**College of Commerce**
**Division of Economic & Financial Studies**
**Department of Business**

# BUS 805
# Knowledge Management

# *UNIT OUTLINE*
# *SEMESTER 1, 2008*

Lecture: Thursday, 2:00pm ~ 5.00 E4B 316

## Unit Convenor:  Dr Peter Murray

Students in this unit should read the unit outline carefully at the beginning of the semester. It contains important information about the unit. If anything is unclear consult the unit convenor.

# BUS805: Knowledge Management and Organisational Learning

## 1.0    Unit Description

This comprehensive unit examines how organizations learn and manage knowledge.  Superior learning ability is the basis by which organizations create knowledge and superior knowledge generates an enhanced capacity to create competitive advantage. This two-way relationship means that collectively, individual and organizational competencies must be enhanced before knowledge can be translated into competitive action. Innovation and technological processes are tangible evidences of knowledge generation. The unit explores how organizations both create and manage knowledge. At the individual level, the unit explores how organizations expand individual worldviews so that advanced interpretive skills are developed. At the organizational level, organizations create systems and procedures as one method by which to capture and store knowledge. The key to understanding knowledge generation however is in the culture for learning that is unique to each organization and how to apply it to various change scenarios. Thus, there are connections between knowledge, change, and learning and we explore these in some detail. While one organization creates a change-ready culture, existing systems, procedures, and policies often shackle others making change difficult. The unit explores the link between superior learning and knowledge to the extent that superior learning organizations are able to make decisions that lead to more informed successful strategic pursuits. The unit will be critical for graduates wanting to work in global organizations.

## 2.0    Unit Objectives

By studying this unit, students will be able to:

2.1    Analyze the relationships between learning and knowledge management. Identify the link between learning and knowledge and why they are interdependent.  Discuss how organizational foresight may not be enough in certain types of industries;

2.2    Distinguish between various change archetypes and radical versus adaptive change attempts across different industry contexts;

2.3    Define punctuated equilibrium and various system states. What role does change archetypes play here?

2.4    Analyze the need for continuous change. Compare and contrast different change scenarios;

2.5    Define the context in which organizational learning is important. Distinguish between learning and unlearning, and why organizational learning is useful in response to environmental stimuli;

2.6    Distinguish between learning at the level of the individual, group, organization. What are learning routines and why are they important?

2.7    Classify the different aspects of knowledge management. Examine different procedures of knowledge creation;

2.8    Distinguish between change strategies and learning strategies and why the two are different. Examine how both change and learning are closely linked;

2.9    Examine the different aspect of knowledge work and why it is difficult to implement. Analyze the importance of knowledge work;

2.10 Define the concept of teams and groups. Verify their importance in knowledge dissemination and communication and in implementing different kinds of learning routines;

2.11 Explore social architecture. Examine why this is a useful approach to both learning and knowledge;

## 3.0  Teaching staff

The lecturer for this unit is Dr Peter Murray, room 634, business building, email pmurray@efs.mq.edu.au  Peter is available for consultation on Monday afternoons between 12.30-2.00pm.

## 4.0  Classes

The class for this unit will be held on Thursday afternoons from 2.00pm to 5.00pm (consult your timetable). The class will consist of a lecture immediately followed by a tutorial session. The latter session will consist of a combination of small group assignment work, case study application, role plays, and presentation sessions. The tutorials may be different therefore depending on the topic area. Students will also be required to complete various assignments demonstrating a strong level of application.

## 5.0  Unit Topics

### Lecture 1:

Linking organizational knowledge and learning. What are the commonalities? Distinguish between

Tutorial Week 1:
Video on EDS. The video presents many aspects of knowledge, learning, and knowledge.
Required:
   1  What are the issues at stake?
   2  What is the organizations readiness for change?
   3  Identify existing knowledge and why it was important.
   4  What challenges existed in relation to existing knowledge?
   5  What links can you identify between change, learning, and knowledge?

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### Lecture 2:

Different ways of exploring change. Change managers and lessons of change from industry. Distinguish between evolution versus revolution and different lenses for reviewing convergence and upheaval.

Tutorial Week 2
In-class case handout. Questions to be issued in class.

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**Lecture 3:**

Explore the patterns of evolution and innovation and review the paradox of culture. Define punctuated equilibrium and how it differs from traditional paradigms. Specifically, why do organizations trend towards becoming more internally consistent. Compare evolutionary periods to revolutionary ones.

