Finding Common Ground – What We've Learned from the Experts

Dr. Denise A. D. Bedford
Goodyear Professor of Knowledge Management
Kent State University

April 26, 2011

PART I

REVIEWING THE WEBINARS AND DISCUSSIONS

Reviewing the Goals of KMEF

- Our goal for KMEF 2011 is essentially to find that common ground – what is it that we all agree upon, consider how that common ground can be used to shape the future professional education, how we acknowledge professional competencies and how we can work together to promote the profession

- KMEF is intended to be a 'big tent' community -- open to anyone who has an interest in KM education issues, from any sector, any type of organization, any position or role.

- KMEF is also a sustained community – not one that ends just with the Webinars or the on-site event – but continues through the concerted activities of the community members

Challenges and Opportunities

- The KM domain is rich in theory and practice, is broad in its coverage and alignment with other domains, but is deep in terms of its actual models and methods.

- This richness is both a benefit and a challenge. If we don't look deeper, we might tend to believe that we work in a fragmented domain, that there are discrepancies between our theory and practice.

- In fact, we have much to work with and a tremendous amount of common ground. As a profession, though, we need to acknowledge that common ground and work together to create the professional discipline.

Webinar Presentations and Conversations

- Over the past six weeks, we've heard from thought leaders in Knowledge Management on four questions:

1. What strategic roles and responsibilities do Knowledge Professonals play in organizations?

2. What competencies do knowledge professionals need to lead knowledge organizations in the 21st century?

3. What are the core and elective elements of a knowledge management curriculum for the 21st century?

4. And, how can we support these competencies in professional training, at the certificate level, at the master's and Ph.d. levels?

Question 1: What we have learned

- Each of the experts spoke to roles which might be mapped to any of four generic types of roles:
  - Strategic or Cxx level
  - KM-specialized
  - Business-aligned
  - Universal

- There was consensus that an organization may need some of all of these roles, depending on the nature of their business and their level of KM maturity

- There was also a consensus that the titles of the actual positions is likely to vary depending on the organization and the sector

Question 2: What we have learned

- There is a strong consensus that experience and skills are critical competencies – not just knowing "about" KM but being able to "do" KM

- Theory is important, but given that KM is an applied discipline "practice" is a key competency

- There is also a consensus that a successful KM professional understands both the art and the science of KM – the hard and soft sides of KM

- KM professionals in strategic positions need to have several types of "intelligence" to succeed

Question 3: KM Curriculum

- On the question of the specific KM curriculum, our discussion is still evolving – KM is an evolving discipline which is trying to grow in an academy that is still solidly rooted in the "industrial era" view of learning

- We seem to agree that the curriculum should address the competencies required by all four generic types of roles

- And, that the curriculum should be holistic in terms of how it allows knowledge workers in all roles to learn both "about" and how to "do" KM, and it needs to be dynamic to include new KM topics as they emerge

- Many different kinds of learning venues are needed to provide this holistic environment – we need to all work together

Question 4: What we have learned

- Perhaps the best picture of what the KM learning environment should look like was presented by Doug Weidner

- There seems to be a consensus that we should take this model and see if we can expand it – to find a home for all of the various learning venues for KM – and to align with the roles and competencies (Q's 1 and 2)

- The issues of credentialing and certification still require extensive discussion – "what" are we certifying or credentialing (a practice area, a person, an organization) and "how" is competency demonstrated?

- The gap of a universally recognized KM professional association that would work with universities was highlighted

Common Ground

- There is an amazing degree of consensus on the four questions

- In addition, there is also common thinking about:
  - What we mean by a knowledge worker and who this includes
  - The many kinds of knowledge and their importance to a knowledge economy
  - KM is an ongoing activity which takes time to achieve and will likely look different for each organization
  - There are many good methodologies that all have common elements – KM educators must be aware of and teach all of them
  - KM is interdisciplinary – more like a richly woven cloth or tapestry than a single thread

Common Ground

- There also is common thinking about:

  ◦ The role that academia should play in supporting the professionalization of Knowledge Management as a discipline

  ◦ There is a need for more rather than fewer institutions providing KM learning and education opportunities – we need to collaborate to grow the field rather than compete

  ◦ There is a need for a continuing conversation about KM education and competency topics – one that results in concrete results in a stronger professional practice

PART II

LESSONS LEARNED ON AN ACADEMIC JOURNEY

My Role and Background

- Goodyear Professor of Knowledge Management at Kent State University, and Adjunct Faculty at Georgetown and Tennessee. Have been teaching since 1997 and teaching KM at the graduate level since 2003.

- 15 years practical work on Information Architecture and Knowledge Management at the World Bank – came into the Bank as part of the KM Initiative in 1996

- Prior to World Bank, NASA, University of California Systemwide, Stanford University, Intel, and a few other sundry places

- Ph.d., M.A., M.S. and B.A. – languages/linguistics, systems, economics, intellectual history, information sciences,…..

