

6.1 Concept-based learning: Introducing the CUEGIS concepts

The world is moving at a tremendous rate. Going no one knows where. We must prepare our children, not for the world of the past. Not for our world. But for their world. The world of the future.

John Dewey (1859–1952), American educational leader, philosopher and psychologist

What is concept-based learning?

Concept-based learning (CBL), as defined by education consultant Dr. H. Lynn Erickson, is a three-dimensional model that frames **facts** (content) and **skills** with **concepts** of the Business Management (BM) course – change, culture, ethics, globalization, innovation and strategy. The rigour of the BM course creates two approaches to teaching and learning: either students can be told what they need to know (based on factual knowledge and skills in BM) or teachers can get their students excited enough to discover and deepen their understanding of BM for themselves.

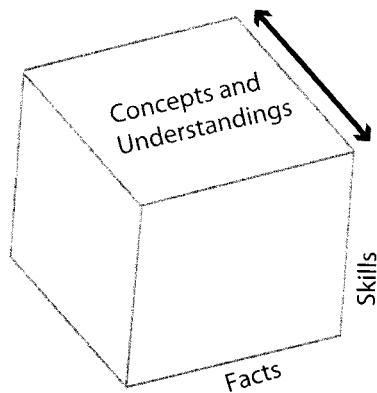


Figure 6.1.a The three-dimensional framework of concept-based learning

The twenty-first century learner lives in a mobile and digital world with access to facts and information at their fingertips. As educationalists, we cannot expect our students to learn ever more content in BM. However, we have to help students to connect the factual knowledge to more permanent (timeless) concepts to advance knowledge and understandings (see Table 6.1.a on page 558). In BM, concepts are used to give students the tools necessary to make sense of the world. Supporters of CBL argue that it is through these conceptual lenses (tools) that learning truly begins to make sense for students.

Concept-based learning is *not* about learning facts and figures in isolation. Instead, CBL is about encouraging students to:

- think beyond the factual contents of the BM course
- be active learners rather than passive learners (for example, there is huge scope in BM to use learning technologies to engage our learners)
- be inquiring and curious learners who want to further their understanding and knowledge (perhaps through the use of real-world case studies that would interest our students)
- make connections of knowledge in BM to the CUEGIS concepts (change, culture, ethics, globalization, innovation and strategy), i.e. ideas transferable across BM topics
- apply their knowledge and thinking to solve problems using an organized framework (CUEGIS)
- develop a deeper understanding of BM topics that learners find of personal interest, relevance and meaning
- use multiple sources and media to gain knowledge
- recognise the transferability of knowledge to familiar and unfamiliar situations
- discuss and collaborate with peers to progress in their learning
- organize and make sense of their own learning
- make meaning of their learning
- think critically and creatively to solve problems
- extend knowledge to understanding
- own and drive their own learning in a synergistic way.

Table 6.1.a The difference between knowledge and understanding

Knowledge	Understanding
Factual awareness, connected to a particular time, place or situation. Knowledge changes over time.	Conceptual appreciation of factual knowledge that transfers through time and across situations and cultures. Concepts are timeless.
Example: According to F.W. Taylor (1911), people are motivated by money, so scientific management can be used to create a one 'best way' to increase productivity.	There is no single way to motivate all people all of the time in all situations across all cultures. Change can bring about positive and negative impacts on motivation.
Example 2: Budgets can be used as a control tool to ensure managers are held accountable for their activities.	Budgets can constrain innovation, yet are shaped by the culture of the organization and are vital to its business strategy.

Concept-based learning in Business Management

The traditional curriculum is designed to be 'topic based' (or content based) rather than 'concept based'. However, critics of content-based curricula argue that the model is outdated (just ask Google!) and does not encourage twenty-first century learners to develop personal intellects. CBL is ideal for the BM course as it promotes a more holistic approach to create a deeper understanding of the subject content. The CUEGIS concepts create six conceptual lenses through which students (and teachers) investigate, analyse and evaluate factual content to create a deeper understanding of Business Management.

One of the arguments in favour of a CBL approach to BM is that a content-driven syllabus, which requires students to memorise facts and information, rarely engages learners or challenges their intellects. Motivation experts such as Pink (see Unit 2.4) suggest that being personally engaged drives motivation. The same applies to CBL – students who are personally and intellectually engaged are far more likely to be motivated to learn. Compare the different experiences for learners who face 'chalk and talk' lessons on the following topics (in an abstract and unengaging way) compared to using a CBL approach:

- The 4Ps of Marketing (Unit 4.5) – students can be challenged in their personal learning and application by being involved in an interschool marketing competition (<http://goo.gl/dC8Kv5>).
- Business organizations (Unit 1.2) – students can gain hands-on experience in setting up and running a business organization by being involved in Young Enterprise (<http://goo.gl/neXMCC>) or the Junior Achievement Company Programme (<http://goo.gl/NuJ7zo>).

