LOST BUT FOUND: BRINGING STRATEGY PRACTICE BACK INTO STRATEGY TEACHING

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of strategic management is important to business schools in general (Mutch, 2021; Priem, 2018) and students, in particular (Grant & Baden-Fuller, 2018). It has often been positioned as an integrating, capstone course, considered "one of the most important aspects of business programs" (Bell et al., 2018: 235). However, its teaching tends to be either 'theory heavy' (Buckley, 2018; Grant, 2008) or 'plunging-in biased' (Bhardwaj et al., 2018), that is, having the tendency to solve problems without understanding them first. This neglects the cognitive and affective development of strategy students (Grant & Baden-Fuller, 2018), their critical thinking (Priem, 2018) and diversity skills (Lindsay, Jack, & Ambrosini, 2018). A gap has, therefore, opened up between what is done in the classroom and what the discipline (Vaara & Faÿ, 2011), students, businesses (Mintzberg, 2004) and policy makers require (Mutch, 2021). The teaching of strategic management has struggled to fit with the needs, the ambiguities and complexities of the business environment (Bell et al., 2018) and the complexities of strategy making in practice.

To this end, some scholars have recently called for practice-based approaches to teaching management (Feldman & Worline, 2016). Yet, the "few empirical studies specific to the strategy teaching discipline ... don't focus on the unique aspects of the strategy course (they were not intended to do so), and they cannot by themselves produce a rigorous body of knowledge on strategy teaching" Priem (2018: 383). While some important steps have been made recently to advance our understanding of the social and the material aspects of teaching change management (Loon, 2021) and basic strategy concepts (Huang, Wright, & Middleton, 2021), practice-based approaches remain largely under-researched and poorly theorized.

The turn to practice-based approaches to strategy research provide a unique opportunity to address the limitations of strategic management teaching as it suggests focusing on strategy practices, praxis, practitioners (Vaara & Whittington, 2012) and the profession of strategists (Whittington, Cailluet, & Yakis-Douglas, 2011). Such an approach is promising not only for shedding new light on the teaching of classic and emergent models and frameworks of strategic management (Wright, Paroutis, & Blettner, 2013), but also on non-executive organisational members (Floyd & Lane, 2000; Regnér, 2003) and external actors in the strategy process (Hautz, Seidl, & Whittington, 2017), in addition to the traditional focus on 'managerial elites' (Burgelman et al., 2018).

The strategy practice community has made significant contributions to document and theorise the mundane (Whittington, 2006) yet significant things that organization members do in their everyday life to develop, implement and change the course of strategic initiatives. As noted by Jarzabkowski and Whittington (2008: 284), a practice-based approach has provided grounds for better understanding "how strategy frameworks and tools are used [and] might thus inspire students to move beyond cognitive boundaries that look for tools to provide answers, to reflecting on the use of tools and understanding their implications, limitations, and aids to judgment." As such, a practice-based approach balances "theory heavy" (Grant, 2008) and "management centric" (Bower, 2008) approaches to teaching strategy, as "Strategy-as-practice rejects the choice… between theory and practice" (Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008: 282).

In this paper, we contend that what may have been lost in strategy teaching, through over emphasis on theory and plunging-in biases, is an attention to the 'practices' of strategy. Many of the critiques of strategy teaching, and the current demands upon practitioners, can be addressed by more explicit recourse to a practice perspective on strategy teaching. Through identifying five core practice concepts and using an abductive

method, we report on a longitudinal comparative video graphic analysis of two outstanding masters level strategy modules, to identify strategy practices in use. Each strategy module teaches very similar strategy content and with similar stated objectives, but comparison reveals that core strategy practice pillars are deployed very differently to very different effects. In addition, additional practices are identified that extend the pillars of strategy practice. These findings show how a practice perspective can go a long way to advance the theory and practice of strategic management teaching.

THE STATE OF STRATEGY TEACHING

The roots of strategic management teaching can be traced to the teaching of the first business policy course at Harvard Business School (HBS) in 1912 (Cruikshank, 1987), where executives came to class to discuss practical problems in their businesses including strategic issues that students could actively discuss and debate (Greiner, Bhambri, & Cummings, 2003). From these beginnings, the HBS case method evolved and recognized the uniqueness and non-generalizability of every company situation. The learning emphasised inductive reasoning, sharpening not only analytical skills, but also intuition and behavioural skills (Christensen, Andrews, & Bower, 1973). However, something now has been lost, as strategy teaching in leading business schools has drifted away from the original practice (Bower, 2008).

Strategy teaching has evolved in two ways, either; i) moving strongly towards emphasis on theory (Grant, 2008), hence becoming 'theory-biased' (Buckley, 2018), often leaning towards industrial economics, and analysis at the explicit knowledge level (Greiner et al., 2003: 405), or ii) relying excessively on a case-based approach (Joshi et al., 2005) that is denuded in the sense that it does not lead to deep learning and critical thinking (Albert & Grzeda, 2015). In this case-orientation, recent critics emphasise the 'plunging-in bias' (Bhardwaj et al., 2018), or the tendency among students to use the concept,

framework or tool that is closest at hand to solve a strategic problem without further reflection and consideration of the appropriateness of the tool.

