

SSHRC: Knowledge Synthesis Report, October 2015

Training of Management in the Arts and Culture Wendy Reid, Audrey-Anne Cyr and Renaud Legoux, HEC Montréal

Key Messages

The arts and cultural sectors are sources of community and social well-being and international recognition for Canada. They provide cultural and symbolic identity for the country. They also generate employment and economic impact in communities. So we have proposed a study of the literature on arts and cultural management guided by current changes in the environment to understand how the structure and dynamics of the field are evolving. What changes for pedagogy emerge from the field as it evolves?

Ideas about art and the values of management have made uneasy bedfellows since the formal introduction of arts management in the mid-20th century. Intended by funding organizations as a solution for sustainability by funding organizations at the time of its introduction, arts and cultural management training also provides legitimacy for arts managers in a world dominated by business logics. But the training field has an uneasy relationship since many programs are found outside of business schools. This separation seen potentially as 'loose coupling' may be a coping mechanism for the field to digest the business logics without excessive intrusion. The organizations also have complex dynamics that can be challenging to solve.

The study and training of arts and cultural management has seen tremendous growth throughout the world in the last several decades. However, a number of paradoxes appear throughout the published texts of the field which is not surprising for this field. Balancing paradoxes is a necessary management skill in the field. Five paradoxes were found in this literature which provide insights regarding the developments in the field and recommendations for future training of these managers.

1. Art versus management
2. Research led versus practice inspired pedagogy
3. Arts and culture versus creative industries
4. National or international 'professional' accreditation and standards versus regional orientation
5. Institutional versus entrepreneurship and innovation

Ultimately those being trained as managers in the field need to be nimble and creative in finding solutions. They need to understand the generalities of managing creative people while being respectful of long traditions, of the specificities within individual arts disciplines and of local and regional cultures. Training for this flexibility could be informed by recent research about complex and pluralistic organizations as well as entrepreneurship and innovation and somewhat less about traditional business logics. Technical skills are necessary in the field but a larger sense of the role of the arts and their potential for social cohesion is also important. Both new enterprises and established organizations need to be kept in mind as training evolves. How tuition fees affect access to this training may have some influence on how many and how diverse the student population could be in this field. Fees and income for most artists are rarely munificent.

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Executive summary

The arts and cultural sectors are sources of community and social well-being and international recognition for Canada. They provide cultural and symbolic identity for the country. They also generate employment and economic impact in a community. So we have proposed a study of the literature on arts and cultural management with an eye to changes in the environment to understand how the structure and dynamics of the field are changing. What changes for pedagogy emerge from the field as it evolves?

Ideas about art and the values of management have made uneasy bedfellows since the formal introduction of arts management in the mid-20th century. Initially promoted by newly created arts councils in the US, Canada and the UK as well as corporations who wished to expand financial support of the arts, the notion of arts management was intended to stabilize the sector. Since this time, the number of arts management training programs and specialized journals has increased exponentially. However, the solution has not been that simple. Researchers have observed that paradoxes are an important feature of the field rendering our understanding of the field as extremely complex. Despite impressions that paradoxes are paralytic and filled with negative tensions, the field lives with this balancing act regularly. Managing tensions is a key skill learned by managers in the field.

The feature of this synthesis is an exploration of the paradoxes that have emerged from an historical study of the major publications from the early years of the field. The practical aspects of these paradoxes is outlined here:

1. Arts versus management:

In early years, artists and early managers in the field found the application of managerial logics to the dynamics of art production and dissemination uncomfortable. But a number of legitimizing mechanisms emerged early and have supported the development of the field as management became defined in terms of the field itself. The first training programs were mainly situated in prestigious business schools like Harvard and UCLA. Key texts of the period provide both past history of managers in the arts as well as business management history and theories. Some of these texts remain popular today but more recently others have applied ideas such as theories of strategy from Michael Porter to the field. The legitimizing process continues.

However, numerous other texts through the years have provided rich portraits of organizational dynamics that are not rational and appear very contradictory, demonstrating the challenges of a straight application of rationally based business theories to the field. As well, the non-profit form is dominant in the arts field and this provides other logics as explanations.

The study and training of arts and cultural management has always been placed as a special program apart from other management contexts. In many schools, it is placed in arts faculties. This separation appears as ‘loose coupling’ that may protect against the influence of business and the conflict of values with those of art.

