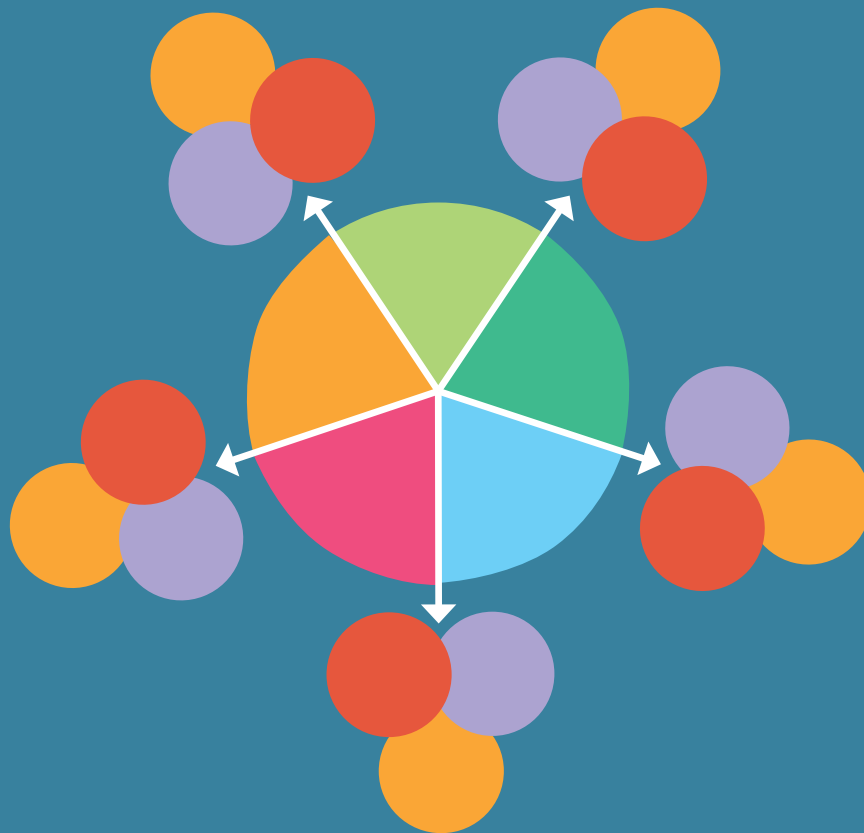BY AMY MOORE AND VERITY HAWARDEN ON BEHALF OF THE CENTRE FOR PERSONAL AND APPLIED LEARNING

AT THE GORDON INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS SCIENCE (GIBS)
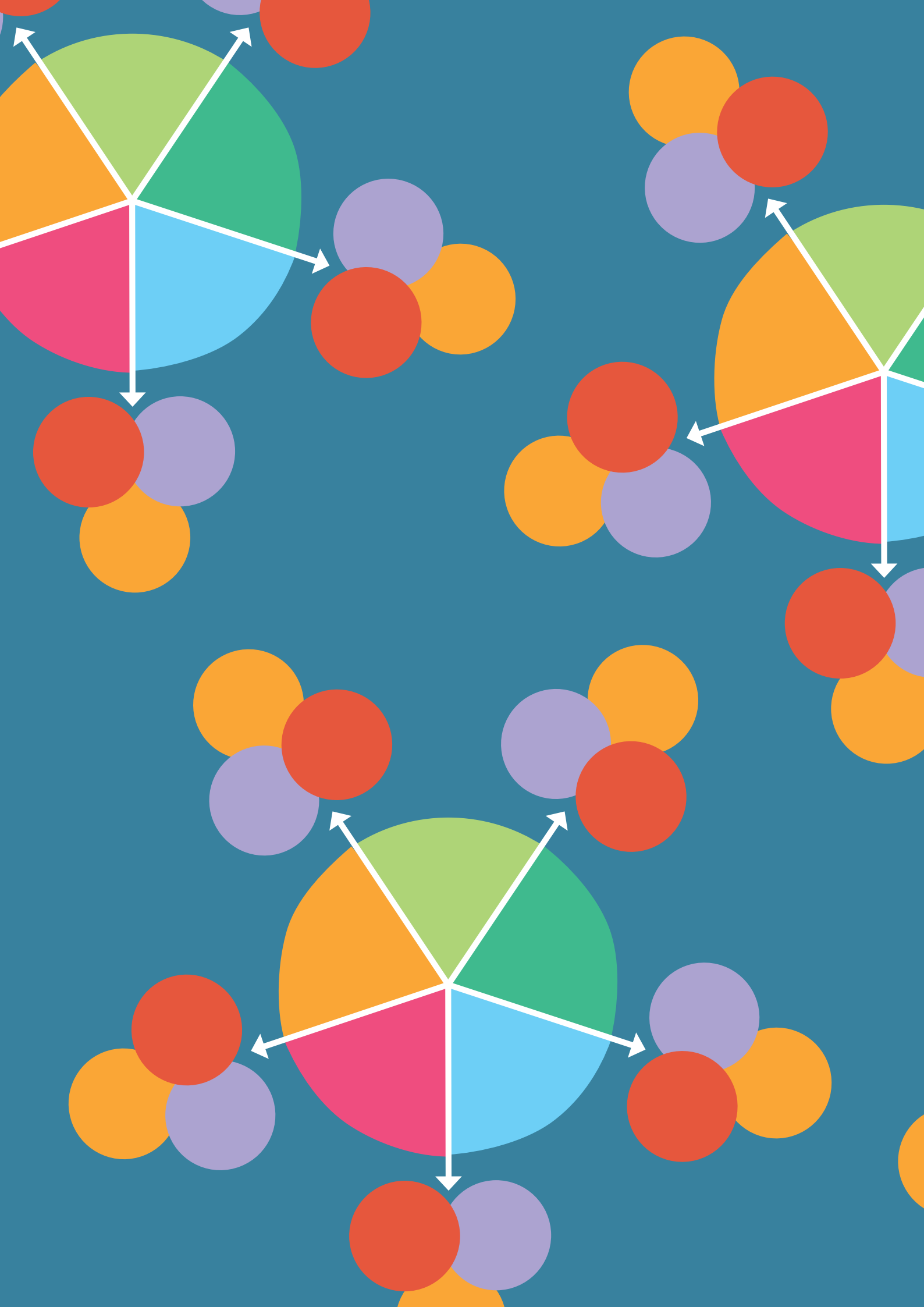
Integration – Supporting The Learning Process In Management Education

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Contents

Abstract

The challenge for business schools is to continue to present the practical, applied, best practice business knowledge that they are known for, but using an approach that sets learners up to make connections between their learning and their personal, team, organisational and socio-economic worlds. Therefore, the aim of this white paper is to discuss global and South African trends in education, principles of adult learning, and how integration supports the classroom learning process at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). The writers draw upon literature, and client and delegate feedback from GIBS' programmes.

Integration at GIBS falls within the centre for Personal and Applied Learning, and is designed and delivered across three different principles, which are explained in more detail below. For integration to be measurable, resultant programme learning needs to be embedded in the workplace through new behaviours, habits, skills and/or direct workplace application. This supports the Personal and Applied Learning centre's overarching mission to make all learning at GIBS personally meaningful to the learner, tangible and impactful in his/her unique environment.