- Teamworking as a form of non-financial motivation (Unit 2.4) – students can get more engaged in their learning and understanding of how teamworking can work as a form of motivation by taking the Marshmallow Challenge (<http://goo.gl/rcp1>).

An alternative way to view CBL in Business Management is to use the **triangle model** (see Figure 6.1.b). This consists of the **content** of the syllabus, integrated with business case studies to provide a **context** to the learning, and embedded in **concepts** to transcend understanding of Business Management. An example of a classroom activity that embraces these building blocks is to get students to investigate how marketing strategy is affected by Culture, Ethics, Globalization and Innovation in a country of their choice.

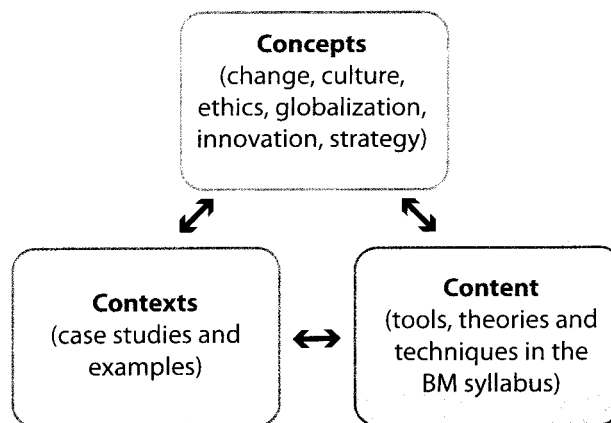


Figure 6.1.b The triangle model (building blocks) of Business Management © IBO, 2014

The CUEGIS concepts in examination questions

Examples of the types of questions in Paper 2 Section C (SL and HL) include:

- With reference to an organization that you have studied, examine how innovation and change have brought about a change in human resource management.
- With reference to an organization or country of your choice, examine how promotion in the marketing mix is affected by culture and ethics.
- With reference to a multinational company you have studied, discuss the importance of innovation and globalization in the company's product strategy.
- Examine how the concepts of globalization and ethics have impacted on the extended marketing mix for a company of your choice.
- With reference to one organization that you have studied, compare and contrast the importance of innovation and of culture for research and development.
- Discuss how ethical considerations and cultural differences may influence employer–employee relations in an organization that you have studied.
- Examine how innovation and cultural differences may influence marketing strategies in an organization of your choice.

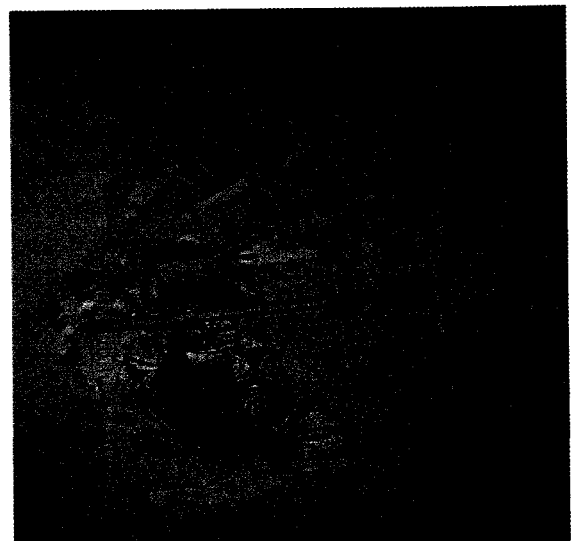
Concept-based learning – Give it a go

Decide how you or your colleagues can best move from a traditional content-driven approach of teaching a topic (such as corporate social responsibility) by applying the triangle model, i.e. how would you move from the 'content' (of teaching CSR) to the triangular model of 'content, contexts, concepts'?

How would you integrate the conceptual lenses (of change, culture, ethics, globalization, innovation and strategy) throughout the 37 topics in the Business Management course? Consider the following example for Budgeting. (See Unit 3.9 for more detail on Budgeting.)

