In the Neil Simon play, *The Odd Couple*, Felix Unger, a culturally sophisticated, newly divorced man, moves in with his friend, Oscar Madison, a street-smart, rough-around-the-edges, sports columnist. Hilarity ensues. The comedic situations revolve around the interplay between Felix’s refined tastes – he enjoys opera, gourmet dining, and is compulsively neat, and Oscar’s cavalier attitude – he is slovenly, impulsive, and a habitual gambler. The audience is left to wonder, can these two men live together, without driving each other crazy?"

In some ways, the relationship between liberal arts and management education parallels the Felix and Oscar caricature. Liberal arts offerings are often dismissed as intellectual and academic; management courses are useful and practical. Liberal arts are far from exigent real-world problems, too delicate and theoretical to offer serious solutions. Management, on the other hand, is situated within the domain of business and involves various types of market exchange; it has immediate economic significance and the vitality associated with action and a self-evident importance. Within the academy, these orientations have erroneously become defined as polar opposites, undermining the power and effectiveness of each. Recognizing this early in the 20th century, Mary Parker Follett urges us to become “thinking-doers;” she writes:

Many of us are ashamed of our ‘mechanical age’…but we must realize that our daily living may itself become an art, that in commerce we may find culture, in
industry idealism, in our business system beauty, in mechanics morals…Only when the spirit of art rises from the roots of our mechanical age will it ‘redeem our civilization.’ The divorce of our so-called spiritual life from our daily activities is a fatal dualism. We are not to ignore our industry, commerce, etc., and seek spiritual development elsewhere; on the other hand we shall never find it in these, but only by an eternal influence and refluence.” (Follett 1924/1995: 60)

The argument here is that liberal arts and management education are irrevocably entangled and mutually interdependent. When we ignore that central to liberal arts education is the critical evaluation of and determination to act upon the most pressing economic and political issues, we trend into idealism and irrelevance. When we forget that management education must be engaged with and constantly attendant to the development and redevelopment of intellectual and ethical foundations, we plunge into corruption, alienation, and environmental disaster. The solution is for liberal arts and management education to work together – *without driving each other crazy*. In this paper, I argue that a liberal arts and management education might most productively be integrated on the basis of ethics and entrepreneurship.

**Lost Opportunities: Entrepreneurship Programs within a Business Management Context**

Entrepreneurship programs are growing at an astonishing pace. According to *Fortune Magazine*, three thousand U.S. schools now offer some form of entrepreneurship
education. Not only are entrepreneurship courses the fastest growth area in business and engineering schools (Morris, Kuratko and Schindehutte 2001: 36), but colleges and universities casting about trying to offer students what they want and need are hoping that entrepreneurship programs will increase the economic benefit of undergraduate degrees. In an interview with *Fortune Magazine*, Daniel Piper, named one of the top professors in entrepreneurship, said that schools are just “trying to service the customer’s needs.” (money.cnn.com/magazines/fsb/bestcolleges/2007/professors).

Driving doubts that entrepreneurship qualifies as an academic discipline, there is an absence of rigor in much of the available research and the foundational theory remains largely unarticulated (Morris, Kuratko and Schindehutte 2001: 36). Critics maintain that management education does little more than promote profit-driven, commercial enterprise. Michael Morris, another top entrepreneurship professor named by *Fortune*, explains that entrepreneurship studies are “evolving in a rather disjointed and random manner… characterized by the ‘garbage can model’ in which topical areas reflect a loose collection of ideas rather than a coherent structure with a shared intellectual paradigm” (Morris, Kuratko and Schindehutte 2001: 36).

Developed in a business management educational domain, entrepreneurship has borrowed concepts from liberal arts disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, and anthropology, as well as from the business disciplines of marketing, finance, organizational behavior, and management. Further, citing Shane 2000, Morris et al. note that “What appears to constitute entrepreneurship research today is *some aspect of the setting* (e.g., small businesses or new firms), *rather than a unique conceptual domain*” (Morris, Kuratko and Schindehutte 2001: 36, emphasis added).
Regardless, entrepreneurship professors routinely insist that the discipline is distinct from business management and that entrepreneurs are not merely business owners. Entrepreneurship is extolled as “A philosophy of life, a way of thinking, a way of approaching personal issues, family life, and community involvement” (Morris 2007). Morris defines entrepreneurship as an attitude that embraces innovation, change and growth while pursuing opportunities and managing risk in every aspect of life (2007, emphasis added). Such definitions are consistently used at Syracuse University, UNC at Chapel Hill, Wake Forest, and Babson College. In a PowerPoint presentation given to entrepreneurship educators, Morris writes, “Entrepreneurship is the most empowering, the most democratic, the most freedom-creating phenomenon is [sic] the history of the human race” (2007). And William Scott Green¹ hopes to “propagate the study and practice of entrepreneurship throughout the American university, rather than have it be confined to the business school and a few other disciplines” (Green 2005: i). Green suggests that entrepreneurship can be seen as “an antidote to the alienation that both Marx and Weber saw as the ineluctable trait of capitalist modernity. In Marxist terms, entrepreneurship can be seen as the reverse of alienated labor, when workers do not own what they produce. In some basic sense, the entrepreneur is at one with the enterprise of her or his devising” (2005: 4). To expose students to this “fundamental and irreducible form of freedom” (Green 2005: 2), Green and Morris urge colleges and universities to make “every student an entrepreneur” and have “total student emersion” in entrepreneurship (Morris 2007).