Delegates experience the value of the integration process as helping them connect the themes of the programme overall, supporting their understanding of the world as an interrelated set of systems, and encouraging a flexible mindset regarding generative problem-solving, and critical and creative thinking. The intended outcome is for delegates to reflect deeply on their adaptive management and leadership practices.

The anticipated value-add of this paper is to:

Provide robust documentation of the value of the integration function in programmes;

Create awareness about integrative functions in learning (as a distinction from pure content or teaching) in the management education field; and

Demonstrate one business school's innovative approach to the process of management learning.

1. Introduction

Friedman (2006) spoke of a 'flattened' world; the World Economic Forum (2016) discussed the Fourth Industrial Revolution; and Sunter (2015) warned about total change in the nature of work. As a result, leaders are required to be that much more agile in understanding and managing the challenges and opportunities presented by the dynamic environment in which they operate. This is compounded by the speed at which these challenges arise, resulting in situations where leaders have limited response time to complex decisions. Therefore, it is critical that executive leaders are able to rapidly harness collective knowledge to facilitate adaptive change (Wuestewald, 2016).

The connection between individual and organisational learning has been recognised as significantly influencing strategic success in the knowledge economy and executive development programmes have been identified as efficient platforms for conveying vital functional and social-behaviour skills to organisational leaders (Wuestewald, 2016). Building on this, the World Economic Forum (2016) advised that businesses will need to profoundly change their approach to education, skills and employment; talent development needs to be central to organisations' growth strategies.

In response to the evolution of higher education, supported by the trends in business management and building on the principles of adult learning, GIBS reconsidered how it could embed the knowledge gained in its executive programmes and enable effective application in the workplace. Furthermore, an understanding of the strategic impact that executive development programmes hold at individual and organisational levels resulted in the introduction of a process termed 'integration' to support classroom delivery.

Keywords

Integrator · Reflection · Thinking · Process · Adult learning · Questioning · Knowledge · Principles

To better understand the value and role of integration used in GIBS programmes, this white paper:

Provides an overview of the current trends in business management, pedagogy and higher education, followed by a brief outline of the principles and modern techniques of adult learning underlying the purpose of integration;

Introduces the approach that GIBS uses to understand and deliver on clients' needs, further demonstrating how this approach links back to adult learning principles;

Offers the GIBS definition of integration, discussing how, when and where learning integration occurs;
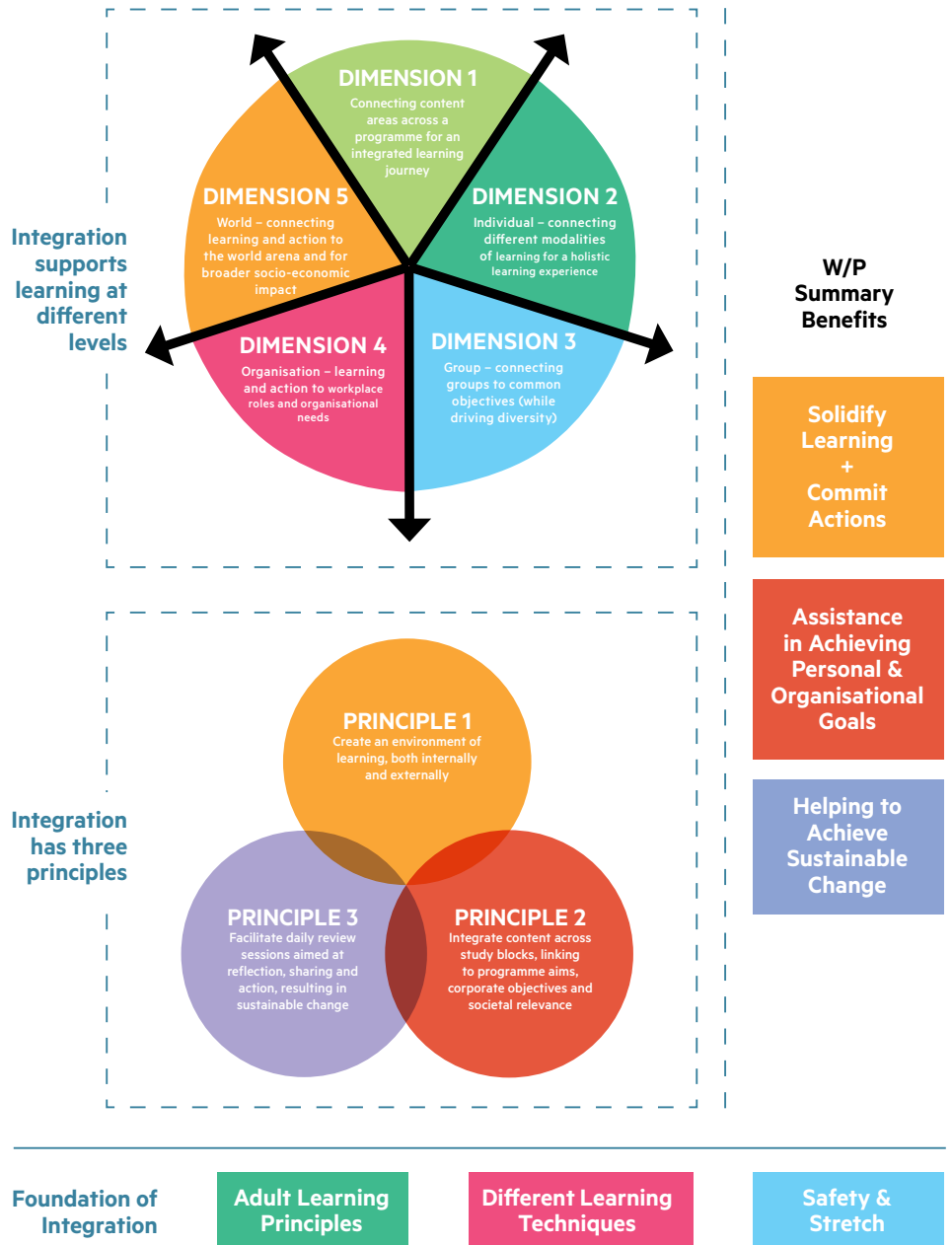
Presents the three principles that are central to the GIBS overall learning objectives and shares the tools applied by GIBS integrators;

Examines the components within the integration process, offering recommendations that GIBS believes are critical to the success thereof;

Shares a selection of testimonials from GIBS clients who have experienced the integration process, especially relating to the current business demands outlined above (namely, an emphasis on impact);

Discusses how GIBS integrators encourage practical workplace application beyond the classroom; and

Restates the purpose behind integration.

Integration supports learning at different levels

DIMENSION 1
Connecting content areas across a programme for an integrated learning journey

DIMENSION 5
World – connecting learning and action to the world arena and for broader socio-economic impact

DIMENSION 2
Individual – connecting different modalities of learning for a holistic learning experience

DIMENSION 4
Organisation – learning and action to workplace roles and organisational needs

DIMENSION 3
Group – connecting groups to common objectives (while driving diversity)

Integration has three principles

PRINCIPLE 1
Create an environment of learning, both internally and externally

PRINCIPLE 3
Facilitate daily review sessions aimed at reflection, sharing and action, resulting in sustainable change

PRINCIPLE 2
Integrate content across study blocks, linking to programme aims, corporate objectives and societal relevance

W/P Summary Benefits

Solidify Learning + Commit Actions

Assistance in Achieving Personal & Organisational Goals

Helping to Achieve Sustainable Change

Foundation of Integration

Adult Learning Principles

Different Learning Techniques

Safety & Stretch

The potential problem facing all business schools as a result of the changing nature of work was that a need had evolved to educate leaders and managers in new ways. In response to this challenge – and supported by knowledge of trends in business management, higher education, pedagogy and adult learning principles – GIBS recognised that a change to the design and delivery of leadership development programmes was required. Therefore, GIBS recommends that integration be considered a key process in programme design to ensure that transformative learning is experienced in the classroom and back at the workplace.

