all matters regarding studies, formal Program governance resides in the Asian Studies Program Study Board. This Board, like each Program Board at CBS, is composed of equal numbers of students and faculty[13]. Currently, three faculty and three students compose the ASP Study Board. While the number of Board members is a function of overall program size, equality of student/faculty proportion is uniform. Regular <non-voting> observers to Study Board meetings include administrative staff: the Administrative Coordinator and the Program Student Guidance Counselor (who is, him/herself, a CBS student).[14] Study Boards meet regularly and publicly, aside from topics obliging confidentiality.

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[13] This is according to Danish national university regulations. Thus, student-participatory Board composition is found in all public universities.

[14] From a potential applicant's perspective, the first "tacit skills" benchmark they encounter is the Student Guidance Counselor or Advisor – a role frequently staffed by full-time professionals in other schools. The tacit skills message is clear: undergraduates are employed at CBS in significant capacities. See the website: http://uk.cbs.dk/uddannelser/bachelor/bacheloruddannelser/asian_studies_programme/menu/student_guidance_service

Student participation in these Boards is taken seriously by all. Furthermore, consensus decision-making is the norm – majority vote outcomes are practically unknown.[15] The range of topics that may be taken up by a Study Board is, theoretically, unlimited. Personnel decisions (such as the hiring or loss of faculty) and budget determinations are formally beyond the Board's prerogative. In practice, discussions often cross formal limits, as students wish to know why an excellent teacher no longer teaches, or how and why budget constraints may oblige curriculum modifications.

As with all Program Study Boards at CBS, the ASP Study Board governs a critical Program aspect: the curriculum. Here, students are called to reflect upon their acquired knowledge - as students who have taken the courses in question (or students who will be taking the course) - with a view to the refinement and improvement of said courses. In fact, all courses, course descriptions and course schedules have to be formally approved by the Study Board prior to commencement of instruction. <u>Student representatives to the Board have the same governance voice as faculty regarding what is taught, and how it is done</u>. From their very different perspectives, concerns, and backgrounds, student and faculty representatives equally share overall responsibility for each program taught at CBS.

4.b.: Tacit Skills Benchmark 2: Aspects of Project Work

Undergraduate university education at CBS has a classroom dimension, mainly in the fall term, when explicit knowledge issues are addressed, terms are taught, and students are expected to retain, reflect upon, and be able to produce them in a proper demonstration of acquired

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[15] In rare and serious instances, individual reservations (whether from student or faculty) regarding a specific decision can be, and have been, noted and passed on to the appropriate Dean.

understanding.[16] As these courses are designed, year to year, to be integrated with the overall theme and group project goal of each academic year, they are, by anticipation or expectation, intended to advance student competence in both explicit and tacit knowledge skills.

Each spring, students are expected to engage in research-issue group projects that, through each of their three years of study, become increasingly more challenging and more reflective of the varied skills they have been expected to acquire. Students are, in the context of group work, expected to identify a valid research issue, establish an appropriate research method, execute the analysis, produce a report, and, not least, include a self-critique of the group's overall process and outcome. And all of this must be done by a specified deadline – after which the submitted project report is read by an examiner and censor. Each project group then faces a group examination.[17]

4.b.1: Tacit Skills Benchmark 2a: the First-Year Pilot Project

First-Year students in the ASP begin Chinese or Japanese language classes in late August or early September. Other classes, however, do not begin. First, there is the "Pilot Project" experience. The Pilot Project is a five-week research exercise in which students are assigned to small groups and each group is assigned a Project Advisor. Each group must confront the same research theme: in the past year, the theme was "Asian organizational culture: encounters from a Western perspective". In reference to this theme, each group is obliged to identify an explicit research issue, devise a proper methodology to address their research questions, conduct the research, provide a report, and submit a self-critique of group performance.

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[16] That having been said, the manner of examination itself involves certain tacit skill development. See the section below on Synopsis-based Oral examinations.

[17] Although the examination is group-based, CBS allows for the possibility of individual grades. Danish university regulations are currently being revised to enhance the possibility of individual grade assessments.