¹ Dean of the College, University of Rochester, Professor of Religion, and part of the Kauffman Campuses Initiative.
However, in business education, entrepreneurship has yet to live up to its potential as a democratizing force, that is, a force that is intentionally inclusive and increases economic, political and social diversification. The economist Joseph Schumpeter, one of the earliest theorists of entrepreneurship (1934), recognizes entrepreneurs as innovators and change agents necessary for economic progress, but Schumpeter did not identify entrepreneurs as change agents for social norms including esthetic tastes, knowledge, and conventional wisdom that come under the rubric of cultural traditions and systems of social valuation. In fact, complaints about the penury of scholarly research, media coverage, teaching tools and business cases that feature women and entrepreneurs of color have hounded entrepreneurship education. John Ogbor writes that the “concept of entrepreneurship is discriminatory, gender-biased, ethnocentrically determined and ideologically controlled, sustaining not only prevailing societal biases, but serving as a tapestry for unexamined and contradictory assumptions and knowledge about the reality of entrepreneurs” (2000: 605).

Using a sociological rather than a business lens, John Butler sees the emancipatory or “self-help” (Butler 1991) aspect of entrepreneurship: it has the potential to be a tangible, practical manifestation of self-expression, not only offering the entrepreneur access to an economic arena that may have been blocked by social prejudice and discrimination, but also affecting her ability to engage with and influence societal discourse – to develop and express personal and group identities by influencing the larger social context. Similarly, Mark Banks chronicles entrepreneurs who “are self-consciously engaged in forms of practice that contain ideas about what is ‘good’ (and therefore
‘bad’), exhibit moral ways of acting towards others, and negotiate the balance between holding instrumental or non-instrumental values” (2006:456).

The qualitative and symbolic interpretations of entrepreneurship from sociologists and ethicists are virtually nonexistent in actual classes and curricula; here entrepreneurship quickly and inexorably becomes conflated with typical business offerings. For instance, at the time of this research, contexts for entrepreneurship include at Syracuse: Start-up Ventures, Early Growth Firms, Family Businesses, Rapid Growth Ventures, Corporate Entrepreneurship, and Academic Entrepreneurship and Cultural Entrepreneurship; the latter two are, however, only vaguely defined. In their program “Entrepreneurship and Liberal Arts,” Wake Forest University offers undergraduate students an entrepreneurship minor. Required courses include Creativity and Innovation, “with the express objective of fostering creative potential in all aspects of work and life”; Foundations of Entrepreneurship, which “addresses the challenges of creating and sustaining organizations in today’s global environment,” and either an internship in a for-profit or not-for-profit environment or an independent study “involving entrepreneurship or social enterprise” (http://entrepreneurship.wfu.edu). At Babson College, ranked by U.S. World and News Report as #1 in entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship 101 begins with the question, “Interested in launching a new business?” And the course description of Entrepreneurship and Opportunity begins with the sentence, “This course concentrates on identifying and evaluating opportunities for new business.”

Even in these integrated courses, entrepreneurship education continues to be directed toward business objectives. For instance, in the elective, “Teaching the Business of Art,” Wake Forest students are paired with “successful working artists and skilled
professionals to introduce and strengthen the entrepreneurial skills needed to make a living as an artist” (http://www.wfu.edu/news/release/2007.03.28.tips.php). The idea that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial thinking can be integrated within the study of art itself rather than as a means to market and sell art has not yet been achieved. In fact, in their article, “Towards Integration: Understanding Entrepreneurship through Frameworks,” Morris, Kuratko and Schindehutte explain that a diversity of resources is required for successful entrepreneurship, but their attempt to define the field differs very little from a typical business manual:

Resources have been grouped into six categories: physical (eg buildings, equipment), relational (eg customers, distributors, networks), organizational (e.g., structures, processes, systems), financial (eg cash, debt capacity), intellectual and human (e.g., sales capabilities, R&D skills), and Technological (eg patents, licenses, access to particular technologies). These resource categories can be captured using the acronym, ‘PROFIT.’ (2001: 43)

Despite the desire to develop university courses so that students encounter “entrepreneurship in regular mainstream disciplines – from philosophy to history to chemistry” (Green 2005: 6), we have not adequately formulated how entrepreneurship can be integrated into liberal arts courses without turning them into business courses. Moreover, though there is the desire to claim that entrepreneurship is “more than a set of business skills, but rather a calling to be pursued in many realms of endeavor” (Green 2005: 5), there is still no description of entrepreneurship that qualifies it as a philosophy
of life, an attitude, a mindset. To date, entrepreneurship has been imprisoned within a business context largely because the subject matter has been governed by the pedagogy and objectives of business schools rather than that of liberal education.