These developments are in opposition to the original conceptions of strategy teaching that privileged inductive, open-ended, problem solving approaches to learning (Bower, 2008) that also encouraged reflective practices and the strategists fine-tuned judgment as reliant on his/her sensibility and decisiveness (Kornberger & Engberg-Pedersen, 2021). Indeed, strategic management theory and analytical concepts are not inherently capable of carrying the burden of developing strategic thinkers (Mintzberg, 2004)—they need to be "complemented by judgment, insight, intuition, creativity, and social and communicative skills" (Grant & Baden-Fuller, 2018: 322), competencies that are acquired from deliberate teaching and learning practice. The literature, however, reveals several areas in which the teaching of strategy practice tends to fall.

Spatial Embeddedness

The context within which learning takes place needs to be considered in strategy teaching (Chu & Tse, 1992). Conventional lectures limit the use of the learning space such that teachers and students get 'stuck in the classroom'. There are examples of use of experiential exercises (e.g., Adams-Webber & Thomas, 1987; Rashford & De Figueiredo, 2011) and real real-life elements have benefits for teaching strategic management, but these alone are insufficient for the professional development of students (Monaghan, 2011). Combining self-directed learning skills with collaborative learning in the form of 'communities of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) can help, but despite some recent attempts (Lohrke, Mazzei, & Frownfelter-Lohrke, 2021; Szyliowicz & Green, 2019), examples of practice-based teaching in strategy that extend beyond the classroom are rare.

Experiential Learning

Several studies have criticised the strategy field for being excessively reliant on case based

teaching at the expense of experiential learning (Joshi et al., 2005). Strategic management teaching has often been criticized for being too conceptual, as opposed to experiential (Navarro, 2008; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002; Rubin & Dierdorff, 2013). Experiential exercises are associated with the positive effects of bringing theories into "life" (Joshi et al., 2005), changing students' cognitive structures, attitudes, expanding portfolios of skills (Johnson & Johnson, 2017), negotiation, leadership, communication skills (Delise & Mello, 2017; Rashford & De Figueiredo, 2011), and deepening student's relationship with the companies in the local community (Robinson, Sherwood, & DePaolo, 2010). Experiential activities can tease out practitioners' interests and real-life challenges and combine them with their interest to theorize them thus showing that "relevance and theory are not incompatible" (Johnson, 2000: 422).

Active Learning

Case study teaching has been criticised for being static, where the teachers—rather than the students—did the thinking and analysis (Siciliano & McAleer, 1997), acting as 'sages on a stage'. Siciliano and McAleer (1997) suggest that students administer the case discussion and Corner et al. (2006) argue that an inductive approach improves interaction and student involvement in strategy case analyses. For strategy teaching, active learning that integrates analysis and synthesis and allows greater creativity and socialization between teachers and peers improves student learning and problem solving (Petress, 2008). These abilities seem particularly suited for the profession of strategic management where organisational firm problems (or opportunities) are often presented in a reductionist manner (Bhardwaj et al., 2018), concealing that they are in fact complex "wicked problems" (Grewatsch, Kennedy, & Bansal, 2021). This also focuses attention on practice as a complex nexus of practices as opposed to isolated pursuits of action (Jarzabkowski et

al., 2016), but there is little evidence of how these behaviours are captured in strategic management courses.

Reflective Learning

Conventional case study teaching has been criticised for not leading to deep learning and critical thinking (Albert & Grzeda, 2015). This criticism can be addressed through students developing *reflective skills*. A key challenge in this process is what some educators have called "strategic thinking" (Liedtka, 1998), denoting the domain-specific type of thinking and reflection expected from strategists (Porter, 1987). Liedtka and Rosenblum (1998) argue that "thinking is an often-neglected component in strategy courses" (p. 285), and that focus should be placed on "how to shape and respond in a continuous and interactive way" (p. 286) than how to analyse and plan. They emphasise the importance of "reflective conversation with a situation" and "shaping process" (p. 287) to generate richer understanding of strategy making. To Greiner et al. (2003) the thinking aspect develops a strategic mind-set, enabling students to "act smart". In doing so, they explained that students should acquire knowledge-in-action through learning by doing. Reflective skills enable students "to think more deeply about what they have learned, learn more about themselves, and engage in critical inquiry that can change their current beliefs and assumptions" (Inamdar & Roldan, 2013: 749).

In summary, critics of strategy teaching have commented on its reductionist approach that appears to hold little of relevance to its intended audiences, that contemporary management education is devoid of real world practice (Mintzberg, 2004; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). For Mintzberg (2004), strategy teaching focuses on only one of the three poles—that is, science (i.e., logic and analysis)—while largely disregarding the art (i.e., imagination and vision) and craft (i.e., experiential and the visceral) of management. Craft requires experience, for "where there is no experience, there is no room for craft:

inexperienced students simply cannot understand the practice" (Mintzberg, 2004: 10).
Indeed, business schools have overemphasised knowledge-by-representation (e.g., models
and frameworks) at the expense of knowledge-by-exemplification, which is
"demonstrative, creative and unreflectively performative" (Chia & Holt, 2008: 471).