2. The Practice Of Business

2.1 Trends impacting business management

Several important business trends of the young 21st century were identified by the dean of Harvard Business School, Nitin Nohria, and several other faculty members, who agree that the world is entering a time of limitless possibilities when it comes to the role of business (Silverthorne, 2011). However, potential serious societal challenges could limit the extent to which opportunities can be realised – the ability to apply management principles to address complex social problems will become critical; and the changes resulting from the profound impact of information technology have altered human societies, resulting in an increased possibility of unpredictable and unprecedented change.

Consequently, it has become essential for leaders to understand human psychology so as to apply appropriate methods and theories that would improve the practice of business and the welfare of society. Individuals in the global business ecosystem need to be aware of the whole and not solely the immediate and local system, and being able to identify and embrace the tools that help individuals navigate through complex ethical choices will become more important. Leadership needs to be developed to be able to work in diverse markets with more demanding stakeholders and leaders must be able to shape the context in which followers are able to innovate. Finally, corporate social responsibility will remain critical to ensure that companies conduct business ethically.

2.2 Management education

Sunter (2014) asserted that education is out of sync with the job market and changing nature of work. Pfeffer and Fong (2002) acknowledged that to remain relevant, management education has to be better aligned with the experience of managing, placing a particular focus on how to inform and support business action. Mårtensson, Bild and Nilsson (2016) presented three additional challenges confronting management learning: globalisation, pedagogical practice and the complexity of the learning process (both formal and informal).

These trends and challenges directly influence the development of business schools as they need to become better equipped to deliver learning opportunities that promote agility and enable action.

Trends in Management Education

- Sense making
- Critical thinking
- Lifelong and continued learning
- Blended learning approach
- Individualised learning

Trends in the Business Management Landscape

- Fourth industrial revolution
- Complex problem solving
- Difficult ethical choices
- Diverse markets
- Human psychology

3. Developments In Learning

3.1 Trends in management and business education

At the end of the 20th century, several forces were globalising the world, affecting economics, politics, geopolitics, environment and culture (Friedman, 2006). The world was becoming increasingly complex and a need for different thinking emerged. Furthermore, the volatile and uncertain environment, resulting from the highly competitive and rapidly changing world markets, necessitated a different learning context (Wilson & Lawson-Smith, 2016). 'In such a confusing world, leadership has to begin with thinking – making sense of what's going on' (Bolman & Deal, 2015, p. 35). A deeper level of critical thinking is required currently as individuals and institutions continually seek to make sense and create meaning (Bolman & Deal, 2015).

The subsequent evolving and complex macro environment and the necessity for different thinking gave rise to higher education bodies having to rethink content and delivery. In response to the growing emphasis on accessible, life-long learning, massive open online courses (MOOCs) emerged as a vehicle to meet an increased demand for new learning experiences. MOOCs provided an opportunity for people to learn in different connected ways. Traditional universities and business schools had to adjust their own thinking in response to the changing competitive landscape and the shifting global environment so as to remain relevant.

Findings from a HoF Wittenberg (2006) study suggested several possible likely resultant medium- and long-term changes in higher education. A few include: life-long learning and continuous education would become key; globalisation would act as a framework and a catalyst for intercontinental integration; the ability to critically question and not blindly follow developments would become essential; democratisation and gender mainstreaming would result in higher social participation of still-disadvantaged groups; and, as a result of growing competition and fast-paced technological advances, people would change jobs more frequently and work could become more individual and flexible.

Considering the above dynamic environmental context, programmes focusing on building management and leadership capability must be customised to meet the needs of the audience and should be delivered in a way that results in a transformative learning experience. Therefore, deeper thinking needs to be provoked, the learning must be embedded, and sustainable change should be enabled to keep up with the pace of change.

3.2 Trends in pedagogy

Pedagogy – that is, the method and practice of teaching – is an important consideration to ensure alignment between the channel of instruction and students' learning objectives. Every year, new pedagogical trends emerge, which inform how instructors are required to adapt their content and teaching methods. Trends in the early 1980s incorporated some of the following themes: curricula were becoming more advanced; students were more motivated about how they communicated, both orally and written; peer and instructor feedback was practiced; there was increased emphasis on problem-solving and not merely skills enhancement; and focus was placed on managerial situations in the workplace, supported by on the job simulations (Munter, 1983)

Fast forward 30+ years and pedagogical trends remain focussed on interactive and interpersonal teaching and learning methods, such as learning through social media and video games, teach-back, crowd learning, design thinking, immersive learning, big data and analytics (Sharples et al., 2016). However, while the trends remained focussed on similar methods, this was occurring in more complex work environments, with both work and life facing an unpredictable future. For learners to be future-ready, they need to be equipped with the skills and means to sense-make, unlearn and relearn; to be provided with the opportunities to practice the 21st-century skills of collaboration, critical thinking, creativity and innovation (Sharples et al., 2016); and to have the platform to exercise not only IQ, but also higher level emotional, cultural and social intelligences. This must be done with curricula designed to incorporate digital disruption, experiential learning, and content which is shaped to fulfill individual needs.

Trends in Pedagogy

Problem solving and on the job learning

Interactive and interpersonal learning

Ability to learn and unlearn

Incorporation of Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Social Intelligence (SQ)

Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

3.3 Principles of adult learning

The term andragogy, which Knowles adapted to associate with adult learning theory (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2012), is defined as the art and science of adult learning (Knowles, 1984). Knowles (1984) believed adult learners had five characteristics: self-concept, prior experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and a motivation to learn. These later evolved into six core principles and included the learner's need to know. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that there are many other factors which influence adult learning in any situation; for instance, individual learner and situational differences, and goals and purposes for learning (Knowles et al, 2012).

Adding to Knowles's theory, Wuestewald (2016) explained that instruction based on adult learning respects the life experiences and knowledge that adult learners contribute to the learning environment. This is further underpinned by an acknowledgement of their internal and goal motivation, self-directedness, and preference for relevant and practical learning outcomes.

While cognitive and case-based teaching methodologies are effective, there has been a shift towards adult-oriented, humanist and experiential learning approaches. This supports Knowles's characteristics in that the experiential nature of learning meets a humanistic need for self-discovery and self-actualisation. Knowles noted that adults are high-task and goal-oriented, have internal and external learning motivations, and want to transfer knowledge gained in a learning environment to the work context. Thus, the emphasis appears to shift from content to process, where procedures and resources are provided which assist learners gain information and skills (Wuestewald, 2016).

Additionally, the challenges resulting from a global economy (Friedman's 'flattened' world) have further influenced the need for adult learning strategies. Reflective learning practices, executive coaching and softer human resource skills that are based on teamwork and adaptive leadership have become more prominent features in the classroom (Wuestewald, 2016).

