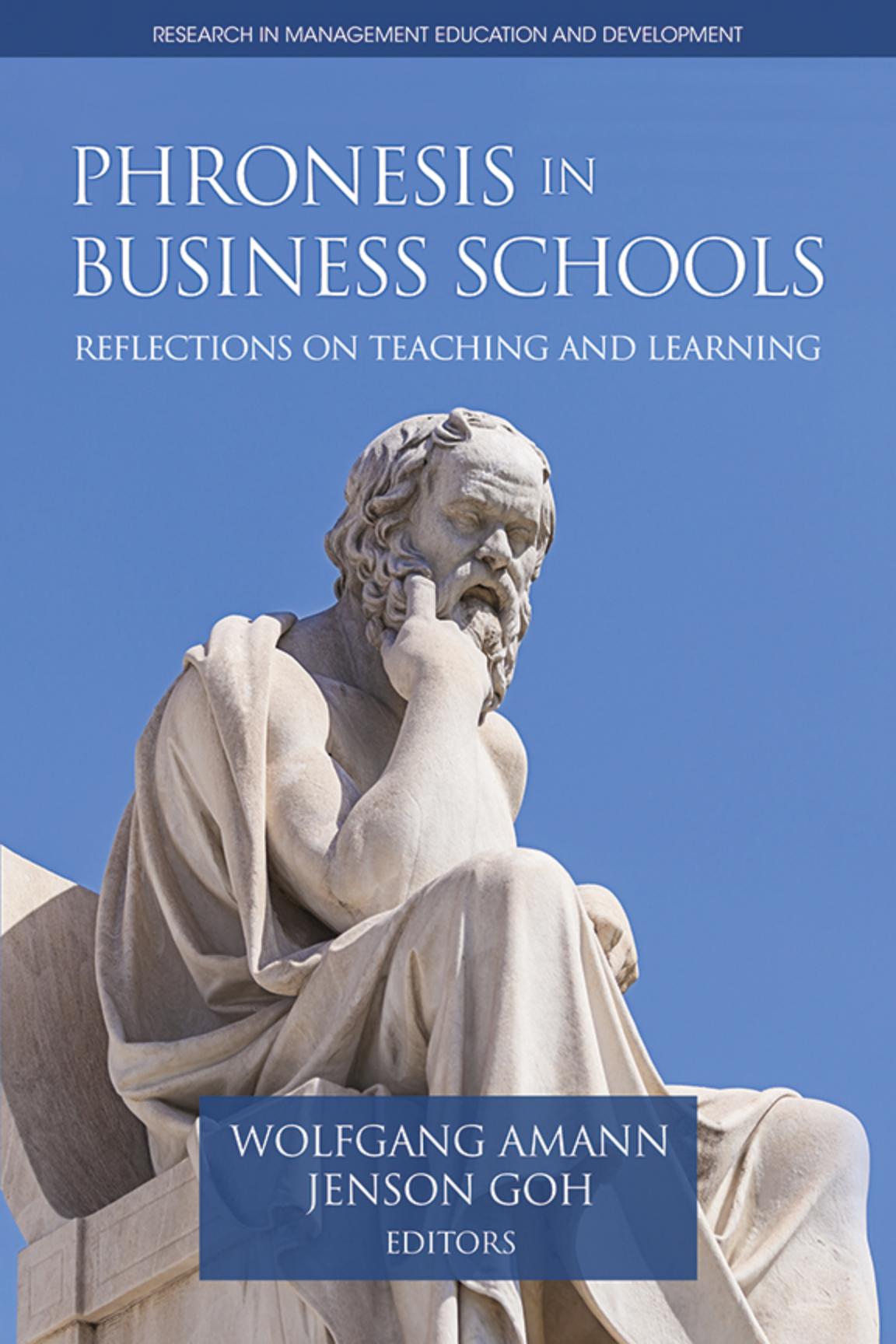


# PHRONESIS IN BUSINESS SCHOOLS

## REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING AND LEARNING



WOLFGANG AMANN  
JENSON GOH  
EDITORS

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# **Phronesis in Business Schools**

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A volume in  
*Research in Management Education and Development*  
Agata Stachowicz-Stanusch, Series Editor

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# **Phronesis**

## **in Business Schools**

### **Reflections on Teaching and Learning**

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*edited by*

**Wolfgang Amann**

*HEC Paris in Qatar*

**Jenson Goh**

*National University of Singapore*



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## **FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This book is the result of two weeks of focused and intense discussions on teaching and learning in business schools from around the world—from the United States to Singapore. All contributors participated in various roles in the 2016 iteration of the International Management Teachers Academy (IMTA) either as faculty or participants. IMTA is a truly unique faculty development program organized by CEEMAN, the International Association for Management Development in Dynamic Societies. This book captures the rich learning experiences and insights created and shared during this program. A big thank you note goes to all chapter authors who readily shared their key lessons.