The Importance of Liberal Arts

But I maintain there is hope for meaningful integration. Liberal arts and entrepreneurship can be conceived as having a common foundation. In 106-43 B.C.E., Cicero, first coined the term *artes liberales*. He introduced Greek philosophy to the Romans and created a philosophical vocabulary in Latin. *Artes liberales* comprised the education of the elite – those free men who had citizenship rights. This general education was essential for leaders because it taught reading, writing and reasoning ability – all things necessary to parse arguments, communicate with others and persuade them to see a particular vision of the world. *Artes liberales* were later divided into literacy: grammar, rhetoric and logic – otherwise known as the Trivium, and numeracy: arithmetic, music, astronomy and geometry – the Quadrivium. The other arts were *artes mechanicae* and *artes serviles*. The mechanical arts: brick making, weaving, baking, were available to peasants, women and crafts workers who did not have time for contemplation and intellectual pursuits. The servile arts were available to slaves who had no need for the liberal arts; because they were barred from public arguments and debate, they could not discursively affect policy.

We have come to associate liberal arts with Socratic inquiry and the examination of universal questions, rather than strictly with citizenship training, and therefore the
liberal arts encompass the philosophical and scientific tradition of seeking knowledge for its own sake. The liberal arts are “scholarly” and “academic” disciplines and have been distinguished from the servile arts as study worthy in itself. The study of justice, virtue, ethics, the study of other cultures, are ends in themselves; whereas vocational studies, the servile arts, are means to an end, worthwhile only insofar as they deliver access to the cash economy, material benefits, increase social status, etc. Liberal arts thinking entails imagining beyond current states and therefore leads to increased complexity and new possibilities; the skills associated with the servile arts entail reduction, simplification and replication of current practices toward ever increased efficiency.

Today, liberal arts disciplines include philosophy, history, literature, languages, mathematics, the natural and social sciences – those subjects that teach how to think analytically, argue effectively and communicate ideas and concepts clearly. These subjects investigate meaning, significance, truth, morality. They provide not only facts, but teach students various ways to evaluate and critique and improve the very disciplinary perspectives they present. Because the liberal arts are not immediately directed toward necessity or survival – only the select few can afford to just study – there remains an undercurrent of elitism. In fact, Louis Menand argues that the liberal arts were saved from being swallowed by vocational and professional schools early in the 1900s by Harvard’s decision to require an undergraduate liberal arts education before professional training (Lind 2006). A liberal arts education, therefore, continues to be an entrée into and a symbol of the elite class, but it is also the only bastion that houses the consideration of ethics as an end in itself.
In the relatively prosperous 1950’s, 60’s and 70’s college was, for many in the US, a time to stave off adulthood, avoid military service, to “find yourself.” More students and parents could afford to take a long-view on educational investment. But, as the economy became less stable, short-term thinking began to dominate, college costs skyrocketed as government grants dwindled, and liberal arts education increasingly became a luxury – too expensive, not utilitarian and vocational enough to be immediately and practically applied. In the 21st century, only three percent of US college students are choosing a liberal arts major. Twenty percent major in business, eight percent in education and seven percent in health care (Lind 2006). In the increasing vocational context, were business courses are dominating undergraduate institutions, liberal arts courses can seem anachronistic. So why have them at all?

Defenders of the liberal arts from the ancient Greeks to contemporary social critics argue that liberal arts teach the critical thinking skills necessary for leaders to make sound decisions. In our complex democracy, each citizen can be seen as a leader, choosing for her or himself those who will govern and by what policies. Michael Lind writes:

In a democratic republic, isn’t it necessary for all citizens to have at least the basics of a liberal education? Even if their participation in public life is limited to voting occasionally, citizens cannot adequately perform that minimal duty unless they have the training in reasoning, rhetoric and fact that in aristocratic and patrician republics was needed only by the few. (Lind 2006).
Liberal arts still provide the educational basis for free men and women to make informed, thoughtful, ethical decisions (Nussbaum 2004). Seen in that light, a liberal education hardly seems superfluous, and yet the liberal arts and the effective communication and analytical skills they help students develop have been dangerously overshadowed in advanced capitalist societies. As we try to reconcile a democratic political system with a capitalist economic system, material and commercial reproduction have overwhelmed our ability to communicate valuation and legitimization. Quantifiable elements: money, votes, material, etc., have overtaken qualitative cultural values evident in symbolic, intangible dimensions of life.