Focusing in on Questions 3 and 4

- Last year I retired from the World Bank in order to take on the challenge of leading the KM master's and certificate program at Kent State and working with the College to support the interdisciplinary Ph.d. program in Communications and Information (including KM)

- Having been both a KM practitioner, a KM teacher and having done KM research, I had a good idea of what the program would have to offer in terms of a curriculum

- But any good knowledge effort begins by knowing what already exists…. so we surveyed the landscape

What we found about curriculum…

- We leveraged the work of all of our seven presenters and the good thoughts and recommendations of many others

- We found existing Master's programs, certificate programs at various levels, strong learning activities and professional communities that provided various ways to learn KM

- Each of them had much to offer – but they were also different largely dependent upon where they were anchored – business, information science, engineering, communication – and whether they were a full program or a single offering

What we learned about students…

- Students needed to learn theory and foundations, but also to acquire real KM skills – because the first thing an employer asks is "Show me what you've done…"

- KM students run the full range of early to mid to late career – they are continuous learners, consummate networkers, and self-starters

- Each student will take a different career path – the KM curriculum needs to be a "designer" oriented.

- There are not six 3 credit courses that will teach you what you need to know to do KM in your organization – run the risk of producing students who only know enough to be dangerous

16

Designing Knowledge Management Competencies for Knowledge Work

Strategic KM Competencies

Selects courses and workshops largely from the Leadership & Strategy, Communication-Culture, Intellectual Capital Mgmt., and KM Evaluation

KM Specialized Competencies

Selects courses and workshops largely within a single competence area in order to develop a deep understanding and skill set – perhaps CoPs or ICM

Business Aligned Competencies

May select courses from across all of the competency areas – depending on what the KM focus of the business operation is within their organization

Universal KM Competencies

May enroll in training courses, attend workshops, join professional associations, learn through practice, and earn professional (non-academic) certificates. Entry point into the KM stream for everyone. A baseline that everyone needs to have.

What we learned about teaching and learning

- Faculty advising is very important and faculty need to have real world experience

- It is NOT challenging to find KM experts who have both theory and practice on their resumes

- Teaching Knowledge Management is a VERY creative exercise – more like mentoring while teaching and learning from the students

- Teaching online KM is even more creative – very exciting but it is not trivial -- many different models and interaction is key

# Competencies for 1st and 2nd Generation KM

- 1st generation KM was a supply side strategy
  - creating and capturing existing information and knowledge just in case it was needed in the future *(Knowledge Asset Management)*

- 2nd generation KM focuses on demand side, in addition to supply side
  - Creating new knowledge, innovating to fill gaps, creating conditions where people can collaborate to create and share knowledge, organizational learning
  - *(Learning, Collaboration/Communities, Culture and Communication)*
  - Focus on existing knowledge emphasizes what is "business critical" *(Intellectual Capital Management, Knowledge Operations, Knowledge Assessment)*

Competencies for 3rd Generation KM

- 3rd generation KM is emerging as a quantum leap beyond 2nd generation KM

- Focuses on representation of human knowledge for machine understanding and processing *(Knowledge Architecture, Knowledge Technologies)*

- The evolution of KM provides us with a very big tent of competencies and an expanding body of knowledge

Knowledge Management Curriculum Areas

- ■ Leadership & Strategy
- ■ Communications & Culture
- ■ Knowledge Operations
- ■ Knowledge Technologies
- ■ Organizational Learning
- ■ Intellectual Capital Management
- ■ Collaboration & Communities
- ■ Knowledge Architecture
- ■ Knowledge Asset Management
- ■ Knowledge Assessment & Evaluation
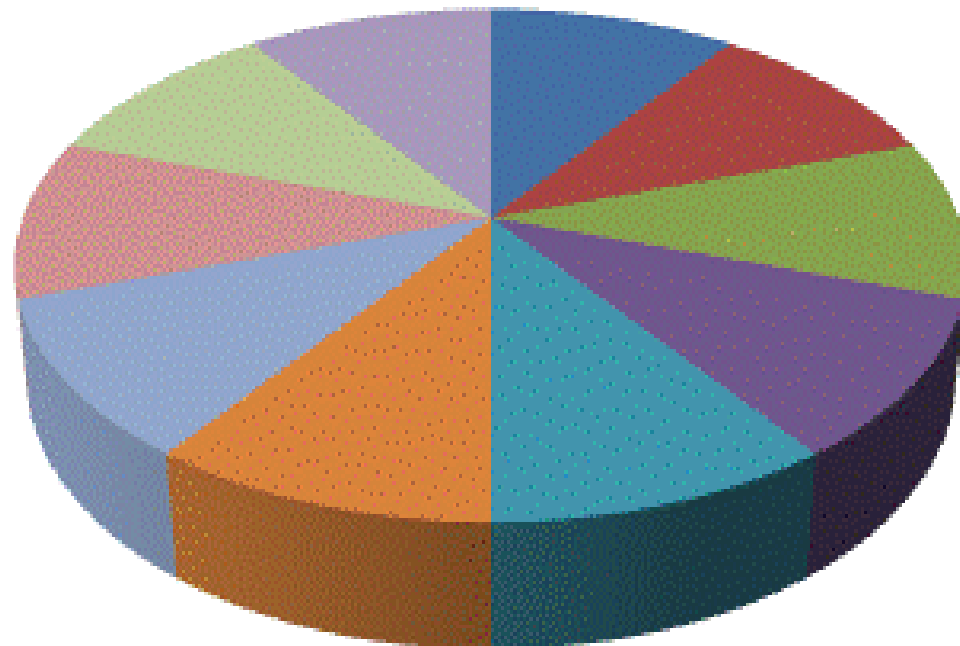
KM Model Curriculum Challenge