—**Wolfgang Amann and Jenson Goh**  
Qatar and Singapore

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# INTRODUCTION

## The Need to Sharpen the Saw

Stephen Covey, who tragically passed away in 2012, was one of the world's leading brains on people's peak performance. However, his book on the *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* continues to be a bestseller and widely read across a variety of professions. One of his habits focused on sharpening the saw. He introduced the story by referring to very busy lumberjacks trying hard to work on a log of wood with an old-fashioned, blunt saw. A colleague passing by asked why they didn't use another saw, or sharpen the one they were using. To the colleague's surprise, the two lumberjacks replied they were too busy sawing.

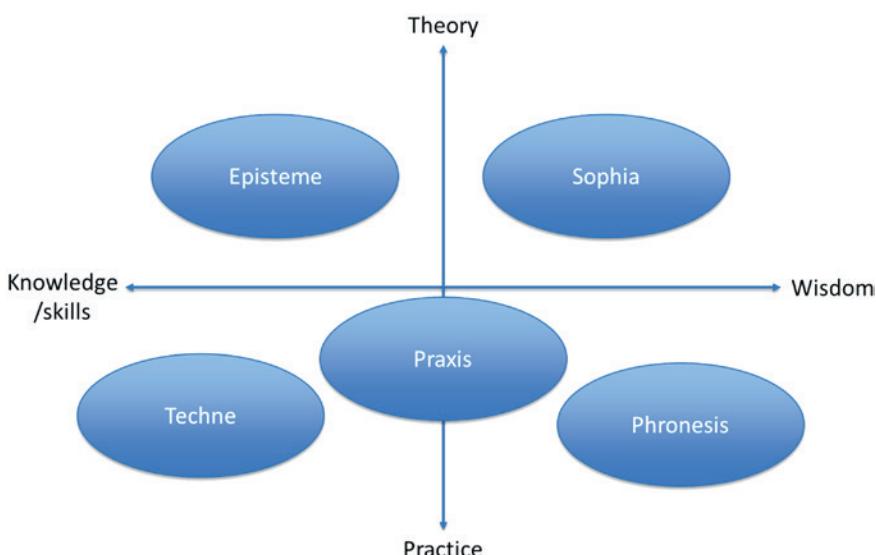
The moral of the story is more than obvious. Busyness is no excuse for not taking the time to sharpen our saw once in awhile. It is with this in mind that this book presents faculty members, program directors, and deans—who are at times rather busy trying to survive, let alone master, the publish-or-perish game played in business schools, or who are working towards improving their organizations' business—an opportunity for reflection.

The book deals with a timely matter, because in July 2017, the United Nations PRME initiative in charge of the Principles of Responsible Management Education introduced an extension of its past six principles for better management education around the world. Henceforth, business schools ought to walk the talk with regard to their classroom content. If they preach and teach lifelong learning, continuous improvement, fighting complacency, and fostering innovation, they have to deliver these themselves.

Mindfulness is yet another contemporary topic in the classrooms for bachelors and executive alike. At the moment, it is at the height of fashion in leadership development circles. Battling the daily and endless to-do lists, preventing the urgent from driving out the important, mindfulness calls for moments of reflection, of introversion, of meta-cognition (to simply observe what one is thinking, feeling, and sensing with regard to packaged, hectic days), and for rediscovering one's curiosity about what else could truly enrich and improve our (work) lives (Reitz & Chaskalson, 2016). A number of positive outcomes could be expected, such as better strategies and organizational set-ups. Why then should faculty members and business school leaders at all levels *not* embark on more mindful, reflective action?

The book also has other stakeholders in a business school environment in mind—all those who want to discover what is new and what type of more modern business school can work with this. This book creates transparency regarding the latest topics for which HR directors and leaders interested in top executive education should look when shortlisting and choosing the learning partners. While costs remain important, executive education offers unique value. An authentic, modern business school can create unique value that far exceeds cost. This book shares insights on what to expect.

What content can the reader look forward to? In order to clarify expectations, we rely on semantics from Aristotle as outlined in Figure I.1 below.