A PRACTICE PERSPECTIVE TO STATEGY TEACHING

The strategy-as-practice literature is based on the fundamental proposition that strategy is
not something that organizations have, but of something that people in the organization
perform (Whittington, 2006, 2007). Strategy is defined as "the detailed processes and
practices which constitute the day-to-day activities of organization life *and* which relate to
strategic outcomes" (Johnson, Melin, & Whittington, 2003: 3). By doing that, a practice
view on strategy work both achieves a micro-level view on strategy (Jarzabkowski & Spee,
2009), focused on the doings and sayings of managers (Vaara & Whittington, 2012), but
also straddles the pervasive content-process divide by defining strategy work as being
contingent on organizational outcomes (Johnson et al., 2003).

A practice perspective is also not meant to attenuate the importance of practice over
theory as "the term "practice" in this context does not refer to rendering pragmatic insights
from management research for a practitioner audience, nor is it meant to imply separation
of academic theory from practice" (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008: 462). As such, it simply
"does not make sense to talk about either knowledge or practice without the other"
(Orlikowski, 2002: 250). Here we show how practice theory may help address the
challenges of everyday strategizing that pass unnoticed (or worse, are neglected) in our
common preoccupation with strategy teaching as embedded in strategy tools and
techniques. A practice approach helps us to decontextualize reifications made of strategy in
current teaching practice and allows us to recontextualize some elements of strategy
teaching such that they are more responsive to the ever-changing needs of practitioners.

We do so by outlining five important ontological dimensions of practice relevant to the teaching of strategy: activity sites, temporality, relational deliberation, purposeful orientation, and material arrangement.

Activity sites. For practice theory, not only the doings and sayings of practitioners matter—the place, or site in which those activities are carried out is likely to transpire through those activities as all social life "is inherently tied to a kind of context in which it transpires" (Schatzki, 2005: 467). Because activities are both place-bound and unbound to a physical location, Schatzki (2003) distinguishes between the *physical location* of things and the *teleological site* of events (the occurrence of things). Hence, the separation is between where things are and where they take place. For teaching strategy, this implies a sensitivity to the physical location of focal topics, means and ends, and their temporal sites in events.

Temporality. The temporal site of activity brings us to the importance of considering the nature of teaching and the topic to which we wish to attend. Building on Heidegger (1962), Schatzki (2006b: 171) notes that "Whenever a person acts, she acts for the sake of a possible way of being (…being at home, being a professor etc.) that organizes what she does." Hence, present action transpires through future aspiration. Similarly, for Emirbayer and Mische (1998: 963) human agency is "a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment)". This view of temporality has implications for teaching strategy. For example, teaching strategic planning assumes a control of time, as if it was a manageable entity and that strategic activity constitutes the sequence and order of events (see other arguments in Mintzberg, 1991).

Relational deliberation. Because we consider the actual work of strategy to be deeply rooted in social activity (Jarzabkowski, 2003) and subject to learning (Burgelman, 1988), we consider the practice of teaching strategy to be relational. By relational we mean a "temporal-relational" approach to practice (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: 969). This entails the ability to relate to subjects, objects, means and ends from one's own and others' temporal trajectory (past, present, and future). In short, this view suggests that "[p]ractices are non-individualist phenomena" (Schatzki, 2005: 480).

In taking this perspective, we assume a relational agency that is under constant shift and flux. Therefore, in the teaching context, a relational agency denotes the ability to push understanding *ahead* through a process similar to the Socratic questioning method (Rud, 1994). To push understanding *ahead* is less an intentional act separate from practice itself. Relationality further implies a transposition of practice. In the teaching-learning context, practice is then both a method by which a topic is communicated and engaged in but also a dwelling in the knowledge that conditions action of a certain kind. For teaching strategy, deliberation means being at the same time thrown into the learning of strategy. Indeed, from a practice perspective, learning denotes the experiencing of something as it happens, in real time, "as it unfolds" (Schatzki, 2006a: 1863). Deliberative experience, hence, denotes the process of understanding out of repeated practical trial (including the body and the mind) at the source of knowledge.

Purposeful orientation. Acknowledging relationally induced deliberation in the teaching-learning context has consequences for our orientation towards the purpose, outcome and goal of strategy practice teaching. However, this teleology neither resides in the concept of strategy itself nor is it exclusively linked with some psychological traits of strategists. Rather, as Schatzki (2012: 16) puts it, participants in a teaching setting "perform particular actions and projects for the sake of particular ends". This characteristic

of practice further entail that each teaching-learning activity is bound to a *prefiguration*, or "the difference that the present makes to the nascent future" (Schatzki, 2012: 16). In this respect, practices are containers of 'thick causal relations', which invite participants to do the things that make sense to do within certain nexuses of social-material arrangements. Individuals are the crossing points of a multitude of practices (Reckwitz, 2002).

Material arrangement. Because we assume practices to be the 'smallest units' of social structures (Reckwitz, 2002) and nexuses of routinized activities as their building blocks (Schatzki, 2003), any purposeful action transpires through a material arrangement. A material arrangement is composed of both non-human physical stuff, including geographical space, objects, artifacts, tools, and other 'things' that constitute the activity at hand, and human bodies, including those of the practitioners and those of the participants in the focal practice. Hence, "any thing, property, or event can be at once both social and material-natural" (Schatzki, 2010a: 133). As such, a sociomaterial compound assumes that a material arrangement (e.g., teaching space, whiteboards, desk and chair arrangement) does not in, and by, itself contain or constitute the meaning of practice; it only qualifies certain actions to take place before others such that they offer themselves as affordances, or possibilities of action for certain individuals with certain capacities (Gibson, 1977).