Free enterprise, initially intended to protect democratic ideals, instead threatens to devour them. We have begun to lose the sense of a coherent social identity: too many people do not feel they are democratically represented politically and economically because the material and commercial elements of our lives are no longer legitimized by social values and ethical standards. Having lost the ability to evaluate and critique material culture, we are in crisis. Herbert Marcuse writes:

A comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevails in advanced industrial civilization…Freedom of thought, speech, and conscience were – just as free enterprise, which they served to promote and protect – essentially critical ideas, designed to replace an obsolescent material and intellectual culture by a more productive and rational one. (1964:1)

**Common Elements of Liberal Arts and Entrepreneurial Thinking**
So what is the fundamental commonality between liberal arts and entrepreneurship? What is the essential process involved in liberal arts and entrepreneurial thinking? I like Michael Mooney’s\(^2\) description of liberal arts thinking:

You see beyond your experience to its hidden structures, and in this way come to master your environment. A piece of music will no longer be simply a score. A text that you read will no longer be simply a poem or a work of drama. It will become something you understand from the inside out, whose allusions and metaphors are suddenly more real to you than ordinary life. Similarly, a human system or natural phenomenon will cease being a simple object, for its form is now seen as an extension of your own complexity. (Mooney 2001).

Liberal arts-thinking is an ownership of ideas. It is personal possession of aspects of social, scientific, historical, linguistic, mathematical knowledge. An integration, if you will, of us and them. Edouard Glissant\(^3\) puts it this way:

One of the most obvious tasks of literature, poetry, and art is to gradually lead humans to the unconscious acknowledgment that the other is not the enemy, that difference does not erode me, that if I change in my contact with the other, it does not mean that I dilute myself...It is no longer dreaming the work, but entering it (http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/announc.htm).

\(^2\) Professor of Intellectual History and former president of Lewis and Clark University.
\(^3\) French-Caribbean poet, novelist, and philosopher, frequently mentioned as a candidate for the Nobel Prize for literature.
Liberal arts-thinking is an engaged, interactive process – not rote, memorization, not top-down imposed dogma, but examination that invites skepticism, dissent and challenges students not only to understand the intellectual content of a subject matter, but to improve on ideas, to create original scholarship – to *generate a new analysis*. Liberal arts-thinking is dynamic; it recognizes and creates evolution and change. It sharpens analytical thinking and critical examination to teach students to reflect before they act, to question prejudice, habit and impulse – to develop themselves as they engage with a myriad of other perspectives. These are the necessary skills of responsible citizenship – of leadership. These skills not only recognize change, but also manage and direct it. In a society that prioritizes critical thought, perhaps the system that saddles students with such debt that they feel compelled to choose their life-course based on earning potential should itself be reconsidered.

Liberal arts and entrepreneurial education share the same critical, forward-thinking orientation: They study and analyze what *is* (e.g., the current state of the economy, social justice, citizenship and community affairs, current business environments, individual and social needs, etc.) and, by identifying and evaluating opportunities for improvement, they consciously contribute to *what will be*. Both liberal arts and entrepreneurship education are characterized by a restless optimism that gives primacy to original, innovative ideas, and, with equal measure, recognizes the importance of self-expression as it reflects a multiplicity of social viewpoints.

This critical, progressive theoretical orientation resonates with Emmanuel Kant’s essay, “On Enlightenment.” When Kant declares, “Have the courage to use your own
understanding!” he is urging us to take ownership of ideas and their application rather
than to be passive, to follow orders or behave out of habit. Kant’s *Critique of Pure
Reason* is often cited as the origin of critical theory evident in the humanities, sciences
and social sciences. The final line of Karl Marx's “Theses on Feuerbach,” which can be
read as a requiem for idealism: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in
various ways; the point is to change it" (1845).

The motivation behind this active-oriented agenda is to critique -- to improve
existing ways of understanding -- not just explain or describe them. The underlying
motivation is social justice, progress, and emancipation -- to reduce and resist systems of
domination and expand the scope of freedom and autonomy. Feminist theory,
Postcolonial theory, Race theory, Queer theory, Cultural studies, Ecological theory and
Environmental studies all fall under the rubric of critique. All are oriented toward self-
reflection and influence the way the self is experienced, expressed and represented in the
social. All are the results of liberal arts curriculum expanding to address the real-world
experiences, identities, and concerns of students. These theories are ultimately directed
toward emancipation through increasing awareness, inclusion, and representation of a
multiplicity of perspectives. *Liberal arts thinking and entrepreneurship have the
potential to be democratizing processes that evolve by validating an increasing number
of individual perspectives as they affect the economic, political, and cultural
infrastructure.*