**Figure I.1** Overview of selected, learning-related Aristotelian semantics. *Source:* Amann, 2017, p. 5.

Millo and Schinckus (2016) specify that Aristotle's semantics comprise several parts that are relevant for learning:

- Daxo—merely an individual's rather unsubstantiated opinion. As editors, we ensured this book is free of this.
- Episteme zooms in on theoretical knowledge, focusing far less on any kind of application. As editors, we can assure the reader that if theory finds its way into the book, it is done in order to substantiate the claims that the chapter authors make in their quest to foster the following types of knowledge and insights referred to as techne, praxis, and phronesis.
- Techne addresses to practical knowledge and skills.
- Praxis sheds light on principled action. Even if certain contextual details were to change, relying on key principles can help a praxis-oriented learner achieve results.
- Sophia, in turn, refers to the research methodology side of creating wisdom, which is not a priority of this book, while phronesis addresses wisdom solely focused on application.

Phronesis on how to orchestrate optimized teaching and learning experiences represents the core of this book. As much as possible, we provide overviews of key insights into and learnings on business schools' fundamental processes. This might require outlining techne-level or praxis-level insights, which will allow critical reflection on how to enhance one's own wisdom as a player in the teaching and learning ecosystem. According to Aristotelian semantics, phronesis refers to "practical judgment, practical wisdom, common sense, or prudence" (Flyvberg, 2017, n.p.).

When reading about the insights and phronesis on teaching and learning in business schools in the following chapters, readers are, of course, encouraged to reflectively start with the topics of their main interests first. In order to give the reader an orientation, the following paragraphs detail and review the chapters of this book.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK**

The book has three sections. Section I deals with self-management as a prerequisite for peak performance. Section II delves deeper and scrutinizes optimized teaching and learning. Section III, in turn, elaborates the bigger picture—the role of businesses, business schools, and management education in society. In Section I, education guru<sup>1</sup> Professor Arshad Ahmad kicks off our joint learning journey. He is associate vice-president, teaching and learning, at McMaster University and an award-winning director, McMaster

Institute for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching & Learning. He is also associate professor of finance and business economics. His chapter “This Week has 9 Hours” has two themes. One theme develops a personal story about events that triggered turning points enabling him to broaden his passion from his first discipline (finance) to his second discipline (education). It is a love story about teaching and learning that has helped shape his academic identity and confirmed what a supreme privilege it is to teach colleagues and students. This personal trajectory leads to the second and more important theme in this chapter, which underscores a handful of the most essential lessons he regularly brings to IMTA, including (a) a broad definition of scholarship, (b) writing a teaching philosophy statement, (c) improving learner centeredness, (d) using appropriate interventions suitable for *Perry’s stages* of intellectual development, and (e) promoting students’ deep approaches to learning. He uses and emphasizes the importance of metaphors throughout and leaves the reader with “mirroring activities” that are incredibly useful developmental tools to improve the craft of teaching.

Industry veteran Professor J.B. Kassarjian continues our learning journey by revisiting the concept of work-life balance. As a senior thought leader in the executive education industry with appointments at top schools such as Babson College, IMD, and Harvard on his CV, he critically reviews the en vogue topic of work-life balance and clarifies that it simply does not exist. Even removing the work of a work-life balance is a challenging endeavor. The underlying premise that there is actually a way of balancing directly competing priorities simply does not hold. There are clear phases in life when certain areas are prioritized. In his chapter, J.B. provides crucial advice and his phronesis on the topic.

In Chapter 3, Danica Purg adds her thoughts on teaching and learning. She is the founding and current president of the IEDC-Bled School of Management, Slovenia, and the founding president of the Central and East European Management Development Association (CEEMAN), which has 211 members from 53 countries. She is also the chairperson and director of the European Leadership Centre (ELC). In her chapter, she emphasizes the need to build a symbiotic relationship between teaching and learning. This in turn requires each faculty member to be organizational leaders to build up and constantly hone the right capabilities to do so.

Jim Ellert is next in our “string of pearls.” As an emeritus professor at IMD and current academic director of the CEEMAN IMTA program, he shares key reflections on the IMTA journey, along with interviews with selected faculty members travelling to the program from all over the world. This chapter clarifies that in today’s world, inspiring and ambitious faculty members do not necessarily have to reinvent the wheel. There are several faculty development programs available, although his chapter outlines just

how special and different IMTA is. Recruiting highly experienced successful faculty members from top institutions to help deliver the program is just one success recipe. This ensures that the phronesis can be effectively brought to the classroom. The successful faculty members of the future, but also effective business schools, actively and holistically drive their growth with the help of such faculty development programs. The corporate sector has a long tradition of developing leaders and top talents. Why should business schools not follow suit?

