

**Reflections on Implementing an Innovative Management Curriculum,  
Or Tacking Between Scylla and Charybdis**

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Recent literature has shown an increased emphasis on competency-based management education and how to implement it (Barron & Wolfe, 1996; Boyatzis, Cowen, & Kolb, 1994; Briscoe & Hall, 1999; Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, & McGrath, 1996; Rutherford, 1995; Whetten & Cameron, 1998). Today accreditation bodies, such as AACSB and regional bodies like WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges), are requiring greater attention to outcome assessment as a way to measure the effectiveness of programs. Yet the task of implementation is often downplayed as if that process is minor compared with the decision to use outcome assessments. The authors, after designing an outcomes assessment graduate management degree program (author3 and author2, 2001), found that implementation dilemmas continually arose. Readers interested in carrying out competency-based programs, outcomes assessment, or new programs in higher education in general will find this paper useful because of the lessons the authors learned from rolling it out.

In implementing the program design outlined in The Journal of Management Education, the authors found themselves in a continuous process of navigating between multi-headed monsters and dangerous whirlpools. Each successive decision that resolved a key issue created a new dilemma to resolve. The decision to use competencies as the model for balancing between the extremes of theory and practice lead to a dilemma about how to measure our desired competency outcomes. The decision to use a particular set of measures led to a dilemma regarding data collection: should we use paper and pencil surveys and perform the

labor-intensive data entry ourselves, or should we look for ways to automate the process? The decision to automate the process made it possible for adjuncts to teach the first course but led to a dilemma about how to coordinate among the full and part-time faculty. The feedback from our coordination efforts led to a dilemma about who should maintain the data collection web pages—faculty or staff? On the basis of these continuing dilemmas, we will argue that when implementing a competency-based graduate program, it is the journey *between* the monsters and the whirlpools that must be embraced.

This paper compares the process of rolling out a graduate program to the process of a sailing a ship against the wind between the ancient mythic terrors of Scylla and Charybdis. In Greek mythology,

Scylla . . . was once a beautiful maiden and was changed into a snaky monster by Circe. She dwelt in a cave high up on the cliff, from whence she was accustomed to thrust forth her long necks (for she had six heads), and in each of her mouths seize one of the crew of every vessel passing within reach. The other terror, Charybdis, was a gulf, nearly on a level with the water. Thrice each day the water rushed into a frightful chasm, and thrice was disgorged. Any vessel coming near the whirlpools when the tide was rushing in must inevitably be engulfed; not Neptune himself could save it. (Bullfinch, 1853)

“Between Scylla and Charybdis” refers to the difficulty of navigating “between two equally hazardous alternatives (Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary).

In implementing the Master of Arts in management program at our university, we navigated between the monsters and whirlpools shown in Table 1 below.

(Insert Table 1 about here.)

The program design involved creating several new courses, revising existing core courses and developing two assessment courses. The design process was explained in greater detail in Author 3 and Author 2 (authors, 2001). Table 2, below briefly defines the program and lists the twelve courses.

(Insert Table 2 here.)

By far the most difficult courses in the curriculum to design and implement have been the first, Managerial Assessment and Development and the last, The Reflective Manager. Both classes involve students in assessing their management competencies in five areas: Personal Skills, People Management Skills, Analytic Skills, Management Knowledge, and Career Specific Skills. For more information on why these competencies were selected, please see author 3 and author 2 (2001). In both classes, students write a learning plan. In the first class, the plan covers their time in the program. In the last class, the plan reflects on achievement of objectives in the earlier plan and makes recommendations for the future. Students also integrate work from several of the ten core courses in a separate assignment. (See Appendix A for more information about the courses and assessments). Because the last course was not taught until 14 months after the program started, most of the implementation issues dealt with the logistics of the first course, so that will be the focus of this discussion.

As a side note, the masters program under discussion meets one night a week for four hours. Students complete an additional 20 to 25 hours of work per week outside of class. They take one course at a time until they complete the program. It takes approximately 16 months to complete the program.

The sections below will show how the resolution of one implementation dilemma cast us directly into the next one as we polished and fine-tuned the program. Sharing the

challenges of implementing this outcome assessment program may be of benefit to other schools of business as they navigate their own waters of program design.

### **The Snaky Jaws of Vocationalism vs. the Abyss of Arid Scholasticism**

In this section, we will discuss the dangers of tacking between the danger of vocational training and arid scholasticism when introducing a new curriculum and how the competency framework helped us stay on course.