However, because immersion in practice is inseparable from the space-time complex through which practice transpires, immersion or solicitation is subject to repetition. In the context of teaching-learning, we consider practice as routinized bodily and mental activities, skilfully performed using adequate tools, including the multitude of objects present-at-hand and enactments of the social and physical space in which practice is carried out (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2010b). Hence, repetition is not only a process of reproduction of knowledge and thereby the reinforcement of social structures (Reckwitz, 2002), it is also the smallest instance of change (Deleuze, 1994).

METHODS

In order to compare different ways in which strategy practice is taught, two outstanding masters level strategy courses in a leading quadruple accredited global business school were evaluated. These modules were chosen as they aimed to teach strategy with high levels of similarity in content and intended outcomes. Both courses emphasize "*strategy analysis and evaluation*", experiencing the "*full cycle of strategy development from the analysis…to formulation…[and] recommendations",* the practical application of strategy "*concepts and frameworks*" to real world cases, and small group working (Module handbooks). Students evaluated module content and the quality of teaching as excellent (+80%) for both modules. Lecturers for both modules publish extensively in world-ranked peer-reviewed journals, were engaged in management consulting, and have achieved teaching awards.

Whilst these modules are similar in content and objectives, the module handbooks show there are some subtle differences. Both modules require students to work in small groups on in-depth analysis of a case study organization, but whilst MSc students have 10 days after conclusion of lectures to do the analysis and produce their report in written form only, MBA students are required to work on their group case studies after hours on module days, present case study findings every day to lecturers and fellow students, and deal with the "*challenge*[s from] *tutors and the MBA class"* (MBA module handbook).

Data Collection and Limitations

Qualitative methods were used to collect empirical material from multiple sources over three phases (see table 1). With permissions from lecturers and students, the modules were videotaped in phase 1 (2018/19), video tapes analysed, along with relevant documents (phase 2), and lecturers interviewed after ethics approval was granted (phase 3 (2021)).

Video tapes were the primary data source allowing direct observation of teaching practices. We immersed ourselves in the video data through repeated viewings, reflection

and discussions (LeBaron et al., 2018). The video camera captured all lecture sessions for both strategy modules. Quotes and descriptions based on observations of the video recordings are identified with (vr) in the Findings. Course documents, including course profile, PowerPoint slides, course handbook, and student feedback were collected.

Interviews with all lecturers were conducted by the third author after the lecture sessions. Lecturers were assured of confidentiality and gave informed consent before being interviewed. In order to avoid problems of retrospective accounts (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020), interviewees were asked questions, when possible with reference to documented module content. Interview coding was informed by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2020: 81-93). Interview quotes are identified by codes L1-4.

Insert table 1 about here

Data Analysis

Because the practice of teaching strategy is poorly understood (Priem, 2018) and conceptually uncorroborated (Huang et al., 2021), we used an abductive approach (Ketokivi & Choi, 2014) to find out how teaching practices were being employed. We moved back and forth between empirical observations and the literature to ground our emergent findings in theoretically rigorous concepts and link them into a process model.

Data were analysed over three stages. We began our analysis with the videotaped sections of the modules and the module documentation to gain initial familiarisation with the dataset and develop preliminary insights into the different teaching practices. We developed rich (30-35 pages each) 'case descriptions' (Miles et al., 2020) of both modules, containing both tables and detailed descriptions of what goes on in the classroom and how this is carried out. The case descriptions also contained information from module handbooks, teaching slides and student evaluations to be able to identify similarities and differences across both modules. Both case descriptions were discussed in several rounds and discussions were tape recorded, selectively transcribed and revisited on several

occasions to capture detailed comments and views of each author to be able to capture the richness of analysis unfolding during discussions.

Informed by the richness of the data in the first stage, we decided to progress our data analysis (stage two) by coding the data. Coding was guided but not determined by our practice-theoretical concepts mentioned earlier; activity sites, temporality, relationality, purposefully oriented and material traces in the data. This was done by the third author, with weekly discussions between all three authors to help progress the analysis. Analysis was mostly qualitative; however, some statistical information was also created based on the quantifiable features of the video-taped parts of the modules in order to better compare the modules. During this second stage we also noticed that some of the data, whilst pointing to the five practice-theoretical concepts, required further insights about the underlying rationale of certain teaching activities, teaching goals and approaches. This led us to collect further data by interviewing each lecturer to refine and validate findings.

These measures revealed that our data was *richer than* the original practice-theoretical concepts, leading to a third stage of data analysis. In this stage, we revisited the main critiques raised against the teaching of strategy and realised that our data provided some insights contributing to the debate. This reading helped us to tease out two new dimensions: 'immersed repetition' and 'professionalisation'—each informed by our data but clearly addressing the limitations of strategic management teaching raised in the literature. These three stages serve to provide transparency into our data analysis (Pratt, Kaplan, & Whittington, 2020). In the following section, we present our overall findings.

