The SMART Practice of Scholarly Practice

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To be published in ***Advances in Developing Human Resources***, 2013

Abstract

The Problem.

Scholar-practitioners can be more successful than their less grounded peers; yet engaging in scholarly practice is not a guarantee of success in a business environment. The cases in this issue provide examples of scholarly practice, but don't necessarily provide actionable advice on how it is effectively accomplished.

The Solution.

This article derives a framework for SMART practice that draws from the literature on scholarly practice and the literature on practicing HRD with a business mindset to generate practices that are effective in organizations. The preceding cases in this issue provide examples of these behaviors.

The Stakeholders

The SMART framework supports practitioners who want to increase their effectiveness at integrating theory and research into practice and HRD faculty who want to provide guidance on successful scholarly practice. In the end, leaders that might desire a more theory- or evidenced-based approach to HRD will benefit from having more savvy HRD practitioners.

The SMART Practice of Scholarly Practice

It has been asserted that individuals who are scholar-practitioners are simply more effective than their non-scholarly peers (Holton, 2004; Short & Shindell, 2009). The HRD literature is full of advice on how to be a scholar-practitioner, and other academic fields recommend similar behaviors for their practitioners (Short, Keefer, & Stone, 2009). Beyond scholarly practice, professionals are often urged by the scholarly community to be more evidence-based, which presses them to both seek and produce more rigorous scientific evidence regarding the results of their practices as well as to apply the most recent research results in their fields (Hamlin, 2007; Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007). The academic community wants theory and research to be applied in the field, but there continues to be a well-known "gap" to be bridged between research and practice.

The case for scholarly practice is somewhat undermined by unexpected outcomes by some practitioners. Anecdotally, many of us have seen examples of practitioner success or failure that is not explained solely by depth of scholarly practice. We've seen that in some cases, maverick practitioners who lack even a baseline understanding of theory and research achieve great results. In other scenarios, we see practitioners with deep background and solid scholar-practitioner behaviors who are not able to contribute effectively in business environments. My own experience tells me that those outside-the-curve examples may be partially explained by the degree to which scholarly HRD practice is combined with a business mindset.

Academic and business mindsets are too often seen as incompatible with one another; scholarly practitioners are told to keep their academic theories to themselves and often feel that in the extreme pace of day-to-day work, they hardly have time (or support) to explore the specific theory and research that might prove helpful (Short, 2006). The HRD praxis model (Lynham & McDonald, 2011) suggests that theory should be drawn into practice and that practice issues demand critical inquiry and reflection as well as new research, but these scholarly elements are not always accessible to practitioners in a timely way, nor is it easy to find material that is clearly relevant. Even so, it is that very theory and research base that provides the foundation for the expertise practitioners need to be effective in their roles.

The tension between scholarly practice and business demands is an ongoing one. If we are going to encourage practitioners to move toward a scholarly practice approach, we need to have practical advice on how a scholarly approach might be enacted in a business environment.

Foundations of SMART Practice

The SMART Practice imperatives that I will put forth are based on a combination of two perspectives. From the scholar community, I draw on research that has uncovered the nature of scholarly practice as well as on years of thought-leader essays about applying theory and research to practice. For the business perspective, I identify relevant advice from the practitioner literature base that describes how to be a business leader in addition to being an HRD leader. I synthesize these literature streams and craft behavioral statements (called imperatives) that mitigate (but don't necessarily resolve) the tension between the two. Ultimately, I organize these imperatives in a framework that results in the mnemonic SMART – SMART practice is Scholarly, Macro, Aligned, Realistic, and Tested. "The SMART Practice of Scholarly Practice" is a set of ten imperatives that provide a workable framework for ongoing HRD practice that is both scholarly and business savvy.

Scholarly Practice

Discussions regarding the application of theory and research to practice have been ongoing in the field for nearly two decades (Short, 2006). The HRD field is not alone in its desire to forge better linkages between research and practice. Similar movements are long-standing in medicine, education, psychology, and other fields (Short, Keefer, & Stone, 2006; Wasserman & Kram, 2009). Of special interest to this discussion is the conversation around evidence-based management practices, since many HRD professionals are managers as well (Rousseau, 2006; Rousseau & McCarthy, 2007; Rynes, Bartunek, & Daft, 2001). The discussions along these lines have now progressed beyond exhortation into clear strategies for scholarly practice and evidence-based practice (two perspectives on the same plane). Advocates of scholarly practice put forth the advice summarized in the following paragraphs.