#### **Launching Towards Vocationalism**

As we began our voyage towards a competency-based masters program, the authors looked for definitions of competency that would inform the design process. The following definition stood out:

Spady (1977, as cited in Kohli, 1979) defines competency-based education as “a data based, adaptive, performance oriented set of integrated processes that facilitate, measure, record, and certify, within the context of flexible time parameters the demonstration of known, explicitly stated, and agreed upon learning outcomes that reflect upon learning outcomes that reflect successful functioning in life roles (p. 549).”

So by this definition, a management competency is a known, explicitly stated, and agreed upon learning outcome that reflects successful functioning as a manager.

University education is the culmination of ancient educational tradition going back, appropriately enough, to the ancient Greeks that regards the central goal of education to be the development of higher order thinking skills—in other words, critical thinking. Competency-based education, however, has its roots in vocational education and the world of training. Because competency-based education can lean toward the vocational, there is a tension when it

is introduced to a university setting that values liberal education. This is the tension between the liberal arts and the servile arts.

At our university, faculty members embrace the values of liberal education. When they were asked to evaluate a competency-based program, they used a liberal arts yardstick to evaluate its appropriateness. Their liberal arts yardstick tended to emphasize academic rigor over assessment of competencies.

The Master of Arts (M.A.) in Management curriculum began its voyage by tacking in a direction that ran the risk of getting snapped up in the snaky jaws of vocationalism. The applied emphasis of the M.A. in Management program came in part because author 2 and author 3 were graduates of a school of management that believed in the value of management education emphasizing application to the workplace. For example, when author 2 studied finance during her MBA, she learned how to determine the purchase price of a company, what marketing strategies were needed to steer a company toward globalization, and how accounting control systems affected worker communication and organizational systems. Consequently, the design of the M.A. in Management leaned heavily toward knowledge and skills that could be used in the students' workplaces, since the students in the program are working adults.

As the program team designed the M.A. in management program, its members became very excited about how students could apply what they were to learn directly to their jobs. At this point the combination of the vocational leanings of competency-based learning, the applied curricular background of Author 3 and Author 2 and the excitement of students really integrating theory and practice were tacking the M.A. in Management boat toward the gulf of an overly applied, vocational style curriculum.

When the team first presented the new M.A. in Management curriculum to the Curriculum Committee<sup>1</sup>, it was rejected because the committee believed that it did not have enough in the way of higher order thinking goals. One curriculum committee member said it “resembled a corporate training program.” While the authors had a great deal of experience designing academically challenging syllabi in the past, we were new at designing graded assignments that met the competency-based program objectives. Our first attempt placed too much emphasis on competency and not enough emphasis on learning objectives and learning activities characteristic of graduate-level learning and the blend of professional and business learning characteristic of the liberal arts university that employed us. The curriculum committee placed greater emphasis on traditional outcome measures such as, papers that required library research and citations, assignments that required deep reflection, synthesis, and evaluation.

### **Lurching Back Toward Scholasticism**

After the feedback from the curriculum committee, the team began to redesign all twelve courses that made up the curriculum so they emphasized more scholarly learning objectives. Author 3 was hardest hit by the criticism of the curriculum committee because his syllabus for the *Leadership and Motivation* course was reviewed first.

The initial text for the course was Hughes, Gannett and Murphy’s (1996) Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience. Although the text’s title may make it look like a practitioner book, it is a college-level textbook with a heavy emphasis on empirical research. Its “enhancements” to the lessons of experience are from academic theories of leadership. The committee’s objections centered on the use of leadership inventories as the basis for class assignments (assessment). Based on the assumption that students of leadership enjoy knowing

how they would rate as leaders, Author 3 designed the first version of the syllabus to use a series of leadership style assessments and inventories. The final assignment was to integrate the results of these inventories into an overall assessment of leadership at the student's organization.

The committee objected to the absence of theoretical application in the original assignments and asked the design team to beef up the syllabus. In a classic case of throwing the baby out with the bath, author 3 redesigned the course on leadership and motivation in a way that sent the ship of the M.A. in Management curriculum directly at the Scylla of a curriculum more appropriate for Ph.D. students than for an applied masters program. Author 3 eliminated the Gannet et al textbook and substituted the Steers, Porter and Bigley (1996) text Motivation and Leadership at Work. This book is an anthology of scholarly research on motivation and leadership by a stellar list of scholars in the field. He created new assignments using theoretical models from the text to assess leadership and motivation in the target organization. He also added an assignment on cultural proficiency and leadership using Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell (1999). The term paper became an integration of the first three papers. With its new, robust approach (per traditional outcome assessment measures), the course syllabus sailed through the approval process.