One additional chapter closes Section I. Dr. Darren Bridgewater, an associate professor at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada illustrates how important reflexivity is. His contribution to this book shows an example of reflection skills that schools and professors need to foster. Faculty members are too often kept busy with a publish-or-perish game, floods of committees or program direction tasks, selling, and high teaching loads. This busyness is rather similar to the situation encountered in companies. However, in order to more credibly educate current and future leaders, business schools must become more of a role model than they currently are.

Section II zooms in on actual teaching and learning. In line with Confucian thinking, Dr. Marko Meier, in his chapter on reflection as a learning tool for managers, clarifies that there are three methods to become wise: first, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest. Dr. Majer was an advertising industry entrepreneur and manager for over 25 years before entering academic circles in the field of leadership study. He combines practical managerial experience with broader leadership concepts, with a special focus on the younger generations at the workplace, thus expanding his professional expertise beyond his native Slovenia into European and the global context of management training. In his chapter, he provides a fresh perspective on experiential learning and a key model to enable and catalyze high impact learning. He also sheds light on the role of coaching in the process.

Dietmar Sternad continues this train of thought and shares the perceived importance of integration reflection in the classroom. He is a professor of international management at Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, an IMTA faculty, and an award-winning expert on case writing and teaching. In his chapter, he clarifies the crucial role of reflective, challenge-based learning in management education. Research results in very different contexts (from sports to music) have emphasized the importance of a combination of challenges and reflective practice in order to become an expert in a certain field. The approach can be succinctly summarized as: "Learning by doing and thinking about what you have learned from what you have done." This chapter reports on recent findings in the neuroscience and the science of learning that support a reflective challenge-based learning

model and shows how this concept can be applied in management education. A typology of challenges that can be used in management education, including concrete examples from teaching practice, and an overview of useful reflection methods, provides a “toolbox” for management educators who want to implement a reflective challenge-based learning approach in their teaching practice.

The idea of working with reflection and reflective challenges in the classroom and longer learning journeys is a preparation for the question: Who has what type of responsibilities when creating and high-impact, unique learning experiences? The next chapter is written by Irina Petrovskaya, an associate professor at the Lomonosov Moscow State University Business School (LMSU BS); Olga Grineva, an associate professor at the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, Moscow; and by Aigerim Yelibayeva, an associate professor at Narxoz University, Almaty, Kazakhstan. In their chapter, they explore four combinations of teacher and student roles which in turn produce four types of questioning modes: the teacher questioning the students, the students questioning the teacher, the students questioning other students, and the teachers questioning other teachers. All these can emerge in teaching and learning processes, but, in a regular class, faculty members too often limit themselves to only the first mode. The authors critically reflect on the reasons behind this limitation and suggest that there is space for a “teacher to teacher” mode in our daily practices, which may open a path of discovery for both teachers and students.

Jenson Goh, who is the Director of Studies, Residential College 4, at the National University of Singapore, takes our discussions on responsibility and action in the classroom to the next level by providing an integrated account of his approach to “flipped classrooms.” The idea is to respect classroom time even more than in the past. Basics learning and background information could easily be absorbed before entering the classroom. Precious classroom time could then be fully focused on experimentation, reflection, and discussing open questions. As a consequence, student engagement in active learning is structured and orchestrated very differently. The difficulty does not lie in understanding what a flipped classroom philosophy is, but how to implement and make fast progress on the learning curve. This is where his chapter has the most value.

Business schools have attempted to internationalize and globalize—some with more, some with less success. One side effect of crossing borders is the diversification of the student body, or of the participant groups in general. Dominika Mirońska extends the content of this book by exploring how to teach multicultural teams. She is an assistant professor at the Institute of International Management and Marketing at Warsaw School of Economics (SGH) in Poland. She starts off with a review of the challenges that faculty members face when they are confronted with more diverse audiences. She

sheds light on the dimensions differentiating cultural groups before applying her thoughts to different methods of presenting classes.

Section III of the book links all activities in business schools to the larger question of these institutions' impact on societies. Executive education specialist and consultant Elena Rudeshko outlines the first cornerstone of teaching and learning's sound impact. She clarifies that graduates are indeed an essential element in strengthening business. She equally clarifies that not all responsibility for a sound education is with the schools. There is a crucial phase after graduation when each individual must take full ownership of orchestrating their growth process. She outlines that holistic, post-education development consists of several elements, such as self-education, internal education, internal education with external professionals/coaches' involvement, and external education (certifications, workshops during industrial conferences, business schools, etc.).