Ground practice in theory and research. Scholarly practitioners have mastered the body of knowledge in their areas of expertise (Ruona & Gilley, 2009), and they continue to keep their knowledge fresh with ongoing reading of the literature. They attend to critiques as well as mainstream dialogues (Bierema, 2009). Scholarly practitioners use the frameworks derived from the body of knowledge to guide their practice, often without having to think too much about it. Throughout a typical engagement, scholarly practitioners repeatedly return to the theoretical and research base to define problems, frame assessments and diagnoses, make sense of findings, and document outcomes (Tenkasi & Hay, 2004).

Take an evidence-based approach to practice. An evidence-based approach to practice is defined by an "unrelenting commitment to gather facts and information necessary to make informed and intelligent decisions" (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006, p. 14). Scholarly practitioners ask to see the evidence supporting recommended strategies, and they rigorously evaluate the strength of that evidence in making decisions. Evidence can be drawn from a variety of sources (Thomas, 2006). While the most credible evidence is from scholarly research, it is also possible to use evidence from experience within communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) and from a specific context (internal pilot testing). In order to read and understand research reports and to critically evaluate research designs and conclusions, scholar-practitioners employ generalized habits of mind such as reflection, critical thinking, theory building and problem resolution (Kormanik, Lehner, & Winnick, 2009; Ruona & Gilley, 2009).

Research and translate specific areas of the literature to inform new practices. A key characteristic of scholarly practice is that recommendations are based on a thorough review of relevant theory and research. Practitioners have been urged to conduct a scan of the literature as part of their consulting process (Lombardozzi, 2007; Lombardozzi & Tyler, 2010). An important part of the process of turning research into practice is to identify the “active ingredients” (Clark, 2005) the key elements that drive success of a particular approach, or the set of elements common in many successful approaches. In order to be effective in this role, practitioners need to be both explorers and translators. They need to be willing to go to the “edge” (Hagel, Seely Brown, & Davison, 2010) where new ideas are being born, and they need to develop skill at bringing these ideas into practice (Tyler, 2009). In practice, ideas often need to be customized, which requires making careful decisions about exactly how to implement them in a specific context. An additional aspect of translating academic ideas for business contexts is a communication one: distilling ideas to key points, creating illustrative graphics, and dropping jargon for more relevant language. The customizing and translating role is one of the most critical (Kormanik, et al., 2009; Short & Shindell, 2009).

Conduct research. Many scholar-practitioners conduct their own research, both formally and informally. Frequently, they partner with academic colleagues in this endeavor, thereby benefitting both their organizations and the field as a whole (Hamlin, 2007). Some approaches to research definition and design advocate a strong practice-oriented perspective (Tyler, 2006; Van de Ven, 2007), and these may be the most useful models for scholar-practitioner research. Often, the scholar-practitioner research is more local, using the tools of six sigma rather than academic models for research (Clark, 2005; Rousseau, 2006), or they may use action research modes of inquiry (Jarvis, 1999). To contribute to the advancement of the field, it is important that scholar-practitioners publish their research.

Participate in scholarly conversations. In engaging in scholarly practice, practitioners enter a cycle of consuming and producing knowledge, and they advance the practice when they engage with colleagues (both academic and practice-oriented) to continuously improve practice (Wasserman & Kram, 2009). Scholar-practitioners are most successful – and most effective at impacting practice – when they live in the “borderlands” (Tyler, 2009) or “edge” (Hagel, et al., 2010) – those dialog spaces where academic and practice-based thinkers congregate. Practitioners with a scholarly perspective often publish their own case studies and literature reviews, and they participate in academic conferences in their areas of interest. They also actively advocate for specific research topics that industry research organizations and academic colleagues might engage. Most importantly, scholar-practitioners actively participate in conversations (Huff, 2008) that advance the field.

Business Mindset

Approaching HR and HRD work with a business mindset is a highly valued quality for leaders working in corporate environments. Practitioners are repeatedly exhorted to know the business issues facing their firms or their clients’ firms, and to build their general business knowledge and act as business leaders. Without an understanding of business goals and practices, practitioners risk their credibility and their ability to communicate with and influence business leaders. The business mindset focuses more on how practitioners approach the work than it does on the specific nature of the work itself. Arising out of concerns that HRD leaders are not “at the table” with business strategists and operational leaders, the movement toward more business accountability focuses on the measurable outcomes and their impact on the bottom line and the success of business initiatives. From this perspective, HRD practitioners are asked to be pragmatic and cost-conscious, and are asked to document their outcomes and demonstrate their effectiveness.