When it came time to teach the course however, Author 3 and several of the adjunct faculty quickly learned that the Steers et al text, while strong on theory and research, gave students none of the hands-on information they needed to apply the theories to their own leadership. Application came through discussions in class and through interactions about their course assignments. But our objective to measure, improve, and re-measure leadership competency did not materialize. The course went from one shoal, overemphasis on practice, to

the other--emphasis on theory but short on practical application. The course was revised once again.

The lesson from this dilemma for people who try to implement competency-based programs in higher education settings is—Don't forget higher order competencies. That is, when presenting curriculum to committee, link the competencies and the assessments to objectives and assignments that are valued in the liberal arts. This is especially true for those of us in professional programs (business, law, medicine, education, etc.) because professional education is less concerned with teaching students how to critically evaluate different theories of management, medicine, law, business, or dentistry (Author 1, 2001) and more concerned with teaching students how to "select the knowledge and skills applicable to a particular professional work setting or problem" (Stark, 1987). The Case Western Reserve University MBA includes "Analytic Reasoning Abilities" (Boyatzis, 1994, p. 88) such as use of concepts, systems thinking, pattern recognition, theory building, using technology, quantitative analysis, social objectivity, and written communication programs. This is a good example of appropriate inclusion of higher order thinking goals in a competency-based, professional graduate program. To sail between the monsters and the whirlpools means balancing strong theoretical knowledge with practical skill at applying the theory and at behaving in ways consistent with what theory recommends.

Learning the lessons from this dilemma, the team reevaluated the course objectives and assignments and discovered a new set of monsters and whirlpools. What measures should they use to determine students competency levels before and after the program?

**Navigating between the rocks of high cost sophisticated measures and the monster of simple measures.**

In this section, we will tell the story of how we debated the extremes of using simple competency measures that were available to us with the textbooks we adopted versus the use of complex, high cost measures that would have required us to pay for data analysis. One of our objectives was to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall program, so we needed ways to aggregate the individual assessment scores of students. The simple competency tools available in textbooks would provide students with information about their competencies, but could not be used for program assessment. In addition, the textbooks tools were loosely connected to the five key competencies that we had identified in the earlier phases of the program design. As we explain below, we navigated between the monsters and the whirlpools by negotiating licenses to use complex, high cost measures at low cost in exchange for sharing data.

In the initial design phases, author 2 and author 3 had only a vague idea of how they would measure the competencies once we chose them. Their experiences teaching with Whetten and Cameron (1998) and Quinn, et al (1996) gave them faith that simple measures were available that would give students an idea where they stood in each area. We steered the ship toward the whirlpool of simplicity. Students could collect and analyze the data themselves. We would help them interpret it.

In 1999, Author 1 joined the faculty. We explained the version of the M.A. in Management curriculum that was then underway to him in the first meeting of the program team. He said, essentially, ‘Hey, did you know that you can explain about 90% of the program in terms of this theory called emotional intelligence?’ His expertise in the competency model proposed by Boyatzis (1994), familiarity with Goleman’s (1998) work on emotional

intelligence, and on Rest's (1979) work measuring levels of moral development led us to investigate more sophisticated measures than we had considered previously. We were particularly intrigued by the possibility of using the Hay-McBer Emotional Competency Inventory or ECI (About EI, 1999). The ECI uses 360-degree feedback to assess subjects in twenty emotional competencies. The competencies fall in four categories: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, and Developing Others. The major downside was the high cost to students if they used the service as provided by Hay-McBer. Fortunately, Hay-McBer were interested in collaborating with us and using us as a research site. We were able to successfully negotiate a license for using the survey and obtained their permission to use the ECI.

We worked out similar arrangements for other assessments or wrote our own. The end result is a mix of home grown and outside assessments that balance our need to keep costs down with our desire to use sophisticated measures. We thought we were finally ready for some smooth sailing, but it was not to be. The choice of measures took us immediately into a new dilemma, one over data collection methodology.