Though there are many ways to define entrepreneurship. The word is from the
French *entreprendre:* to undertake. I like to focus on the beginning of the word, “entre”
meaning between, in the middle, in the midst, in the center, and on the verb *entrer,* to
enter, go in, step inside, move in, access, approach. Entrepreneurs must be creative visionaries, but will succeed only insofar as they identify compelling alternatives to current understandings and persuade others to join them in a new view. Entrepreneurship is both individual and personal, and also social and communal. Spinoza et. al. write, “The entrepreneur does not have faith in and commitment to herself but rather to an intuition or an idea that has struck her as requiring the giving up of the self as she knows it for a new life in a new world that everyone will share” (Spinoza, Flores and Dreyfus 1997: 44, emphasis added).

As educators, we have the responsibility to develop the discovery, thinking, reasoning, and implementation skills of our students and ourselves so we may lead, manage, and excel in highly uncertain and rapidly changing environments. If entrepreneurship is to fulfill its potential and reduce the “debilitating alienation of the modern economic order” (Kolbert quoted in Green 2005: 4), then the material aspects of entrepreneurship will be granted legitimacy only insofar as they reflect shared values with liberal arts education. Among these shared values are a commitment to self-expression, debate, creativity, problem-solving, accountability, and the on-going articulation of the mutuality of social responsibility and personal identity.

**Ethics as the Necessary Context to Business Ethics**

In their volume *Business Ethics: Managing Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability in the Age of Globalization* (2010) Andrew Crane and Dirk Matten define business ethics as, “the study of business situations, activities, and decisions where issues
of right and wrong are addressed” (2010: 5). This might seem entirely straightforward and unproblematic; however, to constrain ethics to the standards of the business domain is to define ethics within a context perceived as so rife with corruption and deceit that the very subject of business ethics is often considered risible -- little more than oxymoronic fodder for ridicule and derision (Crane and Matten 2010:4). Unfortunately, high-profile cases of malfeasance belies the fact that for the most part, businesses are constituted by many honest, dedicated people.

Since repeated large-scale corporate and government corruption has discredited business as a culture capable of generating of ethical rules and regulations – indeed, rules and regulations are more apt to be imposed upon business from outside sources – then a course on business ethics must begin with the understanding of the ethical characteristics that predict moral decision-making across every domain. That is to say, the basic components of ethical rules of conduct must come from outside of any occupational and professional training and imbue it from the outside in. When this is not so, the goals of the activities of the occupation inform the ethical guidelines adopted by the practitioners, and these guidelines can too easily become little more than instrumental vehicles for the objectives already identified. For instance, currently when business ethics is studied, it is too often in the context of the assumption that a business must remain profitable or it will cease to exist. This outcome, that a business might close, must be up for consideration for ethics to apply to business decisions; that is one reason why ethics must come from outside the domain being considered.

Rather than define ethics as particular and limited in scope to any practical domain that already has its own set of assumptions, ambitions, culture and history, the
humanities offers a wider and more holistic examination of substantive issues, including economic systems and business practices across cultures, across time and within demographically diverse populations. Further, within each discipline of the humanities and social sciences, there are fundamental theories that disagree. Rather than employ one overarching set of theoretical assumptions or a single unified goal, conflicting theories critique one another and therefore advance the development of critical skills for evaluation for every kind of theory and practice. When ethics is taught from a substantive point of view that can be applied to any domain, it has a higher potential to be organically derived, embraced from the perspective of a social rather than a self-interested actor, reticular rather than linear, and cognizant of the on-going interdependency, interconnectedness, and at times contradictory goals and perspectives involved in any set of rules and behaviors.

Richard Munch delineates the difference between formal and substantive rationality as follows: “Formal rationality is limited to specific causal knowledge about specific means-end relationships and to the realization of a specific end and one substantial value. Substantive rationality has to include many substantial values; it has to look at the whole world as something that should be made better” (Munch 1994: 174-175). Substantive rationality is characteristic of liberal arts thinking while formal rationality is characteristic of vocational skills. Business ethics, as it is usually taught and learned, is most often formally rather than substantively rational. To their credit, Crane and Matten make an attempt to consider several stakeholders in decision-making; however, fundamentally, their text is functional and formal rather than substantive and holistic. For instance, when explaining some of the reasons business ethics is important,
they write, “Business ethics can provide us with the ability to assess the benefits and problems associated with different ways of managing ethics in organizations” (Craven and Matten 2010:11). While this is undoubtedly true, it is far from the idea that business ethics helps business students develop into individuals who prioritize ethical considerations and identify with moral conduct in all facets of their behavior, including their behavior as business professionals.