A vast number of differing learning theories exist. Two that further support adult learning are transformative and experiential learning, which encourage the use of reflection, hold a philosophy of meaning making, and include the emotive aspects of human beings and their learning. The theory of transformative learning – first proposed by Mezirow in 1990 – is important for adult learning as it encourages shifts in thinking, resulting in far-reaching change and paradigm shifts, affecting the learner's subsequent experiences (Clark as cited in Cox, 2015). Experiential learning is believed to be a 'holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition and behavior' (Kolb, 1984, p. 21). Kolb (1984) asserted that knowledge is a transformation process that is constantly created and recreated.

'The learner is perceived to be a mature, motivated, voluntary, and equal participant in a learning relationship with a facilitator whose role is to aid the learner in the achievement of his or her primarily self-determined learning objectives' (Rachal, 2002, p. 219). Building on the above context, and knowing that adults learn in different ways and through varying learning styles, GIBS uses numerous learning methodologies – such as case studies, action learning, individual business improvement projects, strategic improvement projects, classroom discussion, facilitated debates, experiential opportunities, time in an innovation lab, facilitated reflection exercises, personal development coaching, group coaching and a learning integration function – to ensure the learning impact is sustainable on personal and professional levels for the individual and beyond into his/her system.

> **'Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.'**
> **– Chinese Confucian philosopher Xunzi**

GIBS affirms that the approaches that are probably best suited to the processes of personal meaning making, sense making, interpersonal and social learning, abilities to self-discover, synthesise and actualise learning in context are Action Learning, coaching, reflection and learning integration.

4. Leadership Development In Business Schools

4.1 Preparing leaders for business

The learning space of leadership development must be innovative, future focussed and informed by best practice. Effective leadership is linked to organisational innovation, responsiveness to change, creativity and sustained high performance, which contribute towards organisational performance and growth (Amagoh, 2009). Therefore, it is understandable that effective leadership is crucial for competitive advantage (Day, 2001). Reid (2012) stated that leadership effectiveness can be regarded as the degree to which there is success in influencing people to strive willingly for group goals. As a result, organisations need to focus on how to develop successful leadership (Reid, 2012).

Processes designed to develop leadership effectiveness should improve both intrapersonal skills and real-time follower-leader dynamics, particularly in the context of building human and social capital (Day, 2001; Pearce, 2007). Furthermore, Ibarra (2004) focussed specifically on a leader's identity and established that experiences that facilitate identity transitions (changing roles) contribute noticeably to leadership development. Day (2001) emphasised that, as leadership is defined as influencing others towards group goals, there has to be an interpersonal and organisational context to the application for it to be regarded as effective. Considering the above, it becomes apparent that a fundamental component of effective leadership development programmes is how they enable participants to reflect on what they have learnt and then to transfer that learning to others and integrate it into work contexts (Amagoh, 2009). Leadership development within the business school environment is designed in such a way that there is an underlying assumption that the learning and leadership effectiveness would extend to the organisational context, as business schools develop leadership effectiveness in business people for application in the workplace to achieve organisational results (Reid, 2012).

Trends in Leadership

Focus on intrapersonal as well as cognitive skills

Experiences that facilitate identity transitions

Influencing others towards group goals

5. Executive Education and GIBS

GIBS was set up in 2000 by Professor Nick Binedell, the founding dean. The aim from its inception was 'to improve responsible individual and organisational performance, primarily in the South African environment and increasingly in our broader African environment, through the provision of high quality business and management education' (GIBS, 2016). As such, the school has specific sections that make up its teaching components – accredited academic programmes ranging from the Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration (PDBA) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) to Doctor of Business Administration (DBA); and open and executive programmes designed to meet the needs of business and management within the African region.

Executive programmes have been a core part of GIBS' offering since its inception. Clients have represented the majority of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange listings plus government and industry bodies, with c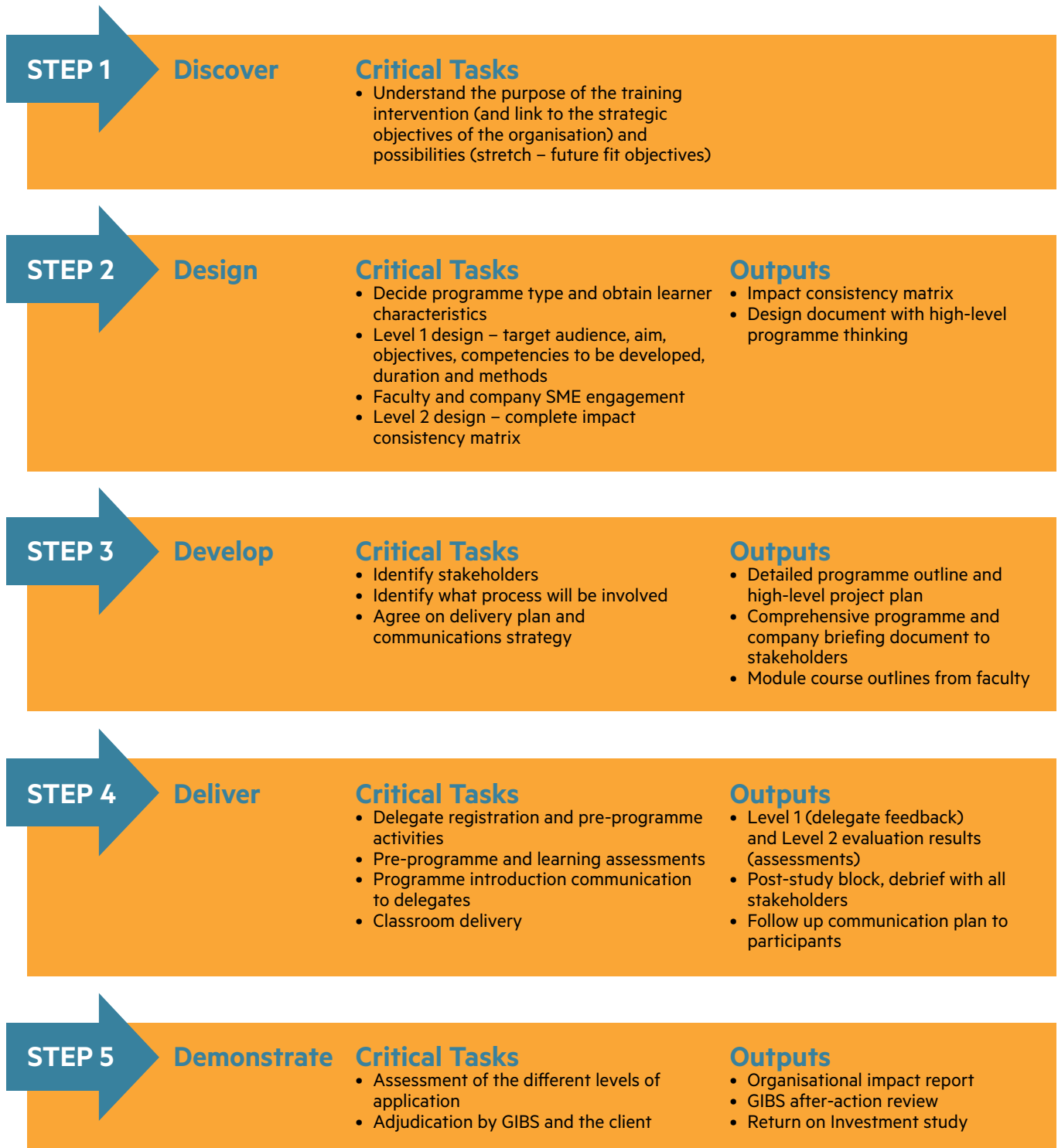ontent delivered throughout South Africa (the majority of classes taking place at GIBS' Illovo campus) to other African countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania; and countries in Asia (China and India); Europe (Germany and the UK), and North America (in states like Florida and New York). Since 2003, GIBS has ranked among the Financial Times top 50 business schools for Executive Education open and custom programmes; and in June 2019, the UK Financial Times ranked GIBS again as the top provider of executive education, not only in South Africa but also across the African continent.