**Tacking between simple paper data collection and complex, web based methods or  
cleaning the Augean Stables with the river of IT**

With strong agreement on the team that the ECI and our other measures were the right approach, we found ourselves embroiled in a new debate. It found us tacking between the extremes of data collection using simple paper instruments that require labor-intensive data entry and collection of data using complex online tools that allow for instant analysis but require constant software maintenance.

The task of choosing the assessments turned out to be relatively easy compared with the task of creating a data collection and feedback system that would provide students timely feedback on their results. Initially, students received paper copies of the surveys, distributed them to their co-workers, which were then mailed to their instructor.

The paper surveys started coming in right about the time the previous program director resigned, and Author 3 returned to his previous role as program director. Author 3 got his piles of assessment data and quickly realized that entering and interpreting the data would be a Herculean task. More specifically, it resembled the cleaning of the Augean stables, one of the twelve labors of Hercules. In this part of the Hercules myth, King Augeus had not kept up with the regular tidying up of his stables and the horse dung had accumulated to an unusually high level. Hercules was given the task of cleaning them in one day, a seemingly impossible task. Hercules cleverly succeeded, however, by diverting the course of a nearby river so that the water went through the stables, washing away the dung.

While it is perhaps a bit disrespectful to compare the piles of paper and data that accumulated with each student who goes through the assessment process with the accumulation in the Augean stables, the metaphor works in conveying the dizzying, overwhelming amount of stuff that had to be dealt with in both situations.

Author 3 began talking to the university webmaster and to faculty colleagues about web based software he could use to enter, analyze, and eventually collect the data. The university adopted a program called "Cold Fusion" for its master of science in interactive technology to teach students how to build e-commerce applications that mix web pages and databases such as Microsoft Access. By following the tutorials, and practicing with the software, Author 3 gradually built a set of applications in Cold Fusion.

First he built pages that would allow instructors to add and track new students. Then he modified these pages to allow students to add participants who would evaluate them in their 360 reviews. With these tools in place, he modified the paper surveys for the Emotional Competency Inventory (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Hay Acquisition Co. I, 1999), an assessment of Strategic Thinking derived from Senge (1994), the Defining Issues Test (Rest, 1979), and a Cultural Proficiency survey (Lindsey, et al, 1999). He broke the questionnaires into short blocks of questions that would not fill more than one screen at a time when displayed on line. He found ways to store the data in memory so that the program would not clog the channel into the underlying database.

Author 3 did all this while preparing for his tenure review and realizing that the description he wrote in his self-review, “taught self web design and data base management in order to streamline administration in M.A. in Management program,” was unlikely to be part of the criteria for receiving tenure.<sup>2</sup> Yet, to manage the mountains of assessment tools that had to be scored and returned, and with little budget from the university, this was the sacrifice Author 3 made for the good of the program.

The next decision point came when it became clear that students wanted to see their feedback faster than instructors could get it to them. This led to another modification. Author 3 added a calculation in the menu page to determine whether four or more participants had completed the ECI and the Strategic Thinking Assessment. When they did, a link appeared that allowed students to view their results. For the self-report assessments, the results were now available as soon as the student completed the survey. Instructors could view the results from their master pages.

For the writing and critical assessment, we began by using an internally developed essay assignment. Students had two hours to write an essay on a short case. Trained graders evaluated the essays. After nine months it was apparent to the program team that these evaluations were taking too long. In June 2001, we began switching to the GRE writing assessment ([www.gre.org/descriptor.html](http://www.gre.org/descriptor.html)), a nationally normed measure of writing ability identical to the essay section of the GMAT. Scores for the test are mailed to students within two weeks of completing the test.

Management knowledge quizzes were posted using free, but incredibly slow and clunky, [www.blackboard.com](http://www.blackboard.com) software. Author 3 created a Managerial Assessment and Development course in Blackboard. Students can enroll using an enrollment code, take the ten self-grading tests, and receive feedback instantly. For career specific skills, students choose the competencies that are most important to their personal development and rate themselves on a 1 to 10 scale. The next move will be to use the university's version of Blackboard instead of the generic one.

All of the results feed into an evaluation of strengths and weaknesses that form the foundation for students' personalized learning plans for the next 12 months that they are in the program. Future design work is needed to link objectives in the core courses to individual student learning objectives so that they can see progress on improving their competencies.