In both their definition of business ethics and in the explanation of why the subject is important, Crane and Matten separate business ethics from ethics generally, or what they refer to as normative ethics. Therefore, they do not confront the supposition from which so much harm has come, that some behavior is ethical in business but might very well be considered outrageously unethical in other domains of life. Humanities and the social sciences provide a disinterested basis for the study of ethics; one where there is no distinction between business ethics and normative ethics. Morals are part of one’s identity and character; we are each responsible for our morals. Ethics are the principles and codes of conduct applied to a given situation by a distinct community. To define ethical behavior by standard of the business community that, as Crane and Matten recognize, is renowned for having a very low ethical standard, is obviously problematic.

Practitioners of business are expected to follow the rules and conventions within business (business ethics) to maintain their membership in and promote the goals of the business community. Membership in any community entails that the ethical standards of the community override personal values – this can be a good thing when it problematizes self-interest at the expense of the coherence of the community, but a bad thing if the community is largely corrupt. Students are taught to subordinate personal values for the
greater good of business, exchange, capital, employment, etc.; that is, the greater good is
derivative of the occupation itself: that businesses continue to be competitive and
continue to make some degree of profit. The equivalent logic in medical school would be
the idea that ethical surgeons are those who perform the most surgeries regardless of the
benefit to patients.

Business leaders and politicians often do not inspire confidence simply because they have not demonstrated the critical thinking and communication skills necessary to effectively share what they know, represent community perspectives and make persuasive arguments. Citizens desire freedom from both material scarcity as well as from “the structures of domination that have become congealed in the communicative process between people” (Eyerman and Shipway 1981: 556). Therefore, too often, business and politics are not legitimized by the constituencies they are meant to serve.

Frequently documented across an array of disciplinary analyses of capitalism, modernity and postmodernity, is an ever-increasing fragmentation of self, a sense of alienation, distrust, disenfranchisement and ultimately, demoralization and environmental collapse. Material freedom was intended to protect symbolic freedom rather than be indifferent or even hostile toward it. Jürgen Habermas writes:

Modern societies attain a level of system differentiation at which increasingly autonomous organizations are connected with one another via delinguistified media of communication: these systemic mechanisms – for example, money – steer a social intercourse that has been largely disconnected from norms and values, above all in those subsystems of purposive rational economic and administration action that, on Weber’s
diagnosis, have become independent of their moral-political foundations.

(Habermas 1989: 189)

The Specious Choice between Money and Morals

There has been an artificial separation between liberal arts education and vocational skills, in this case business, education. Each seems to assume that the other will fill the gaps in themselves while remaining ultimately compartmentalized and separate. Stewart argues that we must “expand the domain of our analysis” (2006) and integrate these orientations such that liberal arts can prepare students for real-world challenges rather than shrink from those disconcerting questions regarding money and power – both increasingly outside the experience and expertise of liberal arts professors. If we do not want the liberal arts to become increasingly irrelevant to and disconnected from student concerns, we must prepare students to address the torrent of economic, social, and cultural challenges they face. At the same time, we must also insist that entrepreneurship within the academy be consistent with liberal education by engaging in critical analysis and methods of determining ethical conduct rather than rely on bulleted, reductionistic PowerPoint presentations that depict action plans governed by self-interested profit motives. If entrepreneurship and management education is increasingly housed in colleges and universities rather than in graduate schools of business, then the tenets of liberal education must obtain in these disciplines or these tenets will atrophy and disappear.

As a liberal arts (sociology) professor teaching at a business school, students in my classes are exposed to sociological theories and ethnographies that critique social and
economic injustice. Exposure to concepts such as anomie and false consciousness, and to first-person narratives representing workers’ perspectives are in sharp contrast with management classes that discuss how to cut benefits and circumvent union and government regulations in ways that are least perceptible and most profitable. It is not unusual for distraught students to tell me that after taking sociology (and other liberal arts courses such as philosophy, political science or gender studies), they no longer feel confident that there is an ethical way to run businesses. However, too often, on this crucial question, both liberal arts and entrepreneurship professors remain silent.

In his article, “The Management Myth,” Matthew Stewart, a former management consultant who holds a Ph.D. in philosophy, turns a critical eye on management literature and asks, “What does an MBA do for you that a doctorate in philosophy can’t do better? (2006). He writes:

As I plowed through my shelf load of bad management books, I beheld a discipline that consists mainly of unverifiable propositions and cryptic anecdotes, is rarely if ever held accountable, and produces an inordinate number of catastrophically bad writers. (Stewart 2006).

Stewart concludes that there are two crucial differences between philosophers and management consultants. The first is that philosophers are better at knowing what they don’t know. The second is money.