FINDINGS

These are presented as follows: i) comparison of strategy module drawing upon the five practice concepts ii) identification of two new strategy practices (immersed repetition and professionalization); iii) presentation of an integrated practice model.

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Activity Site

Physical location. Both modules used a slightly raked amphitheatre style lecture theatre. Some MSc lectures, however, took place in a severely pitched theatre, with students sitting in rows of 10 all facing in the same direction towards the lecturer and with space to walk to desks only along both walls. MSc students stayed at their desks, even during group exercises, whilst the lecturer faced them from the front of the room. The MSc lecturer strived to speak with each of the groups during exercises, but in the pitched layout lecturer/student interaction is constrained to only speaking directly with students who sit near the aisles; "*it is difficult. I would have to jump here* [points to middle of rows]" (vr). Student/student interaction was also constrained, as groups could not physically huddle together. This impacted student engagement: "*there were a few people who didn't engage at all*" (vr). In the MBA module, meanwhile, the amphitheatre was not just used for lecturing, but also for student presentations, subsequent feedback and discussions. After day 1 presentations took place "*in parallel*" (L2), spread over two rooms, "*just to have sufficient time…*[for] *group presentations every day*" (L2). The "lecturing" space was occupied by lecturers during lectures, and by students during presentations and feedback and discussion sessions. Student desks were used by lecturers and students, showing much greater student and lecturer mobility than in the MSc class. Further spaces had been booked for student group work; "*we also reserved the other rooms… two meeting rooms …and the breakout space …[and] the MBA suite*" (L2).

  Teleological location. The teleological location indicates where activities occur in the spatiotemporal activity site (Schatzki, 2003). For both modules the teleological location can be observed as the path to passing the course, which is achieved through very similar "*bog standard*" (L2) lecturing content and in-class exercises related to "*the fundamentals of strategy…of competitive advantage*" (L4). Each lecturing day introduces new theory and tools, supported by group exercises and brief case studies that then result in discussion in

class (vr). For example, MSc students are asked to *"as a group, fast in 10 minutes, to identify what makes Volvo different – differentiation drivers* (vr). Both modules' assessments also form part of the path towards passing the course, and consist of individual assessment as well as a group case study report. Whilst MSc students have two weeks after the final lecture to work on their group case studies (L4), this work forms a large and integral part of the MBA lecturing day: "*for the entire week that we spend together,* [students] *are working from the initial brief through to a recommendation that they make the final day…like a consulting report*" (L2). No "*additional information*" (L2) was provided to MBA students on the case study companies; "*They've got to do the research online or even go out and visit them…It's quite different from the conventional traditional case study*" (L3). MBA students work on their case studies outside of contact hours, and present their current understanding on a daily basis. The presentations are followed by feedback from both tutors and classmates, after which further theory and tools are covered, so that groups can apply knowledge and experience gained that day to their case studies. A final group case study report, handed in on the final lecturing day, is assessed. This integral role of the group case study work in the MBA module forms an additional teleological location on the path towards becoming strategy consultants.

In combination, the physical location, where something 'is', and the teleological location, where an activity *occurs spatiotemporally* (Schatzki, 2003), form the activity site; the "context in which…social life…transpires" " (Schatzki, 2005: 467).

Temporal Aspect
Viewing observed actions reveals how they are temporally embedded; as informed by the past, as aspiring to a particular future, and as a capacity to contextualize both past and future into what is possible in the current moment.

Both modules orient towards passing the module assessment. The MSc lecturer regularly focuses students' attention on the exam; "*this table has all the tools…and when preparing for the exams I would go back and use this table again*" (vr). He uses 93 minutes on the last MSc lecturing day to help students prepare for the assessment. In contrast, only 29 minutes are used for this in the MBA module. An additional temporal focus on students' future careers can be observed in both modules to some extent, but with far greater emphasis in the MBA. In the MSc module this takes the form of a "*presentation with a senior executive from Ernst & Young*" (vr), and a recommendation to read consultancy reports: "*for the degree and what you will do after graduating from your degree*" (vr). In the MBA module this career orientation was evident through the intense daily preparation opportunities for group presentations and for the final group case study report. The nature of the presentation feedback also focused student attention on what will be expected of them in their careers, for example lecturers constantly reminded students what junior consultants would do: "*Let's assume you're consultants*" and "*What I would like to see more in the report is how it resolves the profitability problem.*" and "*you need to justify why you're operating just with those 2* [key issues] *in this type of business*" (vr).

Where the similarities between the modules ends, is in the MBA's temporal focus on gaining experience of a strategy career. Even before the start of the module students are instructed that "*You're not students. You are consultants… relatively new recruits to a consultancy…* [who] *develop a bid to a new client …which shows them why they've got problems and what they might do about it*" (L1), and that they would need to "*pitch it to their senior colleagues - that would be us.*" (L2). Presentation feedback evidences this, e.g "*You're not their friend. You're their consultant. They don't have to like you. Ok? You can be critical…*" (vr). "*You've got to think carefully about timing. And this isn't just about this class, it's about anything you do anywhere*" (vr).