The second cornerstone of teaching and learning's sound impact addresses the impact graduates will have beyond serving the labor market as talents with functional skills. An IMTA core faculty member, former chair of Bentley's Management Department, and founding coordinator of Bentley's Alliance for Ethics & Social Responsibility, Tony Buono illustrates the important details of incorporating the UNGC PRME into the curriculum. PRME refers to a United Nations Global Compact Initiative, specifically outlining the Principles of Responsible Management Education. In the past, various authors have accused business schools of being silent partners in crime. After all, they educated many of the Wall Street players or "banksters." In addition, it is a good sign that, globally, the number of corporate sustainability reports continues to grow. Nevertheless, our global resource consumption exceeds a sustainable level by far and the signs of unsustainability are increasing. Figure I.2 summarizes these PRME principles.

The PRME leadership had for quite some time discussed a new seventh principle, which had always been part of the commitment to them in one way or another. The idea was to turn the following sentence into a new principal: "We understand that our own organizational practices should serve as example of the values and attitudes we convey to our students." In May 2017, however, it was decided to instead extend the second principle to more efficiently include this idea. From now on, business schools should have to be role models, and should do more than just revamping their research and teaching efforts, leaving the rest of their organization rather untouched. Doing more requires business schools to incorporate reflexivity and mindfulness in their own organization set-up if they encourage corporations to do likewise.

Agata Dembek, who is an assistant professor at Kozminski University, and Maria Roszkowska-Menkes, who is an assistant professor at the Warsaw School of Economics, continue our learning journey by critically reflecting

- **Principle 1 | Purpose:** We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.



- **Principle 2 | Values:** We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.



- **Principle 3 | Method:** We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.



- **Principle 4 | Research:** We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.



- **Principle 5 | Partnership:** We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.



- **Principle 6 | Dialogue:** We will facilitate and support dialog and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organisations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.



**Figure I.2** PRME principles. *Source:* <http://www.unprme.org/about-prme/the-six-principles.php>

on the question of why teaching sustainability continues to be rather difficult in business schools. Once again, if companies should integrate sustainability into their operations more rapidly and comprehensively, business schools should also show this agility and flexibility. Barriers to change need to be overcome. This would drastically increase the credibility and legitimacy of business schools to teach sustainability and demand more social responsibility from graduates and corporate executive education partners.

What does this boil down to? Improving teaching and learning, along with transforming business schools is a tremendous leadership challenge. Based on Ashby's (2011) law of requisite variety, challenges and adversity can be reasonably high, as long as business schools have a sound leadership pipeline in place. This refers to business schools playing an active role in identifying and developing the current and next generation talents, who can then take on leadership positions in the future. However, without such a diverse and well-qualified pool of talents, the likelihood of personal and organizational success lagging behind expectations is substantial. Wolfgang Amann, who is an academic director of open, certificate, custom, and degree programs at HEC Paris in the Middle East, sheds light on all cases where just being a faculty member or researcher is not enough for that individual. What can be done if they have higher aspirations? What can be done if faculty members would like to become a dean and henceforth orchestrate the business school's winning performance? This chapter presents the results of a recent study on business school deans. Amann outlines what trends deans identify and the main leadership styles they apply. As a summary, business schools show substantial leadership versatility, which has been linked to higher levels of effectiveness in the corporate sector. In business schools, talents are, nevertheless, often employed differently. The tenure system triggers different dynamics. One of the key insights of this chapter is that those aspiring faculty members wishing to become a dean need to invest heavily in the leadership development, because the nature of the tasks are changing drastically. One side of the coin consists of the power, the title, the moment of glory when, for example, presenting graduation speeches. The other side, however, demands substantial stakeholder management, communication, conflict management, and self-management skills. All of them represent fields that are not naturally developed in the process of obtaining a doctorate thesis. The higher the aspirations, the higher the workload.

After Section III, the book editors and authors provide the final conclusions. This book has been compiled with the goal in mind of capturing the key reflections of the current next generation talents and of experts in the business school ecosystem. The overarching objective is to foster the building of phronesis—wisdom in individuals playing active roles in business

schools. While such wisdom is on a very personal learning field, we have nonetheless tried to make the key learnings more explicit.

## **NOTE**

1. Cf. <http://lead4skills.ceeman.org/news/interview-with-education-guru-prof-arshad-ahmad> for more information and insights on the author.

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