Advice on being a business-oriented HRD practitioner abounds, but the following recommendations are particularly relevant to this discussion.

Keep an eye on performance outcomes. In the practitioner literature, HRD leaders are frequently urged to keep business performance as the “finish line” (Wick, Pollock, & Jefferson, 2006) and to assist managers in identifying and strengthening performance supports and diagnosing and minimizing performance barriers (Robinson & Robinson, 1995; Rummler & Brache, 1995). There are those who caution against the performance paradigm (Bierema, 2009), and call attention to the ways that this paradigm focuses on business outcomes at the expense of the people who produce those outcomes. But these voices are outnumbered by those who want HRD leaders to have a laser focus on business results. Models of human performance (Rummler & Brache, 1995; Van Tiem, Moseley, & Dessinger, 2004) describe a system with a complex interplay of factors. Aspects of the system include performer capability and motivation, goals and expectations, work flow and business systems, task support, performance resources and tools, supervisory practices, team dynamics, and incentives and rewards.

These models also recommend deliberate alignment of the various levels in an organization – the organization's structure and culture, its work systems and processes, and the roles and tasks assigned at the individual level. Ensuring that each HRD project attunes to and integrates with the dynamics of the whole system is critical.

Test and monitor results of initiatives. Business-savvy HRD practitioners have also come to value the habit of measuring results (Derven, 2012; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2011). In addition to eying the business outcomes, successful HRD practitioners set up systems to monitor their own projects' outcomes during roll-out and implementation, as well as over the long term once a project is complete. These systems are designed to monitor indicators of success, both to give evidence that the project is accomplishing its goals and to provide warning if the initiative isn't meeting the mark. Often, projects are tested using a pilot evaluation process in order to provide the business case for a larger scale implementation.

Respond to emergent needs and rapidly changing environments. The twenty-first century workplace holds the additional challenge of rapid change and nearly-impossible-to-anticipate skill development needs and learning and performance technology support structures (Thomas & Brown, 2011). This environment often requires that models of practice be emergent rather than proven and packaged (Groves, Rickelman, Cassarino, & Hall, 2012). Of necessity, practitioners are inventing ways of practicing in the field (Hagel, et al., 2010; Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Practicing in this environment draws from the intelligence of the past as well as the edge-thinkers who are foreseeing the future.

Ensure integration of HR and business initiatives. A close look at learning and development models reveals the systems nature of the environments that best support learning and application of learning. These models suggest that learning and development programs have greater impact when they are multi-faceted (Bersin & Associates, 2008; CLC Learning and Development, 2003; Lombardozzi, 2008; Wick, et al., 2006), and that application is more likely to occur when there is support embedded throughout the system, from peers, trainers, supervisors, and organizational programs (Gottfredson & Mosher, 2011; Van Tiem, et al., 2004). Change models, too, invariably recommend alignment of relevant factors in support of the desired change (Heath & Heath, 2010; Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, McMillan, & Switzler, 2008). Across all these models, alignment of efforts and broad-based buy-in emerge as prerequisites for success. Practitioners are challenged to collaborate across organizational lines, develop cross-functional relationships, and influence goal-setting and initiative characteristics beyond their own span of control. Business-oriented HRD practitioners have their finger on the pulse of the entire organization, and they develop an understanding of the whole system that leads to performance and desired outcomes. They have a broad understanding of HR management as well, and they align efforts across a variety of practice areas by maintaining contacts and developing joint initiatives.

Balance elegance, practicality, and speed. Business leaders understand that perfection is seldom possible, and they learn to make well-reasoned judgments about how to adjust approaches to make them more efficient or more quickly implemented without risking the desired impact too much. Theoretical frameworks provide clarity of approach, but many business leaders claim that they are too structured and academic for fast-paced business environments (Hammonds, 2005; Zemke & Rossett, 2002). Practitioners who work in a business environment, whether as external consultants or internal experts, are pressured to adjust textbook approaches to facilitate speedy response (Rossett, 2009; Wick, et al., 2006). The trick is to maintain the overall integrity of the approach and to rigorously monitor outcomes. This involves applying expert-level judgment to crafting approaches that follow recommended frameworks, but not necessarily slavishly so. To make these choices, practitioners must fully understand the reasoning that supports the approach, and the way each facet contributes to the success of the whole.