Relational Deliberation

This entails the ability to relate to subjects, objects, means and ends from one's own and others' temporal trajectory. It is deliberative, because it enables forming of new experiences at the source of knowledge. We observed relational deliberation in the two teaching modules as significantly different deliberative experiences: the MSc module provided a deliberative learning experience, whilst the MBA module offered a deliberative consultative experience.

In the MSc module the emphasis on a deliberative learning experience can be evidenced through the lecturer's expectations for students' active participation during lectures, e.g.: "*I need you to do some work before coming to class…to go through the slides very fast*" (vr)), and *"I need your help. I need engagement. I need interaction"* (vr)), and *"Are you still with me, guys?"* (vr). In their group work MSc students are provided with some experience of working in a team, to "*build a new skill … of adapting and working with people from other countries … to learn and develop that ability to structure, plan and carry out a complex task*" (vr). However, students cannot learn from other groups, because the group work is shared only with the lecturer, and the lecturer shares his feedback only with the applicable group.

The MBA module provides a deliberative consultative experience. This is evident in numerous examples related to the group presentations and feedback. Students are invited to "*comment on the presentation*" (vr) and that "*it is ok to open it up to the audience if you're not sure.*" (vr). There is growing evidence of interaction between presenters, lecturers and students in the audience as the module progresses. Whilst only lecturers comment on presentations on day 1, on subsequent days students are observed to question and challenge both lecturers and presenting students. Student questions to presenters, for example about organizational capabilities, result in discussions between students. In their group case study work MBA students "*very quickly understand that … strategy making*

and development is as much about making sense of things through a <u>negotiated</u> process as it is to do with the analysis." (L1). This makes the MBA experience more reflective than the MSc class. In addition, MBA students, unlike MSc students, need to present their findings in front of the whole class and deal with feedback on presentation skills, content and the necessary clarity of message required by business executives. This creates higher order, more constructive feedback opportunities. For example, *"Think about headlines... about how you grab the attention of the people in the room… Start with that, don't come out with it at the end. And then justify it*" (vr), "*You didn't do a particularly good job in walking us through what the company is doing right now and what the situation is.*" (vr) and *"…I wasn't clear whether you're presenting options or recommendations"* (vr). Because group case work is presented in class, MBA students have the opportunity to learn from the other groups' mistakes and successes: "*because there is a fair likelihood that, if the Marks & Spencers team are struggling with something, the Tesla team is struggling with the same aspect*" (vr).

Purposeful Orientation

In the MSc module the purposeful orientation is towards increasing knowledge in order to pass the assessments, whilst the teaching practices in the MBA module are oriented towards increasing both knowledge and experience in order to pass the assessments and provide practice for students' future roles. Purposeful orientation towards increasing knowledge is evident in the MSc module in that the bulk of the teaching time (80.2%) is spent on lecturing. This is made up of introducing theory and tools (57.9%) and exercises and case studies related to the lecturing content (22.3%). A further 19.4% of time is spent on introductory and closing comments, and a final 0.4% on answering student questions. In contrast, MBA lecturers spend far less time on lecturing. Approximately similar amounts of time are spent on lecturing and related exercises (45.7%) as on student presentations and

feedback (46.7%, with 26.8% for presentations and 18.8% for feedback). Only 6.1% is spent on introductory and closing comments and 2.5% on answering student questions. In addition to "*time in the classroom*" (L3), MBA students spend "b*y far the majority of the course working in their groups*" (L1). Through the group case study work and the presentation feedback MBA students learn that "*the outcome of the analysis is a product of disagreement, different interpretations, political resolution.… it's not just us telling them; that is them experiencing that*" (L1). The intense and critical presentation feedback provides for further crucial experience, which a lecturer explains as follows: *"we gave quite direct feedback, and in some cases it might have sounded aggressive, but it wasn't meant to be. It was certainly meant to be direct and challenging … It is much better to give you this criticism throughout the week and you have a chance to actually work it through…*[and] *improve*" (vr). This indicates that the purposeful orientation is as much towards increasing experience as it is towards increasing knowledge.

Purposeful orientation is also observable in the form of perspective taking, or cross-understanding. There is some evidence of this in the MSc module, when the lecturer suggests that students need to think ahead to challenges they might get to their recommendations: "*Think of the implications of anything that you propose, for example I will cut cost: how?"* (vr) or "*if shareholders or stakeholders would accept this strategy*" (L4). In the MBA module students are even more oriented towards considering strategic recommendations that take stakeholder perspectives into consideration. Numerous examples are evident including: "*I'm the chief executive of Fitbit, and you're presenting to me…*" (vr) and "*put yourself in the position of them, as owners, in terms of future strategy"* (vr) and "*it does affect where you go from here, in terms of what the shareholders want*" (vr).

Material Arrangement

How space and tools impact on possible actions in the activity space, is shown in quite different ways in the two modules. Room availability for the MSc module led to time constraints on the lecturer and arguably led to fixedness in student and lecturer location throughout the course, particularly as the lecturer's slide changer could only be operated from the front desk. The lecturer had exclusive control of the PowerPoint slides, the whiteboard and the "teaching" space, which created a hierarchical, dyadic teaching experience. There was noticeable fluidity with MBA students and lecturers with each occupying the "teaching space", overcoming hierarchy, and this was helped by a working clicker and appropriate room availability which was preorganised (prefiguration).