GIBS has a distinct approach to understanding and delivering clients' needs, called the 5D approach[1]. This model is intended to provide an integrated and holistic experience for the delegates, which is linked to the overall programme intention and client needs and expected outputs. It builds upon research that speaks to the power of linking academic classroom material to real-life activities (Tusting & Barton, 2003).

[1]The 5D approach was developed by the GIBS Custom Programme team and has been revised and refined since 2010.

6. The GIBS 5D Approach

In collaboration with the GIBS executive programme team and the client (composed typically of the assigned executives and learning and development team), the 5D approach entails:

STEP 1 — Discover

Critical Tasks
- Understand the purpose of the training intervention (and link to the strategic objectives of the organisation) and possibilities (stretch – future fit objectives)

STEP 2 — Design

Critical Tasks
- Decide programme type and obtain learner characteristics
- Level 1 design – target audience, aim, objectives, competencies to be developed, duration and methods
- Faculty and company SME engagement
- Level 2 design – complete impact consistency matrix

Outputs
- Impact consistency matrix
- Design document with high-level programme thinking

STEP 3 — Develop

Critical Tasks
- Identify stakeholders
- Identify what process will be involved
- Agree on delivery plan and communications strategy

Outputs
- Detailed programme outline and high-level project plan
- Comprehensive programme and company briefing document to stakeholders
- Module course outlines from faculty

STEP 4 — Deliver

Critical Tasks
- Delegate registration and pre-programme activities
- Pre-programme and learning assessments
- Programme introduction communication to delegates
- Classroom delivery

Outputs
- Level 1 (delegate feedback) and Level 2 evaluation results (assessments)
- Post-study block, debrief with all stakeholders
- Follow up communication plan to participants

STEP 5 — Demonstrate

Critical Tasks
- Assessment of the different levels of application
- Adjudication by GIBS and the client

Outputs
- Organisational impact report
- GIBS after-action review
- Return on Investment study

6.1 5D process link to adult learning principles

Research on adult learning principles has evolved in the last 30 years. Regarding the GIBS philosophy on executive education, there is a defined process in the 5D model for understanding and delivering on client programme needs. Several aspects are considered around steps one to four of the 5D approach, which include:

6.1.1 Alignment between classroom content and delegate level

Step 1, the Discover phase, ensures that there is alignment in the delegate level with previous experience in terms of work experience, general skills and educational level, and classroom content. This alignment is based on some of the principles of adult learning, including that students can learn ideas through referencing and building upon information that they know – and that they should transfer information from working memory to long-term memory (Deans for Impact, 2015). Hence, learning is enhanced for adults in particular when the students have the sufficient base level of skills to absorb and apply the information covered.

6.1.2 Different learning techniques

This alignment speaks to the importance of a well-sequenced curriculum that is grouped thematically. For students who have been out of the classroom environment for a period of time, there is also a concept of being 'learning ready' – that is, having the focus and attention to absorb a day's lecture without getting too tired. This is where it is important for lecturers (in step 4, the Deliver phase) to use different learning techniques such as multiple modalities (from verbal reasoning and short quizzes, to the effective use of visuals like drawing a picture or showing an animation) to 'scaffolding' information (for instance, a step-by-step example of how to work through a problem to keep students focussed).

Not all adult learning occurs in the classroom. GIBS offers varying types of learning experiences outside the classroom – from action learning to simulations and intense local and international immersions. For example, on the MBA orientation, students are grouped into their syndicates (typically groups of seven to nine people who work together on group assignments for a period of time) and are tasked with finishing an 'amazing race', which normally comprises a series of fast-paced challenges through different locations in Johannesburg. The intention is for syndicates to experience how they sequence their thinking as a group and leverage strengths for future group work.

On executive or corporate programmes, often an immersion experience is built into the learning content, lasting from a day in Johannesburg to several weeks abroad. Both constructs are built upon the Kolb (1984) model of learning through doing and then reflecting, as all these experiences are debriefed in the classroom. In the Level 1 feedback forms (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006) students often mention these opportunities as a useful way of learning while having an enjoyable experience.

6.1.3 Applying learning back to organisational context

In the initial interaction with the client, there is often an important discussion around what the delegates will learn, and how they will behave differently back in the work environment – as well as the value back to the organisation. That value is measured in a variety of ways, such as self-assessments, managerial feedback, tangible outputs from a personal development plan and a specific business improvement project. GIBS faculty members help to facilitate reflection, learning and specific action steps to deliver the value expected.

7. The Centre For Personal And Applied Learning

Coaching @ GIBS

Individual Coaching
Coaching is proven to leverage leadership capability and optimize.

Action Learning Coaching
Action learning is the practical application of learning - usually undertaken in groups - to achieve a favourable outcome on an identified business challenge. An expert coach will guide problem solving reflections and the identification and application of solutions that align to the strategic intent of an organisation.

Group/team Coaching
Group coaching is scalable, cost effective and enhances social learning and leadership through real-time interaction & peer feedback.

Facilitation @ GIBS

Process Facilitation
Facilitation is the process of harvesting and activating the wisdom, energy and skills in an individual or group. It's one of the key processes in business and leadership development for generative & sustainable results. E.g.'s range from problem resolution, to team performance to strategy development.

Learning Integration
Learning integration is a facilitated process of making connections between aspects of learning for greater meaning and application. During a programme this is facilitated by a 'learning integrator'.

As the debate in the business school community around relevance continues to grow in intensity and creativity, it is tempting to speculate that innovative, effective learning may lead to a new category of business school faculty whose expertise lies in the learning process and context-specific application. These experts could be called facilitators or coaches and would work alongside the traditional faculty whose expertise lies in content and abstraction.

GIBS recognised the need to focus on individual sense-making, learning process, learning reinforcement and impactful embed of learning in workplace performance. This led to the creation of a business unit called Personal and Applied Learning, and the formalisation of a faculty group named Professional Associates.

These experts have a range of learning-oriented capabilities, including what GIBS refers to as 'learning integration'.

Alison Reid is the Director at The Gordon Institute of Business Science with the portfolio of Personal and Applied Learning. Reid (2017) said of the Professional Associates body: 'Since PAL [Personal and Applied Learning] was formed in 2013, we have actively worked to create and develop a core group of individuals who are part of our faculty and known as professional associates. They bring tremendous value to GIBS – from their business experience, learning expertise, high standards of delivery, to their process specialism. The GIBS Professional Associates are some of the most sought after as learning experts such as coaches and integrators on programmes.'