- Define a model curriculum which is grounded in the 10 KM Competencies against which any KM degree or certificate can be measured

- Covers each competency with combination of traditional courses, short executive style courses, and workshops which new and working professionals can use to acquire and build their KM knowledge and skills

- Will help to ensure predictability and reliability of skill sets and knowledge foundations for KM professionals

- Difference between "recognizing KM" and being able to "do KM"

Proposed Core KM Courses

1. Foundational Principles of Knowledge Management (Survey course as prerequisite)
2. Organizational Learning
3. Communities of Practice
4. Economics of Information
5. Effective Knowledge Management (Evaluation)
6. Foundations of Document Management
7. Knowledge Organization Systems

Intellectual Capital Management Curriculum

- Competency Management
- Economics of Information
- Economies of Network Industries
- Epistemology and Knowledge Theory
- Expertise Management
- Global Talent Management
- Human Capital Analytics
- High Performance Organizations
- Information Privacy Issues

- Intellectual Capital Management
- Intergenerational Workforce Issues
- Knowledge Economy
- Management of Knowledge Workers
- Mentoring and Coaching
- Talent Leadership and Management
- The Virtual Global Workforce
- Workforce Planning

Collaboration and Communities Curriculum

- Communities of Practice
- Crowdsourcing Methods
- Design of the Physical Environment
- Chaos and Complexity Theory
- Coalition Building
- Collaboration Processes

- Facilitation and Arbitration
- Knowledge Networks
- Peer Review Processes
- Social Capital and Collaboration
- Social Computing

Culture and Communication Curriculum

- Organizational Culture

- Change Management

- Managing Multicultural Organizations

- Business Narrative and Storytelling

- Organizational Communication for Knowledge Organizations

- Rewards and Recognition

Knowledge Operations Curriculum

- Business Analytics
- Business Capability Modeling
- Business Process Management
- Business Process Re-engineering/Re-design
- Business Reports Design
- Business Rules Design
- Business Service Costing & Valuation

- Data Governance
- Data Management
- Data Mining
- Decision Sciences and Systems
- Introduction to Business Architecture
- Workflow Analysis
- Workflow Automation
- Workload Management and Balancing

Knowledge Architecture Curriculum

- Architecture Compliance Methods

- Introduction to Applications Architecture

- Introduction to Enterprise Architecture

- Introduction to Information Architecture

- Introduction to Knowledge Architecture

- Multilingual Architecture

- Ontological Engineering

- Requirements Analysis

- Semantic Web Applications

- Systems Analysis

- User Centered Design/User Experience

What we learned about the process

- Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate – listen, listen, listen

- Collaborate within the department and across departments

- Collaborate outside the university with professional associations, professional communities, KM institutes and trainers

- KM is a dynamic field so it is better to be agile in both your courses and your faculty members – give your faculty the support to propose new courses as the topics emerge

What we learned about sustainability

- This is a young academic discipline – like computer science in the 1960's

- We're not only growing the discipline but we're trying teach it while practice and the body of knowledge are developing

- Research into actual KM topics is where we see another big gap – faculty need to collaborate with practitioners to develop high quality research results and methods

- Just as chemistry has many theories and models, knowledge management also needs a rich research foundation

NEXT STEPS – ON-SITE AT GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Engaging the Larger Community in the Discussion

- The next step is to engage a larger number from the KM Community in the discussion of these four issues

- We were able to provide a platform to hear from the thought leaders in these four areas through the webinars

- There are many others with ideas to contribute – the next round will include 20 panelists and we hope many more community participants

- Expand the discussion further through open working groups who continue the dialog and engage with others in an open community