

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP PROPOSAL – HR DIVISION**

### **The Sustainable Teaching of Human Resource Management in Multinational Enterprises: An Incrementalist, Multiple Constituency, Competence-based Approach.**

#### **WORKSHOP ORGANIZERS\***

Peter J. Dowling, School of Marketing and International Business, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. (email: [peter.dowling@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:peter.dowling@vuw.ac.nz))

Noelle Donnelly, Victoria Management School, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. (email: [noelle.donnelly@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:noelle.donnelly@vuw.ac.nz))

\*Principal contacts for this PDW

#### **WORKSHOP FACILITATORS**

Allen D. Engle Sr., Eastern Kentucky University, USA

Peter J. Dowling, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Marion Festing, ESCP-EAP European School of Management, Germany

Noelle Donnelly, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Barry Gerhart, University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA.

#### **ABSTRACT**

This PDW will focus on the different and dominant approaches to the teaching of HRM issues within MNEs. Designed to facilitate greater debate on the diverse range of approaches to the teaching of this field, participants will be given the opportunity to discuss and debate the complex challenges inherent in this field. The focus will be on developing different approaches to teaching HRM in MNEs. In order to facilitate debate, a multi-faceted competency-based approach will be put forward for open group discussion. Apart from the networking of scholars currently teaching or seeking to teach HRM in MNEs, participants will also take away with them an understanding of different approaches to the teaching of this subject matter and knowledge of existing resources.

## **Teaching HRM in MNEs: A Problem Definition**

International human resource management (IHRM) has been characterized by “complexity” – a shorthand term to capture the greater number of activities, breadth of actions, depth of interaction between the employee and the multinational enterprise (MNE), a greater variety in the origin of employees (parent, host and third country nationals), the greater potential cost of failure in people process activities, and greater variations in regulatory and institutional environmental contexts – characterizing HRM in MNEs (Dowling, Festing & Engle, 2008: 5-8). As a relatively new and fast evolving subject area, the field of IHRM can be viewed from three broad perspectives: firstly, those who focus on cross-cultural management issues (Gooderham and Nordhaug, 2003; Warner and Joynt, 2002); secondly, those who adopt a comparative country-by-country or regional and geographical perspective (Budhwar, 2004); and finally, those who take a thematic approach in their focus of HRM issues within MNEs (Dowling, Festing & Engle, 2008; Edwards & Rees, 2006). It is this complexity and variation in approaches to this subject matter that makes teaching HRM in MNEs so challenging for academics.

This workshop will focus on the ‘mapping’ out of diverse approaches to the teaching of HRM in MNEs. This will involve the submission of a statement from participants about their personal approach to the teaching of this field or their individual perspective of the field prior to the workshop. At the workshop dominant perspectives will be identified and table discussions facilitated around the relevance of each perspective. In expanding the theoretical foundations of this field an innovative competence-based approach will be put forward for wider discussion and debate.

## **Towards Sustainability: Competence-based Approach**

A key objective of this workshop is to develop a strategy for dealing with this complex subject in a “sustainable” manner – that is in a form that 1) more specifically identifies the goals for the course, 2) incorporates an assessment of the resources available to the instructor, students and other constituencies associated with the school, and 3) focuses on identifying and developing a combination of cultural, functional and product competencies in the students. By doing so, instructors may therefore more efficiently use limited resources; assess more accurately the

development of student achievement; and ultimately more logically respond to the complexities inherent in this fascinating teaching area.

### Incrementalism and Needs Assessment

Learning theorists have long advocated the conduct of needs assessment to efficiently focus firm resources on training and development activities that provide a maximum impact in terms of organizational goals (Kirkpatrick & Hawk, 2006). As an approach it enables a more efficient application of organizational resources, where resources are applied only to those areas of personnel development that will provide the greatest benefit to the firm.

Applied to a higher educational context, the principle is to assess the students' present state of capabilities (or competencies) and then incrementally move them from where they are now to those capabilities associated with course or program priorities. This incrementalist approach is particularly critical for teaching HRM within MNEs given the complex and sometimes overwhelming nature of the subject matter.

### Constituencies and Resources

Critical to the sustainability and successful delivery of IHRM courses is the construction of an inventory of the constituencies involved in this course, and their various competencies and resources. In order to explore its application, a series of scenarios will be presented to forward a discussion of this element. Potential constituencies include the instructor, the students, other faculty in the institution, outside subject matter practitioners, or broader institutional and regional resources (e.g. international student associations, global trade organizations, government agencies, area chapters of the Society for Human Resource Management, etc.). Identifying and assessing the potential contributions or competencies that each of these potential constituencies can bring to the course will then be discussed.

### Cultural, Functional and Product Competencies

The third element of this approach will focus on conceptualizing competencies relevant to class activities. A broad, yet parsimonious set of competencies is called for. Participants will review Engle et al.'s (2001) model of cultural, functional and product competencies. Cultural

competencies are conceptualized in terms of breadth and depth. Cultural breadth is how many different types of cultures a constituent (student or instructor) has experienced, and cultural depth is the extent to which the constituent has a long term and sophisticated experience in other cultures. One would assume that undergraduate students in more parochial regions of the US are less likely to have meaningful experiences in a variety of different cultures than a group of European Executive MBA students. Assessing the cross-cultural experiences of all the constituency groups relevant to the course will then be discussed.

Functional competencies, as applied to the discussion, relate to how much experience the constituency groups – particularly the students – already have with the traditional, domestic HRM functions of HR planning, recruitment, selection, training, career development, compensation and benefit administration, employee and industrial relations. Again, assessment of the functional breadth and depth of competencies available in all the relevant constituency groups will be discussed.