Tutorial Week 3
In-class case handout. Questions to be issued in class.

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**Lecture 4**

How do firms change continuously despite the lessons of punctuated equilibrium? How would we explain an organization in which its internal processes are neither so rigid as to control the process nor so chaotic that the process falls apart? What do fast decision makers do? How do core rigidities get in the way however of constant change?

Tutorial week 4:
In-class case handout. Questions to be issued in class

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**Lecture 5:**

Define organizational learning within the dimension of complete and incomplete cycles. Explore the links between unbounded learning and learning levels. Compare the learning typologies and how they might be linked to both punctuated equilibrium versus continuous change. Which learning types might be need for continuous learning?

Tutorial week 5
<u>In-class case study (15%) to be completed tonight.</u>

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**Lecture 6**

What is individual learning? Why do individuals learn the way they do? What aspects of organizational learning are important? How do we identify one from the other? General: In this topic, we explore the notion of learning to understand its importance for both innovation and strategic renewal,

Tutorial Week 6:

Role play. Break into groups. Prepare a role play on either individual learning or organisational learning to give to the class. Be prepared for an impromptu role play.
Required:
1   What problem issue would you like to demonstrate?
2   Develop a skit lasting for about 10 mins that illustrates the issues
3   Make sure the theoretical aspect you want to demonstrate is clearly articulated in the play;
4   Give a brief overview to the class of the issues and how the play demonstrates them.

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**Lecture 7**

What is knowledge and how is it processed? Why is knowledge creation both an outcome and a process and framework? How does one understand the differences between tacit and explicit knowledge?

Tutorial Week 7
Form into groups. You are a general manager in an aircraft factory making aircraft wings. Knowledge procedures in the past have been in the hands and minds of two production supervisors including the actual process from raw material to finished product where the aircraft wings are shipped to the U.S. One day, both supervisor leave within 2 weeks of each other and cannot be retained.
Required:
1   What are the issues at stake?
2   How can you solve them?
3   Map a fictitious process by drawing a flowchart.
4   What procedures should be put in place to ensure this never occurs again?
5   How will you communicate and implement the procedure?
6   Be prepared to present your answer to class in an impromptu presentation.

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**Lecture 8:**

Analyze the relationship between change and learning. Why is it difficult to change when the existing learning routines are poorly aligned? What issues are at stake between successful change and the type of learning routines required to bring about change?

Tutorial Week 8
Video: Analyzing how successful change is brought about by adopting different learning routines. Required: Analyze this video with respect to the article by Murray, Syed, and Boal (2008) on change and learning.

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**Lecture 9**

Why is knowledge work not as easy as it sounds? How do workers respond to poor organizational processes? Define different knowledge strategies. Why is it difficult to implement knowledge work?

Tutorial Week 9
Form into groups. You are required to set up a community of practice. Choose a particular type of firm in a particular industry. The firm can either be product or service oriented. Think of a specific problem that needs to be solved that top management are either not equipped to solve themselves or one where different viewpoints are sought where strategic advice is needed.
Required:
1. What are the problem issues (make them up if fictional)
2. How will you form the COP?
3. Who will be involved and how many?
4. Which aspects of theory apply? Why?
5. Be prepared to present your COP to the class in an impromptu presentation.

Video analysis (15%) due today
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**Lecture 10:**

Define the roles of teams and groups given that both are used to carry communicate knowledge and implement learning routines. Distinguish between different contexts that block better team performance.

Tutorial Week 10
In-class case. Analyze the facts and make useful assumptions. What aspect/s of teams and group theory might be relevant here?
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**Lecture 11:**

Determine the differences between a social architecture approach to innovation versus a more structured and systematic one. What role do higher level learning routines play in social architecture?

Tutorial Week 11
Group problem and presentation (20%) today (first groups present).
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**Lecture 12**

Summary lecture: What are the integrative features of this unit? Why are they important?

Tutorial Week 12
Group problem and presentation (20%) today (second groups present).

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**Lecture 13**

Final exam (40%). Students will complete a 3 hour exam on the issues, concepts, and cases.

## 6.0   Textbooks and Reading

Book of readings. Please obtain your book of readings and course notes from the university bookshop as this is a mandatory purchase for the unit.