The Pilot Project occupies the first five weeks of formal study at CBS for Asian Studies Program students. They attend language classes, but are otherwise engaged in the challenge of a formal research cycle. The Pilot Project Coordinator offers four or five lectures throughout this period to introduce the students to the basics of social science research, the role of theory and hypothesis testing, group formation, report composition, presentation and critical evaluation. The students are expected to incorporate the lecture material in their research issue considerations.

As stated, each student group is assigned a project advisor. Advisors are graduate students that have studied in the Program (this advisement is a compensable task at CBS). The Project report submitted by each group must be approved by the Pilot Project Coordinator and is then subject to a final review session in which another group is assigned the role of critical evaluation. Following this, the advisors offer a final assessment. First Year students then begin the fall term classes, which are designed to enhance their explicit knowledge and research skills for the First Year Project that will commence in the spring term.

A number of points about the ASP and education at CBS are made abundantly clear to the students through this Pilot Project, albeit tacitly, absent any explicit instruction. First, Asian language studies will be expected to proceed along with any and all other aspects of academic study at CBS. One cannot be sacrificed for the other. Second, students immediately discover that their academic success is linked to successful group participation, along with the timely submission of well-done reports - both become inherently tacit dimensions of a successful CBS student educational experience. Third, students learn that there is a functional difference between a "teacher" or "instructor" and an "project advisor". Too, they learn that a person who may initially serve only in a neutral "advisement" role can, at Project end, "transform" her or himself into the role of an evaluating "instructor" who assigns grades. Fourth, students note that the

success of the group's project is wholly contingent upon the individuals who compose the assigned group and their ability to work together in a reasonable and responsible manner. Fifth, students who participate in a series of lectures on theory, social science research method, presentation, and report composition, become individually and collectively responsible to rapidly internalize what has been taught and then make this knowledge explicitly manifest in their one report, composed by a group, appropriate to the stated goals of the Pilot Project and within the stated time parameters.

4.b.2: Tacit Skills Benchmark 2b: Project Advisors, not Instructors

The ASP Pilot Project opening lecture and Manual emphasizes the fact that each group will be assigned an advisor – someone who has already undergone the educational experience.[18] Advisors exist to assist each student group in their effort to move from research issue formulation, to proper method, data gathering, assessment, and project report composition. One very important point, introduced at this outset of their university education, is that the advisors have a limited role as a resource person; the responsibility for the group's research output completely resides within the assigned Pilot Project group. As stated in the Pilot Project Manual:

> each group is encouraged to use their Advisor to ensure that the group proceeds in a well structured, coherent, logical, and time-efficient manner throughout the Pilot Project. As each group is solely responsible for its final product, the Advisor is not to be looked upon as an authority, nor is she or he in any way responsible for the quality of the final product. The Advisor is a guide, with prior, personal experience of the Pilot Project journey (ASP Pilot Project Manual 2006).

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[18] Only in the Pilot Project are advisors assigned. In the spring Research Project period, students are obliged to select their own advisor, contingent upon Program approval.

This step, right from the first week of university instruction, <u>shifts fundamental responsibility for knowing and knowledge from instructor, or Program, to the students themselves, and the group to which they have been assigned</u>. Pedagogically, the responsibility for insight inheres with the student, each student's capacity to work with others, to rapidly absorb occasional lectures on theory, method, reporting, and evaluation offered through the weeks of the Pilot Project – while facing a final evaluation when the advisor becomes evaluator. Each group is judged for their initial undergraduate effort in this very time-constrained adventure into the social science research cycle.[19]

The **research-oriented participatory project work** occupies a major part of each of the three years of undergraduate instruction at CBS. The projects run from late January to June. Some classes may be offered during this time (the ASP offers one week-long interdisciplinary methods each year). Nevertheless, student attention tends to focus on project work, with the aid of a Project Advisor. The academic "themes" for each of the three years of study at ASP are:

Year 1: Comparative cultural and social analysis

Year 2: Economic and cultural contexts of business enterprises and organizations

Year 3: International and Global Corporate Strategies

Exemplary third-year students may devise projects that are funded by local firms. Group projects have, for example, involved market studies in Japan for potential products.

