

Leadership and management education: An analysis of the experiences of an Australian group of managers

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A key issue appearing in the business education literature in the past decade and most recently with the spectacular failures of leadership and management in the financial sector of recent times, has been the question of whether leadership and management can in fact be taught. Doh (2003) presented an overview of the key arguments with regard to leadership development inclusive of the nature versus nurture argument in leadership. The debate on leadership and management development though has come to focus upon three major issues. Firstly, at a broad level there is the challenge to effectively develop leadership and management practice. Specifically the question arises as to what approaches in training and education can develop leadership and management practice? The second issue within the debate concerns the role of business education institutions in the education and development of aspiring leaders and managers. Finally, there is the third issue of the debate which concerns a theory to practice divide with the need for business education to develop at the pace and scope of business practice. In addressing the first and last of these issues there has also been a considerable effort in leadership and management research to identify models of teachable practices that engender effective leader and manager practice (Heifetz, 1995; Tichy & Cohen, 1997; Doh, 2003; Ready & Conger, 2004)

This paper reviews the literature on leadership and management education and teaching and learning approaches for leadership and management development. The paper then considers the results of post program interviews from a group of Australian mid level managers 18 months after completion of a leadership and management development program. Themes and constructs from the post program interviews are considered against the critical issues raised in the literature. Conclusions developed highlight insights gained regarding leadership and management practice education in terms of context, content and process of learning and development.

Field of Research: Leadership, Management, Executive Education, Teaching & Learning.

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