Budgeting and the CUEGIS concepts

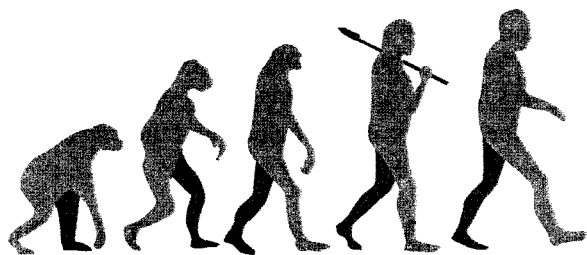
- **Change** – The changing business environment may require adjustments to corporate plans and budgets, but does this mean that flexible budgets are better than zero budgeting? How do changes caused by natural disasters impact on the budgeting of businesses?
- **Culture** – How do corporate culture and cross-border cultures impact on how budgets are set and managed? How does organizational culture and the impact of the leader influence budgeting?
- **Ethics** – All budget holders are responsible for the money of their organization, yet this responsibility carries ethical considerations. History has shown that budgetary powers have corrupted many business leaders, across all industries.
- **Globalization** – The rise in cross-border trade due to globalization has enabled larger scale operations, enabling firms to benefit from economies of scale (see Unit 1.6). Whilst this reduces the average costs of production, exchange rate fluctuations can cause problems for budget holders. How does the drive of globalization and overseas operations impact on the budgets of businesses?
- **Innovation** – To what extent does budgeting constrain innovation?
- **Strategy** – Budgets are integral to any business strategy as finance is needed to fund all business ventures, e.g. a growth strategy entails larger budgets to be allocated to finance larger scale operations.



Using the CUEGIS concepts in Business Management

Change

When you're finished changing, you're finished.
Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790), one of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America



US novelist, Ellen Glasgow (1873–1945) said, “All change is not growth, as all movement is not forward”. In other words, change should only be pursued if there is a clear purpose. Figure 6.1.c shows the two different forces of change. **Driving forces** push for change whilst **restraining forces** act against change. Due to the conflicting forces, change must be managed within organizations if they are to move forward and remain competitive. The relative strength of these forces determines whether the change should take place.

Before instigating any organizational change, managers must ask themselves:

- Why is change needed?
- What do we hope to achieve with such change?
- Who is affected by this change and how are they likely to react to the change?
- How will we know that the change has been successfully implemented?

This set of questions is recurring as businesses constantly face change. A popular management tool to aid this process is **force field analysis** (see Unit 1.7), which acts as a framework for helping managers to understand the pressures for and against any change situation. By identifying these forces, managers are able to assess the effects that the forces may have and to decide on a course of action. Managers can then plan to strengthen the forces supporting a decision for change, and reduce the impacts of opposition to it (see Figure 6.1.c).

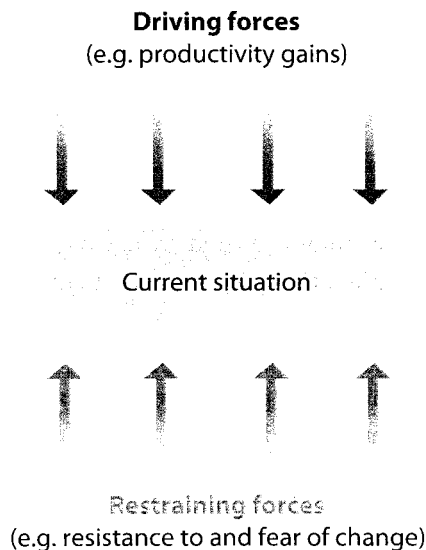


Figure 6.1.c Forces of change

There are usually four phases of change (FRIA), all of which need to be managed although to varying degrees:

- Fear of the unknown
- Rejection due to misunderstandings of the need or purpose of change
- Interest (buy-in from the staff)
- Acceptance of the need for and purpose of change.

Case study

Businesses that have changed their names include Toys R Us (formerly known as Children's Supermarts). Japan's Nintendo was created in 1889 as Marafuku Company. Nissan was originally Datsun. Panasonic was called Matsushita Electric Corporation. Pepsi was called Brad's Drink. Nike started off as Blue Ribbon Sports. Google was originally called BackRub!

Theory of Knowledge

If it is not possible to teach everything that is important, isn't it more important to reconsider what is worth teaching?

Case study

For generations, photography was synonymous with Kodak. Founded in 1889, Kodak was one of the best-known brands of the 20th century. However, with the rapid rise in demand for digital cameras, the market for camera films (dominated by Kodak) died a pretty quick death. At the turn of the millennium, Kodak had clearly ignored the change of times, having expanded its global workforce and increased production of the old technology (camera film). By 2006, Kodak was selling an obsolete product. In 2013, the company filed for bankruptcy protection.

Culture

A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.