In addition, immersed repetition and professionalization were also identified:

Immersed Repetition

Repetition is a necessary ingredient of teaching practice in general. Traditionally it consists of multiple reiterations of definitions and core concepts, and repeated application of tools and techniques to in-class exercises. The aim of repetition is to improve students' memorization of the materials taught in class, in much the same way that soldiers are exposed to repeated drills until they gain muscle memory of the exercises. The MSc lecturer repeats each definition (e.g. for competitive advantage, value, substitute) until every student fully captured them in their notes, and indicates the importance of learning points by repeating them: "*I'm saying it again*" (vr). The immersed repetition that we observed in the MBA video recordings, however, goes much further than this. For example, rather than memorizing the taught materials, MBA students experience them through repeated application to their group case studies. As these students employed tools and techniques over and over again, they were immersed in strategy practice. This enabled them to achieve a more granular understanding of the strategy materials, and how they

could be used in different contexts, or even to apply creativity and "*create a piece of analytics that works for this context, this situation*" (L3). This amounts to more than just building muscle memory and rather mindless repetition through drill. Students wrestle with tools and techniques so that they are informed by, and inform, them as they struggle to engage with the strategy issue at hand. We observed immersed repetition in each of the five practice-concepts.

 Immersed repetition as related to activity sites. This was observed both through physical location and teleological location. The MSc module physical lecture location was not consistent, meaning the site of learning lacked permanence. In the MBA module however, constant room permanence was observed. This was no accident as MBA lecturers lobbied the business school strongly to ensure that appropriate and "*sufficient space…was organized*" (L2) in advance, both for presentations and group work. This supported the site of learning, not just by enabling lectures and in-class exercises to take place in a constant environment, but also by facilitating efficient use of time through parallel presentation and feedback sessions.

 New knowledge (theory and tools) was presented on a daily basis in both modules, covering similar strategy topics such as environmental analysis, strategic capabilities, competitive positioning. The MSc lecturer repeated key learning points at the beginning and ends of each session. This knowledge accumulation resulted in a teleological location oriented towards passing the course assessment. In the MBA module there was similar knowledge accumulation through lectures but a distinctive difference from the MSc was that new knowledge and presentation feedback was applied daily by MBA students to their group case studies, resulting in a *build-up of experience through enactment*. Another difference was that day one of the MBA module *started* with student presentations, i.e. "*before* [students] *even had <u>any</u> exposure to theory*" (L2). These first presentations were

guided by questions in the course handbook, and lecturer briefings before the start of the module. So, the module was structured as "*always having the practice first, and using the theory not as something that is applied, but something that they used to reflect on what they already did"* (L2). Lecturers would then *"ask them to go away and look at it again."* (L2). Offering theory after practice (group case work and presentation) also improved students' knowledge accumulation "*because they've spent a couple of hours working on a problem and then you have a dedicated lecture on this particular problem… they're more attentive. They ask better questions"* (L2). This additional build-up of experience through the *enactment* of new knowledge and feedback strengthens the teleological location for the MBA module as the path to becoming strategy consultants.

Immersed repetition as related to temporality. In the MSc module the temporal focus towards passing the module assessment was reinforced by repeated references to the exam. This amounted to repetition, as opposed to immersed repetition. In the MBA module, however, students experienced immersed repetition through the repeated application of new feedback and theory to their group case study content and presentation style over time. This way students came to realise that strategy making "*is an iterative process*" (L1). As a result, the quality of their case studies progressed over the course of the module. Lecturers observed about presentations on day 3: "*some of you are very advanced already, others are in earlier stages*" (vr), whilst feedback on day 4 showed progress being made: "*I thought there was super content to* [the presentations], *and in the discussion, which is most important, you're starting to think about the logic and the clarity of what we're working to*" (vr). This allowed students to work towards their future roles as strategy consultants.

Immersed repetition as related to relational deliberation. In the MSc module the lecturer provided extensive repetition of core concepts and learning points to help students

apply tools to isolated case studies. For example, the MSc lecturer recited definitions repeatedly (e.g., competitive advantage 9 times), and repeated important findings: *"I'm saying it again. The same trend… influences a group of companies positively and another group of companies negatively"* (vr). In-class case studies are not developed over time, but instead new knowledge was applied to new case studies. However, these uses of repetition of knowledge do not amount to immersed repetition.

Immersed repetition is more clearly evident in the MBA module, where repeated feedback helped students to understand the connectedness of concepts and tools, as well as the connectedness inherent in their case studies. This growing mastery of relationality enabled MBA students to develop their group case studies over time. There are many examples in the video data, but the following illustrates how one student group developed their understanding of concepts that are core to their case study company, through lecturer and student feedback. On day one, lecturers are seen to question high royalty costs: "*…the three main investors are getting 79 pence on the pound on royalties. They couldn't care less whether Spotify makes any profit. They take the money from the top…"* (vr) and "*what does that mean in terms of…how the labels see them versus the other players*" (vr). On day 5 the group's presentation provided evidence that students have taken the feedback into consideration, as high royalty costs are shown as a key strategic issue in their presentation.