8. Learning Integration

8.1 What is learning integration?

In response to the changing trends in higher education and pedagogy, and building on the principles of adult learning, GIBS re-engineered the process by which it attempted to consolidate and embed the learning gained in its executive programmes. This was done by introducing a new role, referred to as 'the integrator', an individual who designs and facilitates the process of integration. The integration process has been adopted by GIBS as pedagogy in executive programmes.

8.1.1 Integration defined

While there is no peer-reviewed academic definition of integration, Cunningham (1993, p. 5) stated that education is not simply about attaining knowledge but defined critical pedagogy as "the educational action which develops the ability of a group to critically reflect on their environment and to develop strategies to bring about (democratic social) change in that environment." In this context, the education action that GIBS applies is the process of integration.

GIBS defines integration as a practice that supports the adult learning process by creating a safe environment for the delegates to share, reflect, critically question and challenge assumptions and mindsets. It also provides a platform for encouraging shifts in thinking, learning and behaviours. Through this process, the delegates are empowered to solidify their learning and commit to actions that assist them in achieving their personal and organisational goals.

8.1.2 GIBS model of integration

The GIBS model of integration© supports the creation of connections across five different and interconnected dimensions of learning and change. Dimension 1 is the overall programme construct and delivery. Dimension 2 concerns the individual and how he/she learns, internalises information, interacts with others, and contributes to the group. Dimension 3 is centred around how the group in the classroom interacts and works together to achieve the aims of the programme – from an individual, group and organisational or sector perspective. Dimension 4 is about linking the aims of the programme, the learning objectives for the individuals and group overall to the needs of the organisation or the sector. Lastly, Dimension 5 helps to create the connections between the four different areas to regional and global trends and best practices. The figure below depicts these dimensions.
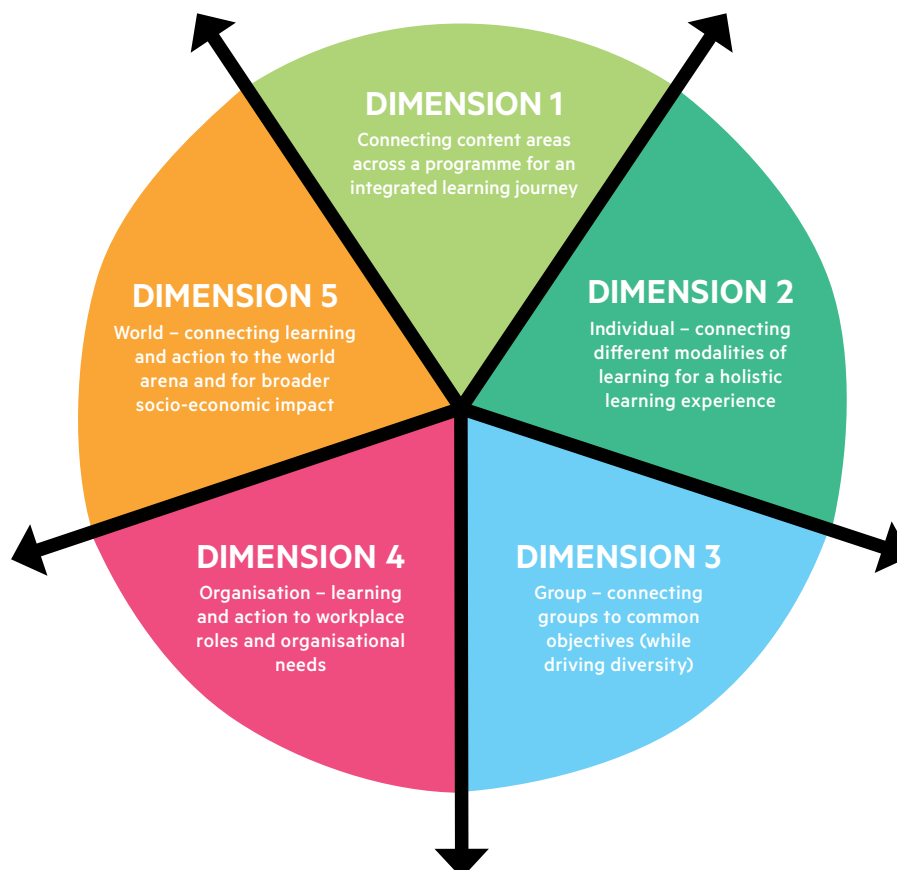

DIMENSION 1
Connecting content areas across a programme for an integrated learning journey

DIMENSION 2
Individual – connecting different modalities of learning for a holistic learning experience

DIMENSION 3
Group – connecting groups to common objectives (while driving diversity)

DIMENSION 4
Organisation – learning and action to workplace roles and organisational needs

DIMENSION 5
World – connecting learning and action to the world arena and for broader socio-economic impact

Figure 1: The GIBS model of integration©

8.2 How, when and where does learning integration occur?

8.2.1 Three core principles to integration

The integrator is often considered the 'golden thread' of the programme as he/she is responsible for three principles that are central to the overall learning objectives.
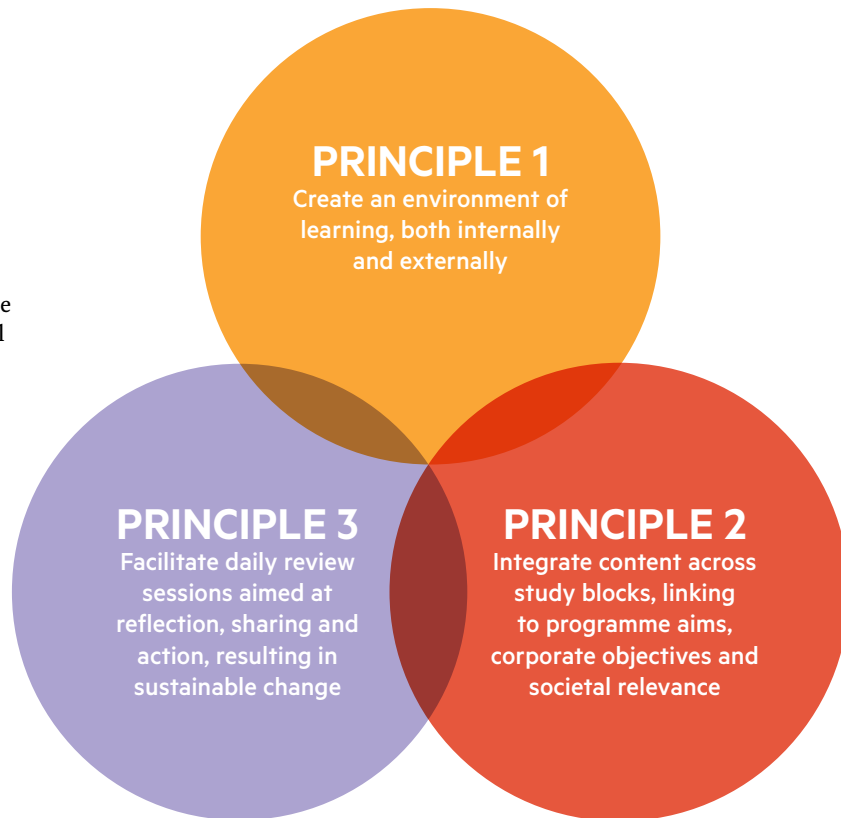

PRINCIPLE 1
Create an environment of learning, both internally and externally

PRINCIPLE 3
Facilitate daily review sessions aimed at reflection, sharing and action, resulting in sustainable change

PRINCIPLE 2
Integrate content across study blocks, linking to programme aims, corporate objectives and societal relevance

Figure 2: The GIBS three principles of integration©

Principle 1
Create an environment of learning internally and externally for the delegates

GIBS believes that for learning to occur, there needs to be a belief in one's learning capability (along the lines of the growth mindset work from Stanford University's Carol Dweck) and a combination of 'safety and stretch' (Dweck, 2006). The integrator helps to create that combination through various different practices. For full-time integration, the integrator is with the delegates most of the time in the classroom and acts as a visual anchor for the delegates, plus is a central point of contact for classroom content and learning questions.