The web-based system went fully operational in April 2001 after four months of testing it by using it to enter data from paper surveys. Students were given the freedom to supplement the required assessments with other data they wished to collect. They were also free to give paper surveys of the ECI and Strategic Thinking assessment to peers, managers, and direct reports who did not have web access. The net result has been the automation of about 95

percent of the data collection task, but with flexibility for less technologically savvy participants.

Analysis of group data for purposes of overall program effectiveness cannot be done automatically on the web, it still requires copying the database to other programs such as Excel or SPSS so that it can be analyzed in greater depth. As of this writing, over 150 students and 600 other participants have completed the surveys. Preliminary results show that students' scores closely mirror the ratings from their co-workers in about half the competencies and do not reflect the same ratings in the other half when their results are paired with those of other observers. The data analysis will be reported in greater depth in a forthcoming paper.

The important issue here is to keep balancing between simplicity and complexity. Paper data collection is simple, but entry and analysis is a nightmare. For every student in the program, five to six surveys must be entered, evaluated, and returned to the students within two weeks. The quick turn-around make it a task that most faculty cannot manage. Hence, the choice of moving to electronic processing was essential if we were to meet our objective of making the assessment information available to the students so they could design their personal objectives.

Web data collection is complex. It requires hours and hours of programming time to get a simple survey to work. The payoff is in rapid collection of huge amounts of data that leaves time for more analysis. (Of course for program evaluation and scholarly research, you still have to analyze the data, one way or the other!) The lesson learned is that using the simple tools available in textbooks may be a better choice if you are short on IT skills or support; however alternative program assessment tools would need to be developed (such as exit

interviews and evaluations). The downside of using the textbook tools is that the link between the assessments and the program objectives are often weak.

Once the technology was in place for measurement, we were faced with a new dilemma. Up until that time, only full-time faculty had taught the managerial assessment and development course. They were being stretched to the limit. Could part-time faculty cope with the new technology and the new objectives of the program? How would we coordinate the efforts between adjunct and full-time faculty? We sailed off to find out.

**The monster of using a small committed full time faculty vs. the abyss of using a larger but less informed group of part time faculty to teach a new curriculum.**

Confident that we could explain and measure the components of our new competency framework, the authors began teaching the assessment and development course. The other ten courses in the program were less controversial, so part-time faculty began teaching them right from the start. The design team held workshops with part-time faculty before certifying them to teach each course. The biggest downside to this arrangement was that several part-time faculty taught new courses in regional centers away from the main campus before the full-time faculty had the chance to teach them. This made coordination of common assignments (an objective of the program) across the program even more difficult. To improve consistency, the team decided to institute a series of twice-yearly workshops where full time and part time faculty could share their experiences teaching all of the courses. This gave the team an excellent opportunity to reinforce the importance of key issues such as giving the portfolio assignment consistently.

Nine months into the program, we began to experience turnover among the full time faculty. One professor resigned. Author 2 went on sabbatical and eventually accepted a job at

another university. This made it imperative that part-time faculty begin teaching the assessment and development course as well. In a more traditional college setting in which all courses are taught at a single campus, the design team would have had the luxury of implementing the program by teaching all of the courses themselves and working out coordination issues together. At our school, because there were numerous other courses we were responsible for teaching and there was a shortage of full-time faculty, we must design every course to be taught by part-time faculty. For each course, the designers created a “Master Syllabus” which detailed the required textbooks, course objectives, and the designated portfolio assignment aimed at the target organization. It also provided suggested assignments and agendas for each class meeting, although our commitment to academic freedom meant that they were not required.

In addition to the Master Syllabus, however, the assessment and development course required instructors to be familiar with two web applications, Blackboard, and our homegrown assessment page, which we called “Newton” after its web address (<http://newton.uor.edu/courses/mgmt601/assessment/index.cfm>). We gave each of the instructors one-on-one orientation to the tools and explained the course to them as best we could.

In the first six months of the program, as full-time faculty taught the course for the first time, they all had comments, complaints, and improvements to the master syllabus which we duly incorporated. What we did not anticipate was that the part-time faculty would have the same experience, too! They began to phone in and email with their comments, questions, technical complaints, and error messages. When their students had problems, the instructors referred them on to author 3 who wrote the software. If the course had been restricted to full-

time faculty, we would have had more communication channels to talk things over and make corrections. With part-time faculty scattered around the region, it was harder to make sure that everyone had the same understanding of how things work. We were tacking between the multiheaded monster of plentiful part-time faculty who need more training and technical assistance, and the whirlpool of over-worked full time faculty who cannot possibly teach the assessment and development course every time it is offered. We continue to work on improving adjunct faculty's familiarity and comfort level with the course, the program, and the technology supporting it. This issue will continue to be an important one as we strive to improve program quality. We sail down the middle by sharing responsibility for the course.