<u>4.c: Tacit Skills Benchmark 3: Foreign Language Integration in International Business</u>

Ironically, one of the key instructional aims of the ASP, for students in both Chinese and Japanese language tracks, is the acquisition of explicit, testable knowledge regarding the subject of knowledge management itself. This is amply justified, on one level (and for at least the

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[19] Not all Programs at CBS confront first-year students with the Pilot Project. Other Programs provide modular sessions throughout the fall term.

Japanese language students), by the fact that a leading scholar of the field is Ikujiro Nonaka –

himself a Japanese citizen and well-published in Japanese.

The irony is amplified by the fact that Nonaka is notoriously difficult to understand in

Japanese, in part because he freely uses Western epistemological and philosophical constructs,

including the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger, in his analysis of contemporary management

and organizational issues.[20]

Nevertheless, by the third year of undergraduate studies, ASP students are exposed to

what the instructor has come to term "the Strategic Hexagon" of important themes that render

their Chinese or Japanese language ability particularly suited to the degree they seek: BSc in

Business, Asian Languages and Culture. These themes are evident in Figure 4.

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Insert Figure 4 about here.

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Each opposing pair in the hexagon is deliberately related. Scandinavian and Japanese

economic organizations have certain unique similarities, as students have learned in other

courses (taught in English). Second, Branding is related to Knowledge Management in the sense

that the former obliges brand knowledge as well as strategic knowledge about how a brand may

be best presented to consumers. Competitive advantage (following Porter) is paired with Human

Resource Management in the sense that the former is extrinsic to a given firm, while the latter is

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[20] In August 2005, during a lunch with a delegation of Japanese managers touring Scandinavia to study knowledge management benchmarking processes, one manager laughed at the notion that the ASP teaches and tests undergraduates in Nonaka's Japanese texts. He said, "Hey, even WE don't understand him!" (primary author translation). While he was being socially polite, he was also speaking to truth; Nonaka's process of knowledge acquisition – the shifts from tacit to explicit – remain a challenge in any language.

concerned with issues intrinsic to the firm; both aspects, as well as each paired group, are essential for overall corporate success.

By the end of their final year, those that will graduate will have developed demonstrable knowledge competence in each of the six themes, to the extent that they are able to pass final written and oral examinations (in Chinese or Japanese). In these examinations, particularly the Synopsis-based Oral examination (taken up in the next section), undergraduate skills in explicit knowledge, acquired foreign language competence, and the tacit-dimensions of a discussion-based examination format provide another tacit knowledge skilling benchmark for EU-ROPE at Copenhagen Business School.

4.d: Tacit Skills Benchmark 4: Synopsis-based Oral Examinations

In fall term courses, which aim to ensure adequate knowledge acquisition for spring projects, grade evaluations at CBS frequently derive from Synopsis-based Oral Examinations. Many exchange students participate in these courses and experience this examination format.

These examinations involve a student (one or more, if group-based) that has previously submitted a brief "synopsis" of course material. The synopsis <u>must</u> be handed in by a specified deadline in order for the student to proceed to the examination.[21] While the synopsis must be submitted, <u>it has no bearing on the student's final grade, which is itself strictly based upon the oral examination between student(s), examiner, and censor</u>.[22] A censor in the Danish educational

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[21] Each Program Administrator makes obligatory deadlines apparent on an intranet platform. CBS uses Sitescape.
[22] This follows Danish law concerning university examination governance. Danish students, experienced in this examination approach prior to university, appear to understand the distinctions. Yet, at CBS, not only exchange, but non-Danish fully-matriculated students often find the lack of grade implications for the synopsis initially utterly bewildering. When made clear this is an "appetizer" and can be dismissed if students have greater insight after submission, the bewilderment tends to fade.

system is a formally accredited individual whose role is to ensure fairness and appropriate grading process in regards to both examiner and examinee(s).[23]

The oral examinations may be 20 to 30 minutes in length, including time for grade deliberation by examiner and censor, and the grade announcement to the student. Group project examinations, in turn, may take considerably longer, depending on the number of students per group. In general, students begin their oral examination with a brief presentation. The subsequent dialogue among the parties present to the examination challenges the student's comprehension of course material. The Danish 13 point grading system ranges from failure to the rarely given grade of 13, which essentially stands as a recognition of "an exceptionally unusual, independent and excellent performance" (ASP Study Guide 2005/2006, p. 99).[24]

By all accounts, the Synopsis-based Oral Examination tests students on both explicit and tacit knowledge related to the course material. That is, not only must the student demonstrate retention of facts about various readings, but the dialogue approach to examination obliges manifestation of a sophisticated grasp of facts, implications and – for the exceptional 13, an ability to present course material in a manner that refines even the instructor's sense of a given course.