SMART Practice Recommendations

If you put the scholarly practice advice and the business mindset advice side by side, it becomes apparent how they can be in tension with one another. How can practitioners spare the time to conduct a literature review when their work demands swift action? How can practitioners implement theoretical solutions when they do not always fit within the constraints of practice? Practitioners could benefit from practical guidance that explains how they might follow both streams of advice simultaneously. In this section, I'll recommend a short set of imperatives that were crafted from the combination of scholarly practice and business mindset. To arrive at these statements, I laid the scholarly practice advice and business mindset advice alongside one another, and then projected what the combination of the two might say about how to engage in scholarly practice with a business mindset, or how to engage in business-oriented HRD with a scholarly perspective. I created a set of imperatives and categorized them in a SMART framework to make the advice a little more memorable (see Table 1). The SMART acronym stands for Scholarly, Macro, Aligned, Realistic, and Tested, and the imperatives in each category are described below, along with examples of how the imperatives play out in practice. Note that the examples below are drawn from the case studies in this issue, which didn't precisely employ the SMART framework as formulated here, but did exhibit many of the SMART practices described.

Table 1.
Tracing the source of SMART Practice behaviors

<table>
<tr><th>Scholarly Practice</th><th>Business Mindset</th><th>Source</th><th>Imperatives</th><th>SMART</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="10">A. Ground practice in research and theory
B. Take an evidence-based approach
C. Research and translate literature
D. Conduct research
E. Participate in scholarly conversations</td><td rowspan="10">1. Keep an eye on performance outcomes
2. Respond to emergent needs and rapidly changing environments
3. Test and monitor initiative results
4. Ensure integration of HR and business initiatives
5. Balance elegance and speed.</td><td>A + 5</td><td>Develop and apply key guidelines for your practice based on theory and research.</td><td rowspan="2">Scholarly Practice</td></tr>
<tr><td>B, C + 5, 2</td><td>Use specific theory and research to frame the approach you take to your key initiatives.</td></tr>
<tr><td>2, 5 + C, E</td><td>Regularly conduct environmental scans to monitor business news and trends.</td><td rowspan="2">Macro Practice</td></tr>
<tr><td>2, 5 + A, B, E</td><td>Actively engage with the academic and professional community to keep your knowledge fresh.</td></tr>
<tr><td>4, 1 + A</td><td>Ensure alignment between HRD projects and strategic business initiatives.</td><td rowspan="2">Aligned Practice</td></tr>
<tr><td>A, C + 1, 4</td><td>Apply the HRD/HRM models that align multiple practices and approaches.</td></tr>
<tr><td>5, 2 + C</td><td>Identify and protect the "key ingredients" of the models you are implementing.</td><td rowspan="2">Realistic Practice</td></tr>
<tr><td>C + 4, 5, 2</td><td>Translate research and theory into relatable terms for colleagues and business leaders.</td></tr>
<tr><td>B + 1, 3</td><td>Seek preliminary evidence that an approach will work before a full deployment.</td><td rowspan="2">Tested Practice</td></tr>
<tr><td>D + 3</td><td>Conduct a formative evaluation to examine results and make course corrections.</td></tr>
</table>

Note. Source column illustrates which elements of scholarly practice and business mindset in previous columns were combined to arrive at the imperative in the next column. Leading letters or numbers are indicators of which element was primary.

Scholarly Practice Imperatives

Scholar-practitioners rightly value the deep academic background that gives them confidence in their recommendations, and they value the ability to study and monitor emerging research findings and theoretical frameworks. But business partners do not always appreciate thorough explanations of the theoretical underpinnings of HRD work. Additionally, in a busy business environment, staying on top of scholars' conversations can be somewhat problematic (time consuming and sometimes inaccessible). There are two ways that savvy HRD practitioners can address these contradictions. The first is to proactively develop a set of key guidelines for practice that are based in the theory but reworded and packaged so they can be used to educate business partners on what works in the HRD field. The second path is more project-specific. As soon as HRD practitioners become aware of strategic business initiatives or important emerging trends, they should take the time to deep dive into the literature in order to learn quickly what is needed to frame analysis and recommendations in the particular arena.

Two imperatives emerge from the desire to engage in scholarly practice tempered by the need to balance elegance and speed in a rapidly changing environment:

- Develop and apply key guidelines for your practice based on theory and research.
- Use specific theory and research to frame the approach you take to your key initiatives.