As mentioned above, as we expanded use of "Newton," the online assessment software, the frequency of error messages began to increase. This led to our most recent dilemma called "who is minding the store?"

### **Tacking between faculty and staff support of instructional technology**

With the program design fixed, the assessments chosen, the software written, and the faculty deployed to teach the course, we pretty much thought our troubles were over. Then a new dilemma raised its ugly head. Author 3, who wrote the Cold Fusion program used in Newton, received sabbatical leave beginning in January 2002. Up to that time, he had been the only person maintaining the site. Who would manage it while he was gone? Another faculty member, a member of the staff? What would happen next?

For author 3, the experience of writing the software was roughly akin to being sucked into a whirlpool. Several months after he started, he finally surfaced, took a gulp of air and said, "That's enough of this." With the program running 98 percent error free, he took a break. Cold Fusion had a surprise for him, however. Whenever it hung up and generated an error

message, a link appeared asking the user to mail the error message to the web master. He in turn forwarded the error messages to Author 3. Soon a steady stream of error messages was arriving in his inbox. Some required simple fixes, some could not be duplicated. New full-time faculty members have recently joined the program team and they have expressed grave concerns about Newton's reliability. They would like to see a full time programmer assigned to Newton to keep it up and running 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That has not happened yet, so the dilemma remains unresolved. We will probably end up navigating between author 3's advice and a part-time staff member who knows Cold Fusion and is assigned to maintain the system. The fun is in deciding how far to go each way!

### **Conclusion**

#### **If we had only known**

We should ask ourselves if we had read this, would it have helped us design our program better? We exemplified an almost comic level of paradox in this organizational change effort called the rolling out of a graduate program in competency education. We believe that there are some lessons that can be learned from our implementation process. For example, it would have helped us if we had a map of the dangers, such as connecting the higher order learning objectives in the design to the competencies needed. In this article, our goal has been to provide others with such a map.

In this paper, we have tried to expose the difficulties we experienced in implementing an outcomes assessment (competency-based) program design. We likened the process to tacking between two equally dangerous alternatives and searching for a navigable course in the middle. We were not always successful in our attempts, but we hope that by discussing our

difficulties with our management education community, we might be able to help others in their attempts to put these theoretically-exciting, but sometimes impractical ideas into place.

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Table 1 Monsters and Whirlpools

Scylla	Authors' chosen course	Charybdis
Arid Scholasticism	Competency: Knowledge and skills that are valued in the workplace.	Mindless Training
Use simple measures available with textbook purchase	Negotiate licenses to use complex, high cost measures at low cost in exchange for sharing data.	Use complex, high cost measures, pay to have data analyzed and returned.
Collect data on paper and enter it by hand for analysis.	Use paper surveys at first while building web application; move to online with paper surveys for participants lacking web access.	Collect data online, automate data analysis.
Use all full-time faculty who know how to use the web site.	Use a combination of part-time and full-time faculty with brief one-on-one training on web use for everyone.	Use part time faculty and hope the web site is clear enough for them to use.
Hire a full time web developer to fix errors and upgrade the system.	Faculty member hands off to existing web programmer on staff until workload can be defined.	Single faculty member continues to maintain the site.

Table 2. Definitions and courses of the program

The Master of Arts in Management is a 33-unit degree that offers a sharp, but complementary contrast to the MBA. It is designed for students who desire a more qualitative degree focusing on the practice of management. The courses are primarily organizational studies courses, such as management theory, organizational behavior, human resources management, and strategy. The degree is structured around competencies or a mission-based objective.