4.e.: Tacit Skills Benchmark 5: Self-selection for Academic Success

Over the years, it has become obvious that students, at least in the ASP, tend to self-select into recurring groups for each year's Group Project. Recall that the Pilot Project groups are assigned by the Program Coordinator, who seeks little more than a balance between Chinese and Japanese language preferences among students, and appropriate international representation. At

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[23] Censors are selected from a list institutionally approved according to Danish university regulations.

[24] Pragmatically, this means it is only given if both examiner (who knows the course material) and censor (who knows the regulations) discover themselves "taught" by the examinee; it is the presentation of entire course material in a manner that enlightens the instructors' understanding.

this stage of the educational process, the Program – explicitly, bluntly - does not acknowledge that interpersonal group conflict may, of itself, provide sufficient ground to permit a group to break up. This is part of the student's early obligation to Program: to learn to work together in the Pilot Project.[25]

Afterwards, students are given increasing freedom to work in groups of their own choosing. It has been noted that some students, initially assigned together randomly, remain together throughout the project work over their years in school. The opposite has also been observed.

Of greater interest is anecdotal data from a Danish Ministry official, who has long served as an external lecturer in the ASP – teaching first year economics. He observed that students who do well in economics – considered to be among the more difficult first year courses – tend to self-select to work together in subsequent spring term project research. Given the stated Program goals, such behavior appear entirely self-reinforcing in the best sense: group performance obligations inherently lead individuals to seek out others who share the same sense of educational goals and success in superior grade achievements.[26]

Another dimension to the Research Project process concerns student group decisions about an appropriate project advisor. A list of possible advisors is available to students, but the approach to possible advisors is a student responsibility. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the more successful and responsible students make these selections with great care and deliberation; advisors eventually become examiners, so the role is of considerable importance. Student groups

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[25] The Pilot Project is not graded, aside from an "approval" of the project paper and process report by the Coordinator.

[26] Of course, poor students may also self-select for less impressive reasons. Too, students who wish to advance will individually, and quite deliberately, approach groups of good students for upcoming projects simply for self improvement. We have witnessed all such instances.

reportedly have framed an entire research issue in such a way as to ensure a particular advisor would become involved.

5.0: Discussion

Much has been written about the type of knowledge manager or symbolic analyst modern organizations require for success. The various literatures tend to presume individuals in such organizations have already - somehow - acquired the requisite explicit and tacit knowledge skills for such performance. In this study, we attempted to follow the presumed value-chain of acquired educational skills necessary for individual competencies in the modern organization down to the undergraduate level from whence these competencies ought first to be nurtured, graded, and rewarded. We have specified Program aspects that ensure appropriate skills at the undergraduate university in the European Undergraduate-Research Oriented Participatory Education offered at Copenhagen Business School.

The paper reported on the unique Danish educational tradition that appears well-suited for the explicit and tacit knowledge skills set expected of the contemporary knowledge manager. By highlighting this particular educational case and approach, we sought to open up a comparative educational discourse regarding the "Place" (場, Ba) where knowledge management learning may occur in the university context.[27]

The internationalization process of a heretofore thoroughly embedded, domestic-oriented Danish educational environment has not always been easy. Danish students, from elementary education, are raised to work together, work consensually, and work for common goals. At the university level, when national university Programs internationalize, the admission of qualified

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[27] As cited earlier, Nonaka wrote, "The essence of ba is the contexts and the meanings that are shared and created through interactions that occur at a specific time and place, rather than a space itself" (p. 380).

students from other nations results in a influx of other "embedded notions" of university process and student expectations. In consequence, CBS in general, and the ASP in particular, has been obliged to become more reflexively and reflectively aware of a range of formerly "tacit" expectations; faculty, staff, and students have had to become better able to state what the CBS educational process is and why it continues to have merit.