For this principle, the integrator will combine a range of processes, including:

- setting the context for the programme with the learning objectives and overall deliverables;
- discussing the learning process and enablers and disablers of learning;
- helping the delegates set personal and organisational goals;
- facilitating opportunities for the delegates to get to know each other; and
- discussing and positioning course content feedback.

This principle is linked closely to Taylor's (1986) learning cycle which speaks to four stages that delegates – especially for programmes that have a 'humanistic approach to teaching learning' (MacKeracher, 2004) – often go through when learning something new. Stage one of Taylor's cycle refers to 'Disorientation' – that is, delegates might be concerned about being in a new environment, they might be resistant to learning something new, or wary of using new technology presented at GIBS. It is the integrator's role to help normalise these concerns and aid the delegates in thinking through their own coping mechanisms.

Principle 2

Integrate content across study blocks, linking to programme aims, corporate objectives and societal relevance

Each executive programme is designed thematically and is linked to the first three steps of the 5D process. The integrator helps the delegates understand the overarching design, intended outputs and link to corporate needs by:

- Discussing overall programme architecture;
- Introducing faculty and their expertise;
- Sharing principles around note taking and consolidation practices;
- Encouraging delegates to think through thematic groupings and link to corporate challenges and opportunities; and
- Exploring how content can help develop themselves and others at different management levels.

This stage is linked to Taylor's (1986) second learning step which refers to 'Exploration' – that is, exploring and thinking through content linkages to corporate and societal concerns and opportunities.

Principle 3

Facilitate daily review sessions aimed at reflection, sharing and action, resulting in sustainable change

Transfer of learning happens when there is an 'implementation of knowledge, skill, attribute and other qualities acquired in the training programme into the workplace' (Gumuseli & Ergin, 2002, p. 81). Moreover, Cross (2006) established that frequent and open conversation in the learning process augments innovation and learning. Principle 3 ties together the other two principles and aims to help delegates translate learnings to add value to the organisation. For this, the integrator has specific allocated time in front of the class on a daily basis to:

- Encourage the delegates to reflect on what they have learnt on a variety of different systems thinking levels (self, industry, society, nation);
- Challenge the delegates to think and commit to what they can apply in their own lives (workplace, family and broader society); and
- Help create personal, class and organisational accountability for intended actions.

In these daily reviews, the integrator uses an array of techniques – such as self-reflection journals, and class and reflective smaller group discussions. Often, the delegates say that learning to reflect was one of the more valuable parts of a programme.

According to Tsang (2011, p. 1), whose study focussed on reflective group discussion as a critical reflective approach for evolving professionals

'Being a reflective practitioner is a highly desirable attribute for professionals because it signifies quality assurance through a sustained cyclical process of self-examination, self-evaluation, self-directed learning, enlightenment, self-optimization and transformation. To be relevant and applicable to the dynamic community and global economy we live in, [delegates] need to possess more than just knowledge and skills, they need to know how to learn, how to enable learning, to be self-aware and self-critique, to construct their own meanings and perspectives, as well as to consider contexts and experiences in light of learning (Masella, 2007; Dall'Alba, 2009; Tsang, 2009). Teaching to impart knowledge and skills is no longer adequate, rather it is the "teaching to enable learning" that must be emphasized'.

8.2.2 Mechanisms used by the integrator

The power of questions is a fundamental reflection technique used in the integration process. Albert Einstein is attributed to saying, 'If I had an hour to solve a problem … I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask …' (Gurteen, 2018). In much the same way, the integrator encourages the delegates to think through individual and organisational assumptions, subconscious biases and powerful questions that could be asked on an individual, team and organisational level. The integrator stimulates thinking and discussion by encouraging reflection and asking questions that are linked to the five dimensions of the integration model.

The best practice for the integrator is to immerse him/herself in the programme and client context, the flow and architecture of the programme, as well as to know the lecturers and designers, stakeholders and delegates. The most important thing, though, is for the integrator to really know his/her facilitation and adult learning resources, processes and application of skills to be able to plan a relevant experience, while also being unattached and present to what might emerge, thus being able to synchronise accordingly. In so doing, the integrator makes use of his/her full and continuously updated toolbox. Some examples of tools are listed below for illustrative purposes. However, it is not simply the tools that make the process, the selection of the best-fit integrator is as significant.

DIMENSION COVERED	QUESTIONS AND TOOLS THAT INTEGRATORS USE
DIMENSION 1: Connecting content across the programme for an integrated learning journey	**Questions:** How would you summarise the themes that have been discussed and analysed? **Tools:** Mutually Exclusive, Collective Exhaustive framework
DIMENSION 2: Individual insights – connecting different modalities of learning for a holistic learning experience	**Questions:** How have your learning preferences affected your overall experience? **Tools:** VARK
DIMENSION 3: Group – connecting groups to common objectives (while driving diversity)	**Questions:** What are the behaviours we should all display to enable a positive and collective learning experience? **Tools:** Community Contract
DIMENSION 4: Organisation – learning and action to workplace roles and organisational needs	**Questions:** What are you going to do differently as a result of your learning and insights? **Tools:** The 'What? So what? What now?' exercise
DIMENSION 5: Connecting learning and action to the world arena	**Questions:** How can you relate the content to societal or organisational challenges? **Tools:** My Learning – My Shift – My Pledge

Table 8.2.2: Integration questions and tools mapped against the GIBS Integration model

> **'That education is not an affair of 'telling' and being told, but an active and constructive process.'**
> **– Dewey (1916 p3)**

8.3 Who should the learning integrator be?

8.3.1 Choosing an integrator

Choosing the 'right' integrator for a programme is an important decision for the client and GIBS. Often the criteria used by GIBS includes:

- Combination of business and learning and development experience – it is important that the integrator is able to link content covered in class to global and industry trends.

- Understanding of learning processes – as part of the construct to the integration process, the integrator needs to plan and deliver a learning process that speaks to the aims of the programme and delegate level.

- Solid facilitation skills – linked to the point above, the integrator needs to be comfortable facilitating a group and individual audience, and to use different processes that keep the integration interesting and different every day.

- Honours or master's level of education – an honours level is typically the base line level of education that GIBS expects of its facilitators.

- Curiosity about delegates and high EQ – GIBS looks for integrators who enjoy interacting with others and who are curious about the clients' and delegates' aspirations and needs.

8.4 Why learning integration?

8.4.1 Value of integration

The value of integration is experienced from various different stakeholders – primarily by the delegates, the client contact, and the organisation or sector represented at large. The integrator also helps support the faculty who are lecturing or teaching as they are able to share themes of class discussion and particular interests of the delegates or trends that were discussed. Lastly, as the integrator is involved with the overall programme, he/she can provide feedback to the faculty or programme management on suggested improvements.