The Master of Arts in Management is defined: (1) Master: A graduate program that requires analytical and synthesize skills (Bloom, 1956). These are graduate level skills and require more than knowledge and content understanding (undergraduate skills). (2) Arts: A program that requires aptitude or skill rather than a body of principles or knowledge (science). (3) Management: A program that focuses on accomplishment or bringing about objectives rather than knowledge of business functions. This helps distinguish it from the MBA and helps the program committee design courses that focus on these objectives. The following table describes the courses in which these objectives will be inserted:

<p>MGMT601 Managerial Assessment and Development  MGMT 674 Human Resources Management  MGMT 621 Contemporary Ethical Issues of Management  MGMT 661 Decision Making  MGMT 689 Managing Change and Organizational Learning  MGMT 623 Team-Based Organizations  MGMT 690 Strategy  MGMT 622 Leadership and Motivation  MGMT 624 Communication and Conflict in Organizations  MGMT 632 Management of Self  MGMT 686 Organizational Frames  MGMT699 The Reflective Manager</p>
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*Appendix A:  
Handout describing M.A. in Management*

# The M.A. in Management: From Start to Finish and Beyond

In the M.A. in Management there are ten three-unit courses, a one-unit course and a two-unit course. The ten three-unit courses meet once a week from 6 to 10PM at your regional center. You will take these courses one at a time (with three exceptions) and each course lasts six weeks. These ten three-unit courses are:

- Human Resources Management
- Contemporary Ethical Issues of Management
- Managing Change and Organizational Learning
- Strategy
- Organizational Frames
- Decision Making
- Leadership and Motivation
- Team-based Organizations
- Management of Self
- Communication and Conflict in Organizations

Your first class might be any one of these. In addition to the four hours a week you spend in class, you will spend 20 or more hours in homework. These courses are accelerated, which means that you spend just as many hours in these courses as you would in a traditional three unit semester long course, but you spend fewer of the hours in class and more hours on homework. By taking accelerated courses, you can complete your degree sooner. The entire M.A. program lasts a little less than one and half years.

### **Managerial Assessment and Development and The Reflective Manager**

“Managerial Assessment and Development” and “The Reflective Manager” are very unusual courses, in that you work one-on-one with a member of the university faculty to examine your strengths and weaknesses as a manager and to develop your own, personalized plan to become a better Manager. This is unique in graduate management education. We know of no other graduate management and business program that offers this kind of one-to-one work with a faculty member in assessment and creating development plans at both the beginning and the end of a degree program.

#### **Management Competencies**

1. Self awareness
2. Self management
3. Interpersonal communication
4. Leadership
5. Persuasion
6. Conflict management
7. Change management
8. Cultural sensitivity
9. Learning throughout one's life
10. Personal vision
11. Presentation skills
12. Strategic thinking
13. Ethical behavior
14. Written communication
15. Critical thinking

You take “Managerial Assessment and Development” at the beginning of the M.A. program and “The Reflective Manager” at the end.

**Managerial Assessment and Development**

“Managerial Assessment and Development” is a one unit course that is three months long. You take it at the same time that you are taking your first two three-unit courses (for

example, they might be “Leadership and Motivation” and “Team Based Organizations”). However, “Managerial Assessment and Development” only takes about four hours per week and doesn’t take place in a classroom. You will be interacting with a faculty member one-on-one, mostly through email and the phone. You will also have at least one face-to-face meeting. In this course you will assess your strengths and weaknesses as a manager, using a few different assessment instruments. These assessments focus on the abilities (also called competencies) and knowledge that are key to being a successful manager (see Management Competencies and

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| <p>Management Competency Categories</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal development</li> <li>2. People skills</li> <li>3. Managerial Knowledge</li> <li>4. Analytical Skills</li> <li>5. Career Specific Skills</li> </ol> |
|---|

Management Knowledge Areas boxes.)

Completing these assessments is likely to include filling out a survey that rates many of your management abilities. You would then give the web site address of the same survey to five people who know you well. They will then fill out the surveys. The information from others will be available to you once two or more people have filled out the survey.

To assess your writing ability you must schedule an appointment at Sylvan Learning Center to take the writing portion of the GMAT. Another assessment will present a few thorny ethical problems and ask you what the right answer is and why you chose it. You will take a multiple choice test that covers the different Management Knowledge Areas. How well you do on these assessments will not affect your grade for this course. You are taking them so you will get a more accurate understanding of yourself as a manager.