As the Kragh and Bislev research suggests, student empowerment expectations amongst the increasingly internationalized student population are well matched by the Danish educational institutions' presumption of responsible, egalitarian, participatory involvement on the part of undergraduate students. This is a curiously resonant Danish variant of what Nonaka asserts to be universally necessary for successful knowledge management – a "Place" he describes using the Japanese noun: "場 'Ba'".

Accordingly, this paper is an initial attempt to apply the detailed epistemology of knowledge management theory to the realm of university education. A more thorough critical review of learning theory in reference to the EU-ROPE approach would be helpful. However, a more comprehensive study goes beyond the time, page constraints, and resources presently available. The Asian Studies Program of CBS is, at best, an exemplary case, made so simply because the Program's explicit course topic (knowledge management, taught in Japanese) also stands as an important theme in this paper. Other Programs at CBS do no less to explicitly recognize knowledge management in educational philosophy as well as the EU-ROPE approach to group project-based participatory education.[28]

The globalization of undergraduate educational opportunities will, undoubtedly, more or less follow the inherent paths of market and marketing, subject to national and political

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[28] See Bertramsen: http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/20/2074934.pdf

constraints. Most undergraduate university rankings current today remain a function of surveys

by magazines or journals. In these surveys, the perception of corporate recruiters figures

prominently. The authors, through this paper, wish to suggest that other, more compelling,

educational standards for comparative ranking of undergraduate institutions may be available.