The value of integration is illustrated below through a selection of quotes provided by delegates through the GIBS formal feedback process:

- 'The integrator really helped to make the connections and strengthen the learning process' – delegate from the SABMiller Executive Leadership Programme.

- 'The integration in the morning was one of my favourite parts of the day. The integrator helped me make deep connections, linking the course content and encouraging me to think more' – delegate from the BP Emerging Leadership Programme.

- 'The integrator was instrumental in connecting the dots, and made the individual parts a cohesive learning experience' – delegate from the Nestlé Leadership Development Programme.

8.4.2 Workplace application

GIBS encourages the practical application of learnings in the classroom through a variety of application methods. Feedback from delegates and clients has confirmed that the integration process enhances the retention of learning. This enhancement is further supported by organisational support of the delegates when they are back in the workplace. Often, learning application at work is embedded more powerfully when there is a workplace accountability partner for the delegate. This partner could be a mentor, manager, supervisor or colleague. GIBS' integrators encourage honest and thought-provoking conversations between the delegates and their stakeholders to help them accomplish their aims. This accountability relationship and action-orientation link back to Taylor's third and fourth stages of learning, that of reorientation and equilibrium. Furthermore, it supports Knowles's theory that adults want to transfer knowledge, gained in a learning environment, to the work context. In so doing, adults realise a positive benefit from the application of those particular skills and competencies, as has been noted by Amagoh (2009), Sharples et al. (2016), and Wuestewald (2016).
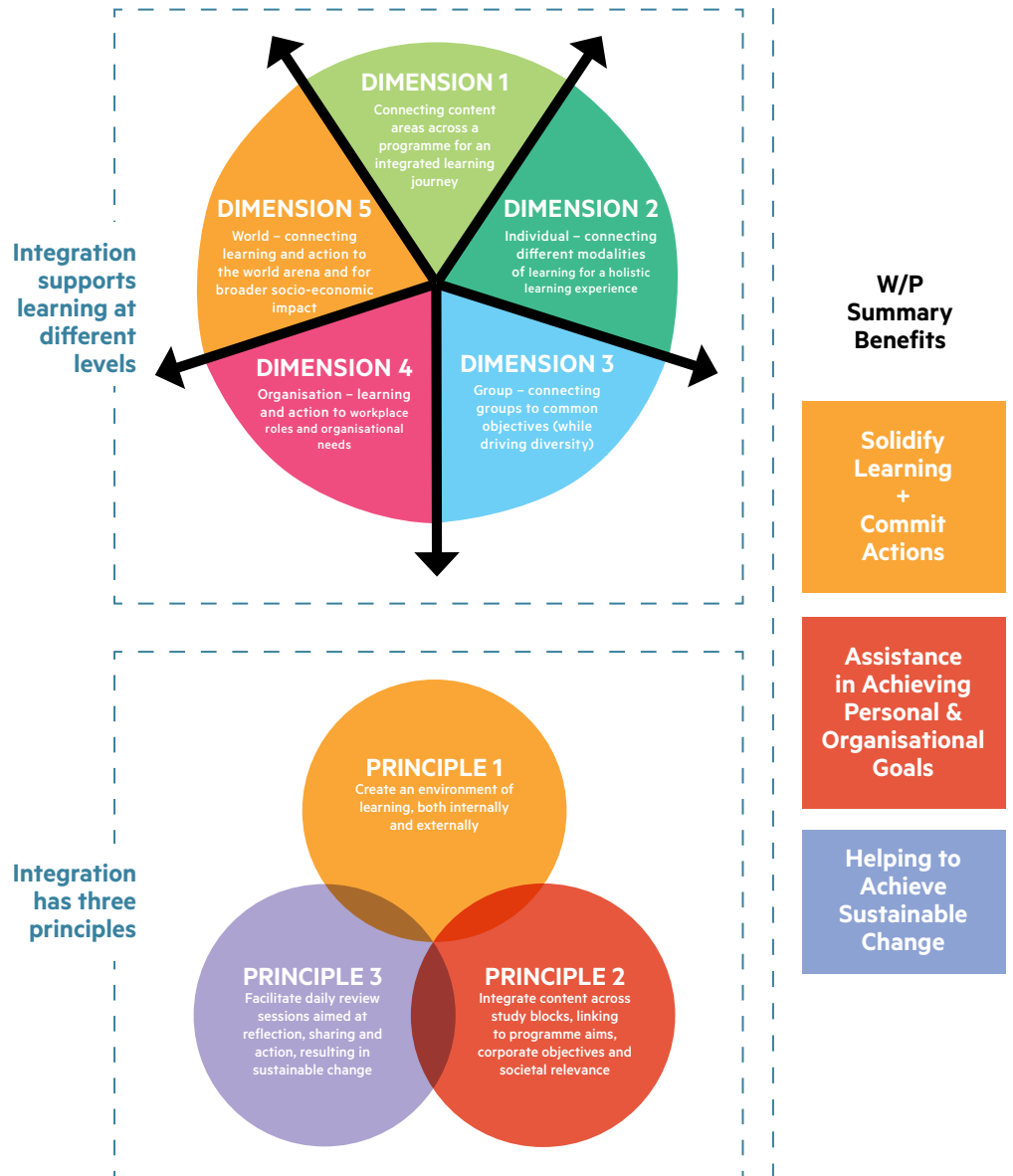
CONCLUSION

This is a time where the business landscape and future of jobs and skills are changing (World Economic Forum, 2016) and resultantly, there is a need to educate business leaders and managers in new ways. Hence, business schools are being tasked with addressing this challenge by being innovative across numerous dimensions, especially those regarding core learning practices. Supported by the trends in business management, higher education, pedagogy and leadership development, GIBS realised the opportunity to develop how leadership development programmes are delivered. GIBS challenged the use of purely traditional delivery methods and, through integration, provided the chance to utilise more interactive, interpersonal and transformative teaching and learning methods.

As a result of constantly refreshing the principles, tools and techniques used in the integration process and from experiences gained in the application of integration over several years with a broad client base, GIBS has found that integration adds a richness to the learning conversations and levels of critical thinking in the classroom. The bespoke integration role helps to provide the delegates with a more enhanced reflection and action toolkit, and to create a more cohesive delegate group. Therefore, GIBS recommends that integration is considered as a core element in client consultations and programme design and delivery.

Integration supports learning at different levels

DIMENSION 1
Connecting content areas across a programme for an integrated learning journey

DIMENSION 5
World – connecting learning and action to the world arena and for broader socio-economic impact

DIMENSION 2
Individual – connecting different modalities of learning for a holistic learning experience

DIMENSION 4
Organisation – learning and action to workplace roles and organisational needs

DIMENSION 3
Group – connecting groups to common objectives (while driving diversity)

Integration has three principles

PRINCIPLE 1
Create an environment of learning, both internally and externally

PRINCIPLE 3
Facilitate daily review sessions aimed at reflection, sharing and action, resulting in sustainable change

PRINCIPLE 2
Integrate content across study blocks, linking to programme aims, corporate objectives and societal relevance

W/P Summary Benefits

Solidify Learning + Commit Actions

Assistance in Achieving Personal & Organisational Goals

Helping to Achieve Sustainable Change

Foundation of Integration

Adult Learning Principles

Different Learning Techniques

Safety & Stretch

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