## 7.0     Assessment

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| 1. | Attendance and Participation in class | 10% |
| 2. | In class case study | 15 |
| 3. | Group problem & Presentation | 20 |
| 4. | Video  analysis | 15 |
| 5. | Final exam | 40 |
| | | 100 |

**(a)    Attendance and Participation** (10%)

Attendance to classes is compulsory, and only absences for legitimate reasons (e.g. sickness) will be excused.  In addition, students will be assessed on their participation in class activities such as class questions, discussion and problem solving activities.  General attendance and participation represents 10% of the total mark.

Participation in the 'in-class' case study component is essential. Failure to attend the class will mean the student will fail the case study component. In this class, case study material will be analyzed and discussed in groups.

**(b)    One In-class Case Study** (15% each)

Students will be required to complete ne 'in-class' case study representing weeks 1 to 6 of the course. In order to pass the case study, students must be able to apply the theoretical issues discussed in the lectures. While there is no perfect answer, students must be able to demonstrate a strong knowledge of the issues and how they can be applied in practice.

**(c) Group Problem Exercise and Presentation** (20%)

Your group should select <u>any aspect of the unit</u> for each week that is of interest to your presentation. You may use fact or fiction in creating a problem. Before you can solve the problem you either have to find one (i.e. a real case from industry), or make one up (i.e. based on a fictional set of facts). Think about how you might frame the problem with respect to the lecture and tutorial material. Ask yourself why it will be interesting for the rest of the class and how you will go about solving the problem. An **example only** of an actual problem (although the one you choose **will probably be different**) might be something like the following:

> <u>Problem Statement</u>: Michael Smith is the General Manager of *Trend City* clothing manufacturers supplying a range of clothing apparel including women's apparel garments and perfume ranges throughout Australasia. Michael is enthusiastic about the new change management plan established by senior management to combat rising competition in Asia. Part of this is his intention to set up a new manufacturing plant in Sri Lanka with low-cost staff. His real worry however is not so much the strategy but the capability of both management and general staff to cope with the change. He is concerned that most traditions have been concerned with preserving the past at the expense of creative strategies for the future. He wonders how this attitude will suffice given the significant rise in technological and environmental changes his company faces. He jots down the reasons for his concerns (e.g. not enough training, the need to set up an offshore factory, marketing inefficiencies, loss of customer base). He suspects that he will outline to staff a number of top management meetings that took place in deciding on the strategy. Later that night, he begins to wonder about the organizations readiness for the new strategy and whether the organization can be reconfigured quickly in the short term. He has also heard of other manufacturers in the industry who tried to change in a similar fashion but had to abandon their attempts (Note: the problem statement should be about half a page. Practice writing it in succinct and specific terminology).

> <u>Problem Question:</u> As a learning and knowledge expert and your understanding how both are linked to change, what are your thoughts about this problem? What is the range of issues? How might the company learn from various theoretical approaches and the context in which they apply? How might Michael approach the problem differently and what solutions exist?
> (Note: the problem statement should be about half a page. Hand you're problem statement **to the lecturer before the presentation**. Practice writing it in succinct and specific terminology).

Note that the problem statement above is similar to the one you should write in terms of 1) providing a background to the problem 2) outlining the actual problem 3) detailing case facts, and 4) providing a question that underpins the problem statement. You should then 5) prepare a presentation that briefly outlines the problem to the class while outlining the possible solutions designed to solve the problems and how you will implement them. **Your presentation should run for a maximum of 20 minutes. Apart from the problem statement, no extra written information is required.**

**(d)    Group Video Analysis** (2000 words) (15%)

Students are required to analyze any video on change, knowledge, or organizational learning. Please source the Macquarie library/search engines to locate an appropriate source. Preference should be given to a case study video that provides students with deep knowledge application. If you are able to do so, attach the video application to your assignment.

Required:

1.  Detail the specific change, knowledge, or organizational learning issues facing the company. What background or environmental factors led to the present situation?
2.   Detail the strategies adopted. Did they work? Why/Why not? **Note:** If no strategies exist in relation to learning, or knowledge, or change, or all three, you should select them and discuss how they would potentially address the issues.
3.  Using specific theoretical perspectives from your readings and lecture material, in what ways does theory provide some explanation for the issues faced and the particular strategies adopted?

**(e)    Exam** (40%)

A final exam will consist of four questions from a selection of 6 topics. Students must have a strong general understanding of the topics presented in the course.