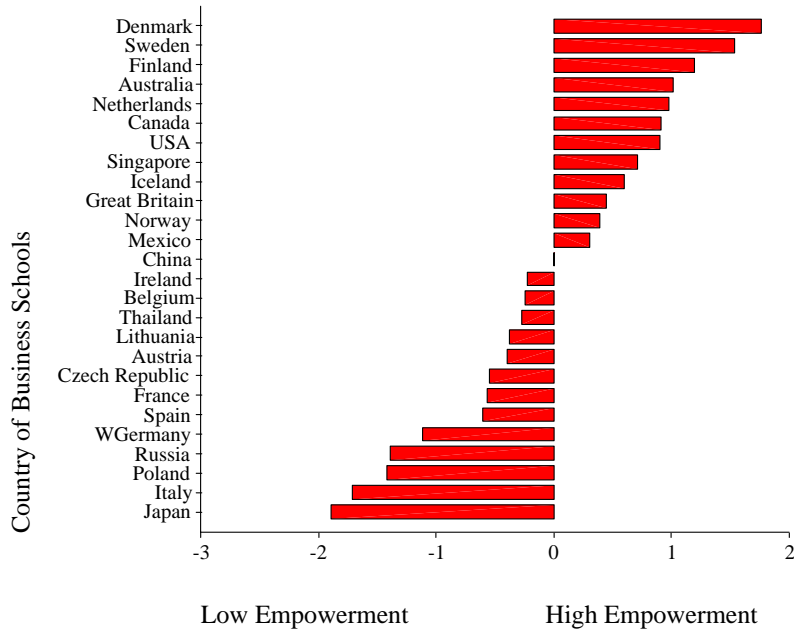Figure 1: Authority and Group Work
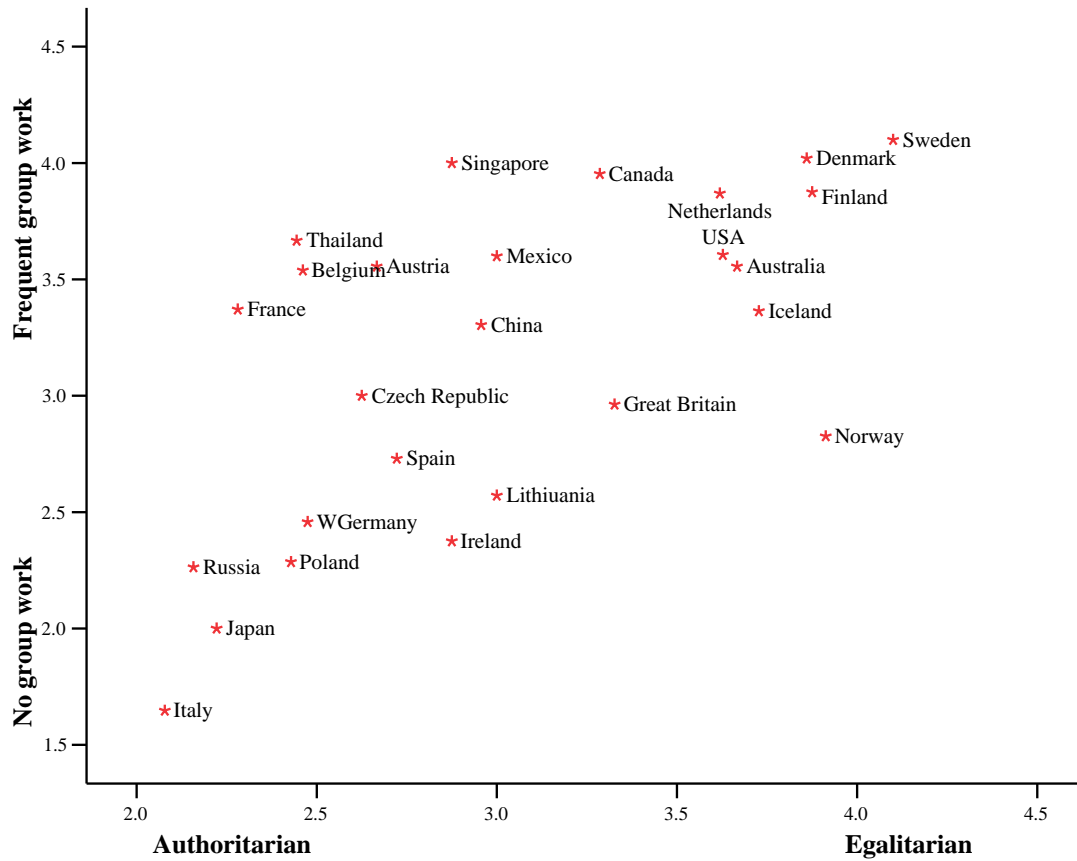
Note: The horizontal axis represents answers to question 2, the horizontal axis represents answers to question 5.
Rho .60 Sig. .001. Kragh, S.U., and Bislev, S. (2005).