Recommendations:

- a) Arts management programs should continue to recognize the complexity of management in the field and ensure teaching tools that help balance and manage the paradoxes and complexities.
- b) Opening up to management theorizing that looks at pluralistic organizations may help to understand the dynamics of the field and assist students and managers to consider their dilemmas more appropriately.
- c) The continued dominance of managerial logic in the field is a topic to be understood since these people are employers and funders.
- d) Remaining in separate programs may help enrich the field since many are found in schools outside of business faculties.

2. Research led versus practice inspired pedagogy:

Reluctant managers in the arts field have often reported a preference for hiring graduates that have extensive work experience. Faculty also talk about the potential for great enrichment by experiential learning. In fact, in certain circles there is resistance to management theorizing and research (AAAE). However, many in management schools will argue that pedagogy led by research is superior and generates critical thinking. It may also provide new insights that enable innovation and better solutions. Clearly both are useful, but this tension may be related to the previous observation of loose coupling. Experience in the field presumably provides orientation to the institutionalized norms and ensures a continuity of the logics interior to the field itself without too much interference from other logics.

Recommendations:

- a) A balance of research-led pedagogy and applied exercises and internships appears to be an appropriate balance.
- b) Research-led pedagogy should take advantage of the recent insights available regarding pluralistic organizations in order to understand better the complexity of the field.

3. Arts and culture versus creative industries:

Recent policy and research focus on creative industries and creativity has produced a broader and more generalized theorizing of creative organizations. It has become a substantial research field and the findings enable an analysis and descriptive view across arts disciplines and corporate forms. It separates itself from the normative tone of the teaching texts and general promotional and protective stance that the arts sector adopts. Its point of view may well bridge the separation that has occurred between the arts and the cultural industries. As compared to arts management, there are no teaching texts on the creative industries. However, entrepreneurship supported by several texts has become a pedagogical topic in the field of arts management training and this may be the response that is the most useful for the field at the moment. The new presence of creative industries may be a break through or a distraction. What is its relationship with arts management training?

Recommendations:

- a) Teaching texts that transfer the insights in the creative industries to application would be a worthy investment in order that those in arts management training may take advantage of the insights.
- b) Complex cases that provide those same insights are increasingly appearing. More would be welcome.

4. National or international 'professional' accreditation and standards versus regional orientation

From early days, the notion of professionalization has been discussed. However, judgement is ambiguous or even conflictual about how standardized and accredited the field should become. In Europe, the potential homogenizing effect of the Bologna Process has moved this notion forward, but researchers have commented on how it creates insensitivities to the local language and systems. However, even without full agreement about accreditation across the US, those in that country argue for greater knowledge about international culture and systems in order to respond to the increasing internationalization of the art field.

Recommendations:

- a) Teaching texts and cases that provide insights about managing at an international level would support creating sensitivities and diplomacy.
- b) Developing cases that transfer important teaching concepts into local contexts would enable appropriately local understanding.
- c) Teaching management emerging from Western applications may be limited in regions in the Global South and elsewhere not traditionally resourced like the West.

5. Institutional versus entrepreneurship and innovation

Teaching creativity and innovation has certainly become a major interest in business schools and in most industries. It is being applied across many fields and understanding the techniques of creativity generation may help with responding to change as is often required in the field of arts and culture. However, the specificity of the disciplines and organizational structures in the arts and cultural field may be lost as a result. As well, while entrepreneurship is an important phenomenon in the field of the arts and culture and has been for decades in North America, an extensive number of established organizations also exist. Training for management in those organizations as well as for entrepreneurship involves differences and similarities and there may be special considerations that programs need to develop to ensure that these differences are part of the curriculum.

Artists who have traditionally been trained for high performance careers may still need that training but allowing for exposure to other entrepreneurial and career management notions may well aid in their ability to find career solutions and art expression.

Recommendations:

- a) Entrepreneurship and innovation should be a part of every curriculum, but so should management for established arts and cultural organizations.
- b) Techniques of creativity may be useful for managers in all disciplines in the field, however, there should be caution to ensure insight for each discipline and its history of practice in order to ensure authenticity in creativity.
- c) Exposing students in professional arts schools to principles of entrepreneurship and career management will be useful, but caution needs to prevail to enable high performance achievement.
- d) Principles of social innovations and understanding the potential role of the arts in social cohesion and health would also be useful to teach to both artists and arts managers. This approach builds on entrepreneurship but also shapes a different notion of the definition of art.