Finally, product competencies have to do with the experience the various constituency groups have with institutions or industries. MBA students are often working professionals and can bring to course discussions a wealth of experiences in their industry, be it electronics, pharmaceuticals, engineering, automotive, mining, etc. These students may lack an academic vocabulary, but often have experienced a phenomenon (such as post-expatriate dissonance). In contrast, undergraduate students are more familiar with the vocabulary of the discipline and can draw upon a diverse range of inter-disciplinary thinking. The breadth and depth of these product competencies relate to both a general understanding of business processes, organizational and professional role expectations, as well as the more specific understanding of an industry or institution.

#### Towards a Five Stage Process Model

The discussion on this approach will conclude with a five stage model based on the previous discussions of incrementalism (needs assessment), constituency identification and cultural, functional and product competencies. The first stage is a competence-based assessment of the instructor, the students and the other relevant constituencies. The second stage is the

creation of sustainable, realistic course goals, conceptualized in terms of developing cultural, functional and product competencies in the students. As an interesting aside, what are the advantages and disadvantages of setting a balanced incremental growth in cultural, functional and product competencies (an equal or “balanced” approach) as opposed to setting cultural, functional and product competence goals of differing emphases as the result of needs assessment (a “compensatory” approach)?

The third stage is a discussion of teaching methods and tactics, the use of study abroad, educational media, the internet, research projects, international travel, multiple site student teams etc. in the light of the competence needs assessment and institutional resources. The fourth stage will focus on a discussion of course design issues based on participants’ personal experiences or thoughts on teaching this type of course. The fifth and final stage will be a general discussion of course evaluation in the context of this incremental, multiple constituency and competence driven approach.

## REFERENCES

- Budhwar, P. (ed.) (2004) *Managing Human Resources in Asia-Pacific*, London: Routledge.
- Dowling, P., Festing, M. and Engle, A. Sr. (2008) *International Human Resource Management. Managing People in a Multinational Context, 5th ed.* London: Thomson (Cengage) Publishing.
- Edwards, T. and Rees, C. (2006) *International Human Resource Management: Globalization, National Systems and Multinational Companies*, Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Engle, A. Sr., Mendenhall, M., Powers, R. and Stedham, Y. (2001). Conceptualizing the Global Competency Cube: A Transnational Model of Human Resource. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 25 (7), 346-353.
- Gooderham, P. and Nordhaug, O. (2003) *International Management: Cross-Boundary Challenges*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kirkpatrick, J. & Hawk, L. (2006) Curricula and Evaluation: Maximizing Results. *T+D*, 60 (4), 61-62.
- Warner, M. and Joynt, P. (eds) (2002) *Managing Across Cultures: Issues and Perspectives, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*, Thomson Learning.

## **WORKSHOP AIMS & FORMAT**

Given the complexity and increasing growth of this subject within Business School curriculums, a key objective of this workshop is to facilitate and identify different approaches to the teaching of HRM issues within MNEs. It is envisaged that by presenting a competence-based approach, structured discussions will take place around the academic philosophies that underpin this field. Concluding with discussions around a five stage competence-based model of HRM in MNEs, this workshop will provide participants with a set of skills or perspectives that can be applied to the teaching of this field. This workshop is intended for those participants who currently teach, or, plan to engage in the teaching of HRM in MNEs. The format of this session will consist of panel presentation, open group interactive discussions and scenario planning.

It is envisaged that the workshop will be a 2½ hour session and will be run as follows:

- Initial introductions and interactive discussion on the teaching of HRM in MNEs,
- Interactive table discussions on the ‘mapping’ of approaches to the teaching of HRM in MNEs (reporting back and open discussion around the underlying philosophies),
- Presentation and open group discussion of the competence-based approach,
- Assessment and discussion around available resources in the field.

In order to facilitate the ‘mapping out’ of dominant approaches to the teaching of HRM in MNEs, participants will be required to submit a brief statement outlining their current approach to the teaching of this field and/or their perspective of the field prior to the workshop. This is to provide advance identification of common teaching approaches and challenges scholars currently face. By doing so, discussions at the workshop can be directed towards the relevance and merits of dominant approaches, along with the resources required in adopting such perspectives. Below is the call for statements. To facilitate the discussion, we request a banquet style room with 4 tables and 8 chairs around each table.

## **Statement**

We have received email statements from all the workshop facilitators agreeing to participate, and these workshop facilitators are not in violation of the Three + Three rule.

Peter J. Dowling and Noelle Donnelly, Workshop Organizers.

### **Professional Development Workshop: HR Division.**

The Sustainable Teaching of Human Resource Management within MNEs

#### **Call for Statements**

##### **Who should attend?**

This PDW will draw together leading scholars and authors in the field of IHRM to discuss and debate key challenges and innovative approaches in the teaching of this complex field. This workshop will provide the opportunity for experienced and emerging scholars of IHRM to explore different approaches and challenges to the teaching of HRM in MNEs.

##### **What we ask you to submit?**

This is an interactive workshop. You are invited to submit a brief statement (max. 500 words) of:

- a) current or past approaches to the teaching of HRM in MNEs or topics germane to this field, and/or,
- b) your perspective of the challenges faced in teaching HRM in MNEs.

##### **When?**

Statements due: *June 12<sup>th</sup> 2009*

Notification of Acceptance: *July 10<sup>th</sup> 2009.*

##### **Where?**

Statements can be submitted to either of the workshop organizers:

Noelle Donnelly at ([noelle.donnelly@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:noelle.donnelly@vuw.ac.nz)) or

Peter J. Dowling at ([peter.dowling@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:peter.dowling@vuw.ac.nz))