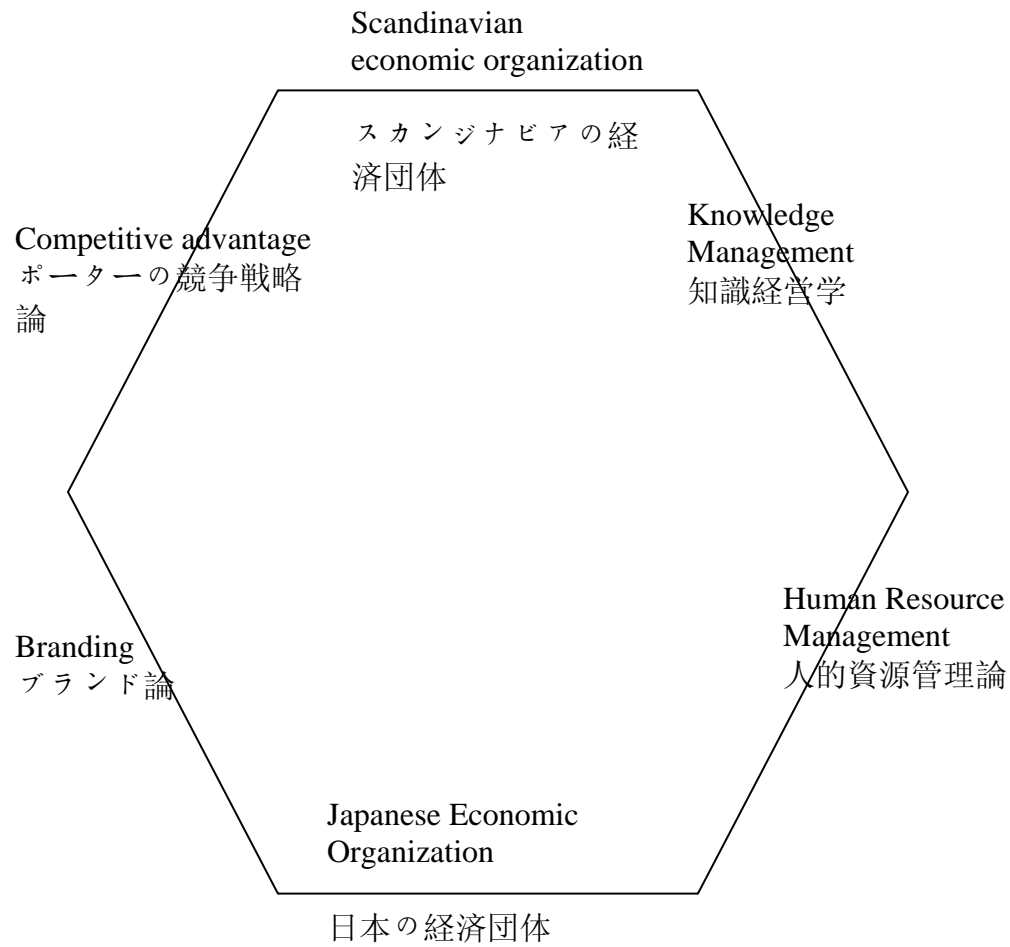
Figure 2: Authority and Critical Discussion
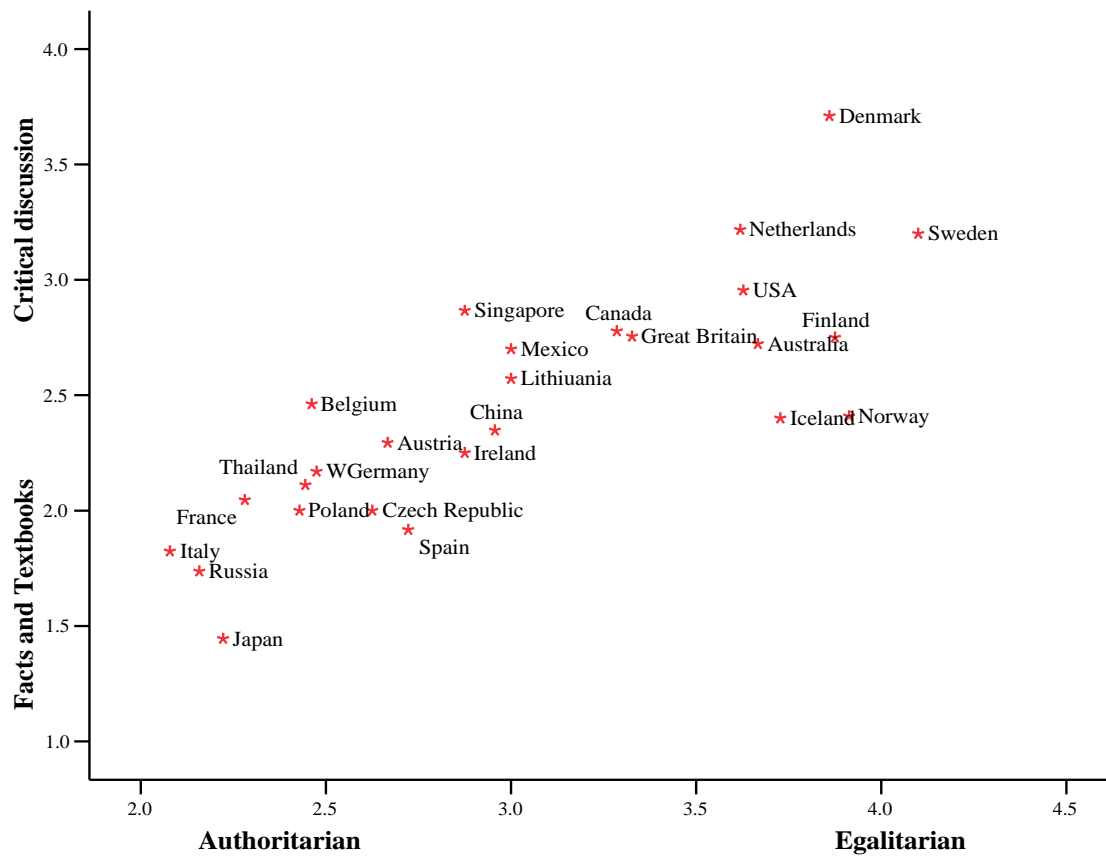
Note: the horizontal axis represents answers to question 2, the vertical axis answers to question 3. Rho .81 Sig. .000. Kragh, S.U., and Bislev, S. (2005).

