BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE: INVERTING THE PROPERTY CURRICULUM DESIGN PROCESS

Professor Eddie Blass

Australian Property Institute, and Torrens University Australia

ABSTRACT

Problem/Purpose

The strength of criticism against Higher Education providers for developing graduates who are not work ready has been growing for more than two decades. Not only are Universities being slow to respond, but their responses are not addressing the fundamental issues that have established the theory-practice gap.

Design/methodology/approach

This paper firstly explores the issues that have impacted the Higher Education environment recently and will continue to impact the future of Higher Education providers. Secondly the paper undertakes a stakeholder analysis to demonstrate how the demands on the sector are increasing and increasingly competing for different outcomes, thereby establishing a range of theory – practice gaps. Thirdly the paper looks at some responses within the sector to addressing the gap and why these are not adequate solutions. Finally the paper presents an alternative model of curriculum design which fundamentally changes the teaching contribution that Higher Education offers society.

Findings

The paper concludes that while ever Universities try to add practice to a theoretical base in the curriculum they will fail to bridge the gap; in order to bridge the gap, curriculum design needs to start with the practice and then underpin with theory.

Research limitations/implications (if applicable)

The case study presented and methodology of curriculum design has only been in practice for 1 year in Australia so the extent to which the final graduates do bridge the gap is yet to be fully ascertained.

Takeaway for practice (if applicable)

New model of approaching curriculum design which will underpin the API's work in 2016.

Originality/value

New methodology of engaging in curriculum design.

Social Implications (if applicable)

Graduates who have bridged the theory – practice gap.

Keywords: Curriculum design; Higher Education; theory – practice gap;

Email contact: eblass@api.org.au or eddie.blass@tua.edu.au