Scholarly practice imperatives are frequently employed by scholar-practitioners because their grounding in theory and research gives them the background to recognize when a review of the literature will provide guidance to strengthen approaches to practical issues. At the broadest level, practitioners sometimes create guiding principles to underpin all of their work. Wukitich, Simmons, and Hutt (this issue) provide an example of scholarly practice in a more specific context when they described how they used the action learning framework along with appreciative inquiry and Theory U to address a need to reformulate and communicate values at Children's Hospital Colorado. Busch (this issue) drew from statistical methods more often used in scholarly research to define front line sales competencies. Her grounding in research methods allowed her to adjust techniques to create a thorough but practical approach to defining competencies that was workable for the realities of the practice situation. Short (this issue) and Gedro and Wang (this issue) also deliberately looked to the literature to define appropriate frameworks and practices for their projects at ABC and Empire State College respectively.

Macro Practice Imperatives

In business environments that have been described as "white water" – rapidly changing and frequently chaotic – being prepared to respond is often an exercise in futility. One way to get above the fray is to take a macro view of the world. On the business front, HRD practitioners must be aware of the changes in the business environment that are niggling at their business partners' minds. These can come from a market perspective, or from an internal perspective as business leaders try to address concerns or anticipate changes. Meanwhile in the academic world and in the larger HRD industry, new research and emerging trends may also be poised to effect changes in how to engage in HRD practice and the kinds of recommendations that might be made.

Understanding the need to respond to emergent needs in rapidly changing environments while still wanting to practice in well-grounded and evidence-based ways provides two additional imperatives for practice, which are categorized as macro imperatives.

- Conduct environmental scans to monitor business news and trends.
- Engage with academic and professional community to keep your knowledge fresh.

Two examples of macro practice in this issue demonstrate that effective HRD practitioners keep in touch with evolving needs and trends in their businesses AND in the field in general – and these often coalesce into important initiatives. Short (this issue) was able to match up a business need to minimize travel to training events with evolving tools for delivering learning solutions in order to envision his company's 3D campus. Gedro and Wang (this issue) found an opportunity to apply the emerging literature on workplace incivility to create a more civil work environment at Empire State College after a specific incident called for action. For Short, his read of the business environment sent him to the literature to ensure the 3D solution was effective; for Gedro and Wang, awareness of the literature allowed them to quickly frame an incident in a way that provided a path forward.

Aligned Practice Imperatives

Both the scholarly and the business-savvy aspects of HRD practice recognize the systems nature of the work. Many of the frameworks derived from the research illustrate the complex interplay of variables leading to outcomes. And business leaders well know that organizational performance is a system output not resulting from just one action. Successful HRD practitioners leverage these systems dynamics to amplify the positive impact of their work.

If practitioners want to ensure integration of HR and business initiatives and keep an eye on performance in a way that is underpinned by a theoretical understanding of what works (Becker, Huselid, & Ulrich, 2001; Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Garavan, 2007; Holton, Bates, Bookter, & Yamkovenko, 2007), they might enact these two imperatives for practice that address the need for the work to be aligned:

- Ensure alignment between HRD projects and strategic business initiatives.
- Apply the HRD/HRM models that align multiple practices and approaches.

For example, the scholar-practitioners in ABC company (Short, this issue) and at Children's Hospital Colorado (Wukitsch, Simmons, & Hutt , this issue) clearly had strategic business initiatives at the core of their projects. ABC had a driving need to reduce the cost of delivering training, and Children's Hospital's ongoing changes brought out a need to re-articulate their mission. Aligned practice also takes advantage of the fact that both HRD and business professionals understand the world as a system. The incivility project team at Empire State College made sure to partner with the affirmative action officer (Gedro and Wang, this issue), and the sales competencies identified by Busch (this issue) were intended to support selection, performance management, and development.

Realistic Practice Imperatives

Among the reasons that business leaders give to dismiss recommendations from expert practitioners are that recommendations are over-engineered, too academic or "ivory tower" and simply not workable in the given environment. Sometimes the rejection can be forestalled by paying more attention to important communication guidelines related to limiting jargon and understanding one's audience. In other situations, the theoretical model or practice recommendations are in fact unworkable or not applicable, and a customized approach is warranted.