Group Problem Exercise
and Presentation (20 %)

Extensive
evidence

Minor
evidence

| | | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Quality of the presentation. Use of theory reflected in report, lively discussion, promotes interest, variations and surprises, strong intro and purpose, clear outcomes, believable plot established | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Quantity of your research - did you collect enough information to prepare the presentation | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | How clearly you identified the major themes and issues in the readings and were able to convey this to the audience | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Your ability to captivate the class through the presentation | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | The overall structure and logical development of your presentation problem to the class | | | | | | | | | |
| Communication aspects of your presentation | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Tertiary standard: Does the presentation reach a high standard of research, analysis and communication? | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Overall, the presentation is worth | | | | | | | | | |

<u>**The Dangers of Cheating and Plagiarism and How to Avoid It**</u>

*UNIVERSITY POLICY ON PLAGIARISM:*

**What is Plagiarism?**

The Academic Senate in June 2001 approved policies and procedures to ensure that the University takes a consistent and equitable approach to plagiarism. The Senate adopted the following definition of plagiarism.

*Definition:* Plagiarism involves using the work of another person and presenting it as one's own. Any of the following acts constitutes plagiarism unless the source of each quotation or piece of borrowed material is clearly acknowledged.

i) copying out part(s) of any document or audio-visual material (including computer based material);
ii) using or extracting another person's concepts, experimental results, or conclusions;
iii) summarizing another person's work;
iv) in an assignment where there was collaborative preparatory work, submitting substantially the same final version of any material as another student.

Encouraging or assisting another person to commit plagiarism is a form of improper collusion and may attract the same penalties which apply to plagiarism. Opportunities and temptations for plagiarism have increased with the spread of internet access. Plagiarism is a serious threat to the teaching and accreditation process, and seriously undermines the collegial and ethical principles which underpin the work of a University.

**The Dangers of Plagiarism and How to Avoid It**

The integrity of learning and scholarship depends on a code of conduct governing good practice and acceptable academic behaviour. One of the most important elements of good practice involves acknowledging carefully the people whose ideas we have used, borrowed, or developed. All students and scholars are bound by these rules because all scholarly work depends in one way or another on the work of others

Therefore, there is nothing wrong in a student using the work of others as a basis for their own work, nor is it evidence of inadequacy on the student's part, provided they do not attempt to pass off someone else's work as their own.

To maintain good academic practice, so that a student may be given credit for their own efforts, and so that their own contribution can be properly appreciated and evaluated, they should acknowledge their sources and they should ALWAYS:

♦ state clearly in the appropriate form where they found the material on which they have based their work,

♦ acknowledge the people whose concepts, experiments, or results they have extracted, developed, or summarized, even if they put these ideas into their own words;

♦ avoid excessive copying of passages by another author, even where the source is acknowledged. Find another form of words to show that the student has thought about the material and understood it, but stating clearly where they found the ideas.

If a student uses the work of another person without clearly stating or acknowledging their source, the result is falsely claiming that material as their own work and committing an act of PLAGIARISM. This is a very serious violation of good practice and an offence for which a student will be penalized.

A STUDENT WILL BE GUILTY OF PLAGIARISM if they do any of the following in an assignment, or in any piece of work which is to be assessed, without clearly acknowledging their source(s) for each quotation or piece of borrowed material:

i) copy out part(s) of any document or audio-visual material, including computer-based material;
ii) use or extract someone else's concepts or experimental results or conclusions, even if they put them in their own words;
iii) copy out or take ideas from the work of another student, even if they put the borrowed material in their own words;
iv) submit substantially the same final version of any material as a fellow student. On occasions, a student may be encouraged to prepare their work with someone else, but the final form of the assignment must be their own independent endeavor.

### *Examples*

Examples of plagiarism, scaled from the mildest to most serious offences, which may be collectively known as "The Plagiarism Continuum" (Walker, J. (1998) "Student Plagiarism in Universities: What Are We Doing About it?" Higher Education Research and Development, 17, 1, 89-105) are provided on the following web page:  www.student.mq.edu.au/plagiarism The web site also includes the procedures approved by Academic Senate to be followed in cases of suspected plagiarism.

### *Penalties*

Offences of plagiarism will attract penalties which may vary from counselling and a warning, the deduction of all marks for the assignment, to failure in the unit and reference to the

University Discipline Committee. The penalty will depend upon the extent of the plagiarism, whether it is a first or repeated offence, whether there is evidence of deliberate deceit and whether advantage has been taken of another student.