And money is crucial. Perhaps defensively, many of us in the arts and sciences have come to think that working for money, having a profit motive, is uniformly destructive and exploitative. Money spoils everything. Most professors in liberal arts
disciplines have made the choice, consciously or unconsciously, to subordinate material gain in order to have the freedom to make professional and personal decisions that are largely unencumbered by considerations of profit. Despite the relative lack of financial compensation, university teaching, regardless of the time, effort and expense spent on earning a doctorate, has, like childcare, social work, and running for political office, come to be regarded as a pursuit worthwhile in itself and valuable because of the contribution to the public good, and that is something to celebrate. However, some university professors have come to fetishize poverty: the shabbiness of living quarters and disheveled clothing, a general ascetic tenor and lack of material, symbolizes purity and communicates the impression that not only are liberal arts professors uncorrupted by money – they are incorruptible.

At the last American Sociological Association conference I attended, one of the sociologists told a personal story before presenting his research. He said that he had come to the conference “on the cheap”; instead of eating at the pricey urban restaurants surrounding the venue, he shopped at a local grocery and stored food in the refrigerator of his hotel room. When he was getting ready to leave, he had food left over. Not wanting to be wasteful, he thought he would find a homeless person and offer the food to him or her. He spotted an unenviable hunched figure dressed in a thin, loose-fitting old coat shivering on a bus stop bench, his possessions in a paper bag next to him. The person looked so down on his luck, that the sociologist thought he would really appreciate the food. Grocery bag in hand, he approached the shivering man, but had to veer away at the last moment: the “homeless” person was wearing an American Sociological Association nametag – the sociologist recognized him as a fellow presenter from the same conference.
Regardless of the association between money and corruption, people suffer if they neglect either economic or ethical considerations. Rather than relying on their liberal arts colleagues to infuse the curriculum with qualitative elements while turning a blind eye to the continuing pay inequity, those faculty members who get disproportionate higher salaries because of the more easily quantifiable “market value” of their disciplines should instead stand in solidarity with their liberal arts colleagues for equal pay across all disciplines. All faculty members have a duty to both acknowledge the urgent pecuniary concerns that many students face, such as significant post-college indebtedness in the U.S., and also teach students how to navigate and finally to direct the real world of economic considerations by applying critical examination through effective writing, logical argument and persuasive communication. What Marx refers to as “practical-critical,” even “revolutionary” activity (Marx 1845). In his Theses III on Feuerbach, Marx writes:

The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by [people] and that it is essential to educate the educator... The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice.

And, perhaps most important, these practical skills must be developed in the service of ethical decision-making rather than developing students who merely serve the economy.
Too often, business ethics remain tantamount to “business-as-usual” ethics. We must demand critical examination and ethical behavior within the business realm rather than conclude that ethics are a luxury affordable only by impoverished liberal arts professors.

Stewart writes:

Beyond building skills, business training must be about values. As I write this, I know my M.B.A. friends are squirming in their seats. They’ve all been forced to sit through an ‘ethics’ course, in which they learned to toss around yet more fancy phrases like “the categorical imperative” and discuss borderline criminal behavior…but, as anyone who has studied Aristotle will know, ‘values’ aren’t something you bump into from time to time during the course of a business career. All of business is about values all of the time” (2006, emphasis added).

In Ahead of the Curve: Two years at Harvard Business School (2008), Philip Delves Broughton writes, "No matter how hard it tries, business can never escape the fact that it is the practice of potentially thieving, treacherous, lying human beings" (2008: 157). Broughton goes on to say how Jeffrey Skilling, the former president of Enron, was initially welcomed back to Harvard Business School as a hero because he followed the directions taught at HBS and achieved the intended goal: making lots of money (until he went to jail).

Perhaps Broughton is right, and we cannot escape the fact that potential thieves are practicing the lessons of business school, but that is a wrong-headed and backward

---

4 Thanks to Brian Seitz and Al Anderson, Philosophy Professors at Babson College.
way of thinking about the situation -- it blames the students rather than the system that either creates or helps to create such thieves. There are undoubtedly some students who choose to study business with limited self-interested goals. However, I would venture that for many if not most students, the choice of business school and of a business or management major on the undergraduate level, is largely driven by the desire to be employed in jobs that allow graduates to support themselves and their families.

Every school, every institution, begins with people who are potentially treacherous and presumably, potentially virtuous. In medical education, the institution and the theory behind the practice can provide a structure and an identity for the student and the profession that minimizes or maximizes ethical behavior and moral conduct. Imagine if medical schools promoted the same quantitative evaluation processes as business schools too often do, then just as Jeffrey Skilling and Muhammad Yunus are both are innovative businessmen then so, too, Jonas Salk and Josef Mengele are both enterprising medical researchers. In fact, business schools and medical schools each teach a set of skills to students that have potential for tremendous good and incalculable harm – it is the ethical context that often decides the outcome of the training.