Figure 3: Empowerment of Students

Note: Factor scores. Method: Principal components; Extraction: Eigenvalues over 1. Variance explained: 72%
Loadings: Adressing professors (1), .77; Authority (2), .90; Critical discussion (3), .92; Cases (4), .80; Group work
(5) , .86. Kragh, S.U., and Bislev, S. (2005).

Figure 4: The Strategic Hexagon of Year 3 Business Japanese Themes[29]

Scandinavian
economic organization

スカンジナビアの経
済団体

Competitive advantage
ポーターの競争戦略
論

Knowledge
Management
知識経営学

Human Resource
Management
人的資源管理論

Branding
ブランド論

Japanese Economic
Organization

日本の経済団体

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[29] These themes were first deployed in a 2003 Year 3 Business Japanese Compendium and continue to be used. The compendium is subject to revision as needed.

Table 1: Explicit and Tacit Knowledge Skills Indexed to Specific Program Activities (Primarily First Year Undergraduate)

Year	Event / Experience	Nature of staffing	Instructional Mode	Explicit skill goals:	Tacit skilling intent:
From applicant status until graduation	Student Guidance Counselor	Undergraduates: following standard position posting, screening and hiring.	Individual, personal encounter.	Applicant information, ongoing counseling resource for all aspects of undergraduate study, academic as well as private.	Participatory-membership: The immediate and continually reinforced perception of a particular student role model: undergraduates as compensated Program staff employed by a national university.
Orientation Program, First Year	One week of School and Program Introduction, entirely run by students in Program following Orientation content and budget approval from Program Study Board.	Undergraduates: determined at the Program level. They are responsible for providing essential informational regarding welcome, informational orientation to Denmark, Copehagen, Copenhagen Business School, and their particular Program.	Group experience, with individual presentations by faculty and staff.	Program and CBS information in vast quantities.	Admitted students are encouraged to view themselves as organizationally responsible Program participants. Too, first exposure, by students - to students, of the co-governance nature of a Program Study Board.

First Year	Program Study Board	Program Board consists of half faculty and half elected student representatives. Faculty representatives are elected for three-year terms by a properly constituted Board. The faculty Board chair is elected by a duly constituted Study Board for three years.	Ongoing, public forum governance process.	Program governance responsibilities inhere in the elected student representatives.	Each student, individually and personally, shares responsibility for Program success. The elected undergraduate representatives signify this Program responsibility, as is obligated by national university regulations. Student representatives are decided by a transparent electoral process.
First Year	Pilot Project	Pilot project coordinator (tenured faculty). Pilot project advisor coordinator (Master's student), Pilot project advisors - all CBS Master's students with prior project undergraduate experience.	European Undergraduate - Research Oriented Participator Education (EU-ROPE)	Social science method, research cycle, group work process, attention to deadline.	Personal responsibility for group success, interpersonal consensus-based leadership skills.
Synopsis-based Oral Examinations - in First Year Project and courses in the undergraduate Program.	Various courses over a three-year period.	Course Examiner and censor. The role of censor is to ensure fairness in the process and content of the observed examination.	Synopsis, student presentation, and discussion.	Examination of explicit course knowledge in a test approach that encourages a range of tacit knowledge skills.	Demonstrable knowledge of specific course work, where demonstration success is facilitated by tacit skills acquired in information organization, comprehension, and presentation delivery competence.

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