Marcus Garvey (1887–1940) Jamaican political leader and entrepreneur

Culture is about the norms of an organization, a country or other social grouping. Culture shapes the values, beliefs and customs of people (see Unit 2.5). HSBC's global slogan 'The World's Local Bank' highlights the importance of cultural awareness when doing business in overseas markets. Take a look at some of their advertisements available on YouTube to gain a better understanding of the importance of local knowledge for multinational companies:

- Cultural differences in dining between English and Chinese etiquette: <http://goo.gl/eOatfd>
- Cultural differences when travelling on the train: <http://goo.gl/mjXTtl>
- A series of seven HSBC advertisements are available here on YouTube: <http://goo.gl/lw7k2x>

This short clip from *National Geographic* follows several Sudanese men who travel to the USA and discover some interesting cultural differences: <http://goo.gl/umPbt>. What lessons can managers learn from the awareness of cultural differences and the role of culture in consumer behaviour?

Other culture-related questions relevant to Business Management include:

- What are the cultural norms in your country regarding work–life balance?
- Do you know about the business etiquette in your country? What about in other countries? See Box 4.7.c for some examples.
- What does 'human rights' mean in your country? How is this translated in the workplace?
- How are equal opportunities interpreted in your country? To what extent do gender inequalities exist in your culture? What does 'inequality' mean? To whom?
- Should all schools abandon their homework policies to allow students (and parents) to take more ownership of their own learning? Wouldn't this better promote the traits of the IB Learner Profile?

Culture has a direct impact on our learning. Take the following theorists as example. Do you know what they all have in common?

- H. Gantt – Gantt charts (Unit 1.7)
- F. Herzberg – Motivation theory (Unit 2.4)
- D. H. Pink – Motivation theory (Unit 2.4)
- Maslow – Motivation theory (Unit 2.4)
- F.W. Taylor – Motivation theory (Unit 2.4)
- J.S. Adams – Motivation theory (Unit 2.4)
- John Paul Kotter – Resistance to change (Unit 2.6)
- Philip Kotler – Social marketing (Unit 4.1)
- Jack Trout – Perception mapping (Unit 4.2)
- E.J. McCarthy – The 4Ps of marketing / the marketing mix (Unit 4.5)
- J.C. Levinson – Guerrilla marketing (Unit 4.5)
- B.H. Booms & M.J. Bitner – The extended marketing mix / the 7Ps (Unit 4.6).

Apart from they all feature in the BM syllabus(!), the theorists are all from the USA. How does cultural bias affect our knowledge and understanding of BM? Does this matter?

Language is an integral part of culture. Even in countries that share a common language (such as Australia, USA and UK), cultural differences are embedded in language (see Table 6.1.b).

Table 6.1.b English language and cultural differences

	
Dummy	Pacifier
Boot	Trunk
Service station	Gas station
Footpath	Sidewalk
Jumper	Sweater
Jam	Jelly
Bill	Check
Lift	Elevator
Sauce	Ketchup
Soft drink	Soda
Biscuit	Cookie
Sweets	Candy
Nappies	Diapers
	
Anorak	Parka
English person	Pom
Sausages	Snag
Underpants	Jocks
Trainers	Runners
It's fine	She's apples
Excellent	Ace
Chocolate	Chokkie
Flip flops	Thongs

Ethics

You cannot make yourself feel something you do not feel, but you can make yourself do right in spite of your feelings. Pearl S. Buck (1892–1973), US writer and novelist

Ethics are the socially accepted moral principles that guide decision-making, based on the collective belief of what is right and what is wrong. The rather subjective nature of ethics means it is not always clear what is 'right' or 'wrong', especially when looking at different cases from around the world. Consider the examples below and discuss the extent to which you think each case is ethical?

- In 2013, Gareth Bale (aged 24) became the world's most expensive football player having switched from London's Tottenham Hotspur to Spain's Real Madrid, who paid a world record 100 million euros (\$137.7 million) for his services over six years. Bale's weekly wages were reported to be around \$413 000, i.e. \$59 000 a day or more than \$40 every minute, even when asleep! The UK prime minister's daily salary is around \$622.
- In 2014, the United Arab Emirates introduced a law for all new mothers to breastfeed their babies for at least two years (if they are physically able to), banning all forms of baby milk powder. The law also allows the husband to sue his wife if she refuses to breastfeed their baby.
- In 2014, a six-year-old schoolboy in the UK made headline news when he was suspended from school for four days – he had brought a cheese snack into school as part of his lunch. The 'Mini Cheddars' were deemed to contravene the school's healthy eating policy.
- *The Education Post* reported that Hong Kong parents send their babies to private tutors at the age of just 15 months. Are Hong Kong people forcing their children to learn too much too fast? Isn't free play more important?