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| <p><b>Management Knowledge Areas</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Human Resources Management</li> <li>2. Contemporary Ethical Issues of Management</li> <li>3. Managing Change and Organizational Learning</li> <li>4. Strategy</li> <li>5. Organizational Frames</li> <li>6. Decision Making</li> <li>7. Leadership and Motivation</li> <li>8. Team-based Organizations</li> <li>9. Management of self</li> <li>10. Communication and Conflict in Organizations</li> </ol> |
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<p><b>Why all this assessment?</b></p> <p>If you don’t know your strengths and weaknesses as a manager, you won’t know where you need to grow. The assessments help you to get a more accurate picture of your strengths and weaknesses as a manager so you can create the best possible plan for learning to be a better manager.</p>
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Once these assessments are done, you will set up an appointment to meet with the "Managerial Assessment and Development" faculty member in the regional center. To assess your presentation skills, you will make a short presentation at this meeting.

At this meeting, the faculty member will hear your presentation and takes some notes. He or she will then go over the results of the assessments and explain what they show about your strengths and weaknesses.

Based on your idea of where you want to grow you will develop a plan for learning to become a better manager. It is

called a self-directed learning plan, because you choose the topics you want to learn about or skills you want to improve. We realized that the abilities a person needs to be a good manager in general, do not cover all the abilities that you might need to succeed in your career. So you also have an opportunity to articulate and express the abilities you want to develop that are specific to you. This is another way in which the M.A. in Management individualizes the program for your own needs. Here are some examples:

- You may find that you are weak on writing. So, for each of the rest of your classes, you may plan to review with the writing tutor at least one paper before handing it in. You will be able to find out if you have succeeded by the feedback you get on your papers and by the writing assessment that you take at the end of the program.
- You may want to improve your ability at persuasion so you may decide to volunteer to take a lead position for group projects in your classes. In this position you will have to persuade others. Towards the end of the program you will ask for feedback from others in the group to see if you are becoming more persuasive. You will also see if people who know you rate you as more persuasive at the end of the program when they fill out that survey again.

You write your plan and submit it to your instructor. When it is accepted, you have completed the course. You have up to three months to complete this course.

### **The Portfolio Assignments**

By the end of three months, you will have completed “Managerial Assessment and Development” and two other three-unit courses. In each three unit course, you will have one designated assignment that will go into your portfolio notebook (actually a three ring binder). When possible, these assignments should all focus on one organization (or a part of an organization, like a department). You will look at this target organization from many different perspectives as you complete your courses. Your portfolio will also include all the assessments that you took in “Managerial Assessment and Development,” and your self directed learning plan.

### **The Reflective Manager**

When you start your last three-unit class, you will also start a two-unit course “The Reflective Manager.” This course will help you to bring together what you have learned throughout the M.A. in Management program.

You will retake all the assessments that you did in “Managerial Assessment,” meet with the course instructor and again create a self directed learning plan so that you can continue to develop professionally after graduation.

You will also hand in your portfolio, which will contain:

1. Your assessment scores from the beginning of the program (the “Managerial Assessment and Development” class).
2. Your assessment scores from assessments that you just completed
3. A copy of your self-directed learning plan from “Managerial Assessment and Development”
4. Evidence that you have achieved the learning goals you set in your “Managerial Assessment and Development” self directed learning plan.
5. Each of the portfolio assignments (comments from course instructors must be included).
6. An essay that synthesizes the information about your target organization from most portfolio assignments to diagnose the target organization and prescribe changes.

7. A essay that reflects and interprets your growth as a manager during the past 18 months, with an emphasis on the results of the assessments that you took in “Managerial Assessment and Development” and again for this course.
8. A written evaluation of the M.A. in Management program. This will be anonymous. Your instructor will not see it.
9. A plan for your continued professional growth and learning in the future. This is "The Beyond" referred to in this document's title.  
“The Reflective Manager” will be your last course. You have up to three months to complete the course.

With regards to this last assignment, you may ask why you have to go back to all your previous portfolio assignments to put together a diagnosis and prescription for your targeted organization. The reason is that as a manager, you are unlikely to experience problems or situations that are just ethics problems, or just a problem in managing change. Real life as a manager is messy and real management problems don't stay within the boundaries of the courses you take. We not only want you to learn what is in the different fields of management, we want you to learn how to draw upon what you've learned in many different fields—human resources management, organization theory, interpersonal communication, etc—and integrate so that you understand (diagnose) organizational situations and can change them. This assignment helps you learn how to do exactly that.

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<sup>1</sup> The Curriculum Committee was not a business school committee, but was made up of representatives from education, liberal studies, and business and management—all of the adult oriented programs.

<sup>2</sup> Fortunately, the tenure and review committee did value his contribution because it provided concrete evidence of his contributions to the school in the area of curriculum innovation and program management.