Liberal Arts and Management Education:
Working Together -- without Driving Each Other Crazy

I am not arguing that we should ignore the concepts of money and power, but the legitimacy of their use depends on qualitative influence and values that arise from broad democratic participation and representation. Unless money and power are understood within a matrix of shared values and interpersonal exchange, they will not be legitimate,
and they will not create freedom. Quantitative elements such as profits, votes, and material can express influence, but cannot generate the values that we share and the personal identities we develop. For any enterprise to have long-term survival, it must be supported by a social mandate. Social acceptance or rejection ultimately defines the boundary of enterprise. We are so dangerously close to turning all citizens into mere consumers and all students into mere customers. When this happens, responsibility and accountability drop from the equation, and our political and educational system are increasingly directed only by narrowly defined material and profit considerations rather than qualitative dimensions of shared identity.

One way to address these issues is to dissolve the artificial boundary between the qualitative, symbolic domain and the quantitative, material domain. In the academy, this can be accomplished by integrating liberal arts and entrepreneurship and by infusing business management courses with holistic ethical training – business humanities, if you will. As mentioned, some educational institutions have already begun this process; however, integration initiatives between liberal arts and entrepreneurship curricular and co-curricular activities often lack a coherent rubric with which to define and assess integration. Given the current, lop-sided valuation of material and economic directives, business concerns tend to dominate such integration efforts.

Several years ago, I generated a template that could be used to integrate entrepreneurship into every liberal arts discipline with special attention to preserving disciplinary integrity (2009). In this rubric, included below, enterprise development is only one of four possible outcomes that define an integrated course. Therefore, liberal arts professors are not asked to teach business or to direct their disciplines toward a
business outcome. However, liberal arts professors are being asked to specifically identify the real-world applications of their discipline as well as reinforce the traditional fundamental aspects of liberal arts learning that situate ethical responsibility and agency in students as they are act as self-aware actors in larger social, political, economic and moral contexts. Depending on the focus of the integration, liberal arts faculty could teach an integrated course alone within their discipline, or they could team-teach an integrated course with a member of the entrepreneurship faculty.

Four criteria for integrated courses -- the course must meet at least one (Godwyn 2009):

1. **Study entrepreneurship from another disciplinary point of view.**

   Examples of course titles:

   - “The Ethics of Entrepreneurship during the Great Depression”
   - “Multiple Ways to Define Success: Gender, Race and Class Characteristics Manifest in Business Practices”
   - “Entrepreneurship, Innovation and the Influence of Rembrandt in the Dutch Golden Age”
   - “This Changes Everything: Entrepreneurial Paradigm Shifts in Science, Social Movements, Politics and Economics in the 19th and 20th Centuries”

2. **Incorporate the Entrepreneurial Process** in any course through assignments and classroom decorum (these processes should be explicitly stated in the syllabus as course competencies and evaluative guidelines should also be articulated):

   - Give students leadership responsibility for course outcomes
   - Allow students to share in evaluation of work products (both their own and their classmates’)
   - Have a “real-world” aspect to the course – forming an organization, raising funds for a cause, activist work, community engagement, ethnographic research, service learning, internships, etc.
   - Problem-solving, consensus building, teamwork
   - Develop competency in making persuasive, sound arguments
Develop spontaneous solutions through assignments that force students to think quickly, creatively and innovatively – such as using improvisation exercises
• Have students write plans of execution for projects
• Make it safe to fail

3. **Educate students to open a for-profit or not-for-profit enterprise.**

Students should engage in the business and organizational basics of enterprise development and in equal measure, with the ethical, social and environmental considerations entailed in any business creation. This would include an articulation of the goals and objectives that reflect the values of the educational community and an opportunity for students to generate an understanding of the range of characteristics that define successful entrepreneurship.

The business plan developed would include discussing the affect of the enterprise on a wide range of stakeholders. In addition to considerations of markets, funding and economic viability, students would also articulate the social, cultural, and environmental impact of products and services as well as the ethical implications of the business enterprise. Exploration must include asking how the product/service would affect business owners, consumers, employees, the local community, the larger culture and the environment. Questions about how the product/service, its production and the revenue generated affect all of the stakeholders should be answered in the business plan and situated within larger discourses of ethical conduct and social considerations.

4. **Develop characteristics of the Entrepreneurial Mindset** including risk-taking, innovation, creativity, understandings of social and political impact of ideas and actions, critical thinking, self-expression, opportunity identification, leadership, value creation, effective communication, problem-solving, presentation of ideas, consideration of multiple viewpoints, etc.

Entrepreneurship and business skills are now part of many liberal arts institutions, and that can be a good thing. However, it is incumbent upon liberal arts professors to be active participants in the articulation and interpretation of the objectives and outcomes of these courses. We can do that by doing what we do best: critically examining the process to ensure that it is consistent with the values and goals of a liberal education. Recognizing common foundations and goals, give liberal arts and entrepreneurship faculty a way to work together without driving each other crazy!
Bibliography