To be realistic, then, HRD practitioners need to balance elegance, practicality, and speed while still maintaining the integrity of the solutions derived from well-grounded and evidence-based models. As well, practitioners need to hone communication skills in order to more effectively influence acceptance of research-based solutions. This balancing act results in these imperatives:

- Identify and protect the "key ingredients" of the models you are implementing.
- Translate research and theory into relatable terms for colleagues and business leaders.

Of all the adjectives used to define SMART practice, business leaders may most endorse the advice to be realistic, and it sometimes creates challenges for scholar-practitioners. The project leaders at Children's Hospital Colorado took elements of a number of theories and frameworks to devise their approach, but managed to create a process that was both well-grounded and workable (Wukitsch, Simmons, & Hutt, this issue). They also had to work through the communication challenge of sharing very complex approaches with hospital employees not interested in the deeper details. At ABC, Short (this issue) and his team took deliberate action to communicate the overall approach to key stakeholders, choosing the most relevant background rather than providing the complete store of research they used to craft their approach.

Tested practice imperatives

Academic training typically gives graduates strong analytical skills that allow them to conduct research and to examine the rigor of research conducted by others. This background can help HRD practitioners when they are called on to validate or monitor the results of initiatives as well as when they judge the validity of claims that practices are evidence-based. Practitioners often have to make trade-offs between rigor and practicality in implementing analytic methods, but can still gather evidence about outcomes. A critical result of being sensitive to research practices is avoiding fads and unsupported approaches. Employing research practices – whether quantitative or qualitative – can also help them to identify approaches that are missing the mark before they are widely deployed.

Taking an evidence-based approach and using business tools to validate outcomes and results combine to give several imperatives relating to employing techniques that are tested:

- Seek preliminary evidence that an approach will work before a full deployment.
- Conduct a formative evaluation to examine results and make course corrections.

Mitigating risk can be an important aspect of scholarly practice, and that is done both by deploying already-tested approaches, and by testing in action those approaches that are new or customized. Short (this issue) and his team reviewed research evidence related to implementing 3D learning as they entered into their design of a 3D virtual campus. In addition, ABC's 3D campus was tested before full deployment, allowing them to make improvements before full launch, and giving the organization the opportunity to re-strategize an expensive initiative if it wasn't going to hit the mark.

Call to Action for Practitioners and Professors

Simply combining the scholarly practice advice and the business mindset advice might have resulted in a set of guidelines for successful HRD practice, but the two lists of practices don't merge cleanly; in many ways they moderate one another. It takes some thought to derive how to enact seemingly contradictory advice at the same time. The list of Scholarly, Macro, Aligned, Realistic, and Tested (SMART) imperatives doesn't shorten the list of behaviors to employ, but it does tease out guidelines that have already accounted for the necessary balancing of scholarly practice and business mindset. The SMART framework can stand as an observable, actionable, easy-to-remember set of guidelines for implementing scholarly practice in organizations.

It isn't enough for practitioners to ground themselves in the theory and research of the field; they need to become skilled at applying that knowledge in a business context – a very different endeavor from applying it in an academic context. When considering how to adjust their practice, well-grounded practitioners must consider the ways that theoretical concepts come to life in the context and politics of their day-to-day work environment. The SMART practice imperatives might help them to take a customized view of how to enact scholarly practice in the context of their specific role and projects. SMART practice encourages practitioners to make considered choices about the aspects of the literature that are most important to their work so they are not overwhelmed trying to keep up with everything. Professors who advocate scholarly practice can support the development of this skill set by providing exercises and projects that demonstrate the challenges of applying research to practice, which is not as straightforward as one might think (as the cases in this issue show). The imperatives of SMART practice are offered as a way of considering exactly how scholarly practice is moderated by a business mindset and as a set of guidelines for the practice of scholarly practice.

For Discussion and Reflection

You are invited to think more critically about the imperatives of SMART practice using the questions below. Consider how the SMART practice approach might affect your work as a scholar, scholar-practitioner, or practitioner. Take time to answer these questions from your own perspectives, or with others in small group to explore a diversity of ideas and applications.

1. What initiatives in your context demand SMART practice? What challenges do you have in implementing these SMART practice imperatives in these instances?

2. What examples of scholarly, macro, aligned, realistic, and tested practice can you share from your own experience? These may be examples where you were able to employ the behaviors, or examples where you feel you might have been more successful if you had.
3. In what additional ways have you been able to apply research and theory while at the same time balancing competing business demands? What imperatives does the SMART practice framework miss?
4. How can we position emerging theory and findings in relatable ways to generate buy-in and endorsement from business leaders?

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Bio

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