In this way repeated practical trial is observable in the MBA module as the daily refinement of group case studies. On day 7 the lecturer then demands that all analyses so far will need to be repeated (refined) one more time: "*tomorrow we would like to see your analysis of how your companies are positioned in the industry and a strategy canvas, and a capability analysis including an activity map*" (vr).

Immersed repetition as related to purposeful orientation. Again, the MSc module evidences repetition, rather than immersed repetition, beginning and finishing each day

with a daily summary of module learnings. This orientation is purposefully oriented to increasing knowledge through lecturing for the final assessment. The MBA uses repetition in a different way. Rather than repeating knowledge acquisition so far, MBA lecturers change the nature of their regular presentation feedback over time, in order to facilitate students' discovery of theoretical and practical insights. After the initial intense and challenging presentation feedback on day one, lecturers are also seen to start commenting on what groups did well. For example, on day two: "*you make clear statements about the profitability of the industry; you back that up with relevant statistics. Also, your PESTEL analysis has very clear uncertainties and trends, and again that's backed up with evidence*" (vr). In return, students were growing in their confidence and started to challenge lecturers. The lecturers' commented there was, "*This feeling of intensity that was there… you can feel it in the air …. students were being challenging*" (L2). Mutual feedback was, therefore, changing over the course of the module. This was also enabled by the lecturers reducing lecturing only to those strategy topics that would support students' practical learning, to "*free up time to have more discussion in greater detail*" (L2). This changing mutual feedback, enabled by maximisation of discussion time, amounts to immersed repetition.

   Immersed repetition as related to material arrangement. This is evident from the video recordings through prefiguration of teaching spaces. For the MSc module, and despite operating with two different types of lecture room, the interaction between lecturer and students remained relatively constant, with the lecturer at the front of class facing students. The lecture rooms also inhibited student group interaction meaning students tended to remain in position for their in-class work, often straining in the highly raked lecture hall, to engage from side to side and forwards and backwards from their fixed positions. In the MBA module prefiguration enables students to work on their group case

studies at any time due to constant availability of appropriate rooms, providing a more

consistent learning environment and a more consistent practical experience.

Professionalisation

For the MSc module, frequent reference to real world examples and the use of case studies

might be viewed as conventional ways for students to infer the professional aspects of

strategy work. However, for the MBA module, professionalization of experience was

foregrounded and deliberate. Lecturers deliberately tried "*to simulate a real*

environment…[where] *the pressure is high*" (L1). '*We tried to….bring reality into the*

classroom, to make it such that students can feel what it's like to do the work… actually

you become a strategist' (L2). We also see professionalisation expressed as a growing

discriminatory ability in students, in that they had to translate tools and techniques for

different contexts or "*they might come to the conclusion that it's not useful at all for the*

problem at hand" (L2), rather than just reproducing a technique.

     Professionalisation as expressed through teleological location. The final group case

study presentation, as a teleological location on the path to professionalisation, provided

students with the closest to "real world" experience in the modules, due to the pressure to

represent all their accumulated knowledge and experience within a strict time limit. MSc

students prepared the group case study report on their own within two weeks after

lecturing had finished. This was the site of practice, and provided experience of working in

a group, and presenting their accumulated knowledge in a written report. However, there

was no requirement or opportunity to present the work in front of an audience, and neither

was there undue time pressure. In contrast, the final case study presentation of MBA

students, as the site on the path to becoming strategy consultants through time-pressured

knowledge presentation, provided a richer professionalisation experience. These

presentations were closest yet to "real-life" pressure, because students needed to act as if

they were *"in front of the board of directors. And you've got to be prepared to defend your rational thinking and recommendation"* (L3). In addition, presentations needed to contain all the students' accumulated knowledge and experience, whilst being kept to the same strict time limit: *"Let's stay to 10 minutes again. So you have to think about how you're presenting this… you have to point out where the key capabilities are and why they are such an advantage or* [if] *there is no advantage that is also a conclusion"* (vr).

Professionalisation as expressed through temporality. Students in the MSc module had ten working days to submit the final group case study report (MSc module handbook), and they had no other "*course, so they work 100%*" (L4) on the group case study. Even so, some "*students complain*" about the time pressure, to which the lecturer would say to "*improve your time management skills…it is part of the learning experience that you never have time to do things*" (L4). Students in the MBA module, however, experience professionalisation through overtime pressure. In order to apply each day's accumulated knowledge and experience to next day's presentations, students needed to work after hours. Groups were given tasks to do between lectures, both during lunch breaks and before the next module day. This gave them experience of the time pressure they could expect to experience in their future roles. Lecturer one explained this as follows: *"… it is highly time pressured… the amount of time they've got to do things is not adequate. And that's deliberate. ...they're just going to have to work extremely long hours, which some groups end up doing. I mean, literally all night."* (L1). Lecturers warned MBA students "*before the start of the module… how tough it would be … and that if they don't do the reading that they wouldn't get any sleep… that if they don't complete their stuff … we would just add to their plate.*" (L2).

Professionalisation as expressed through relational deliberation. Some of the groups of students in the MSc module disagreed over one of the in-class group exercises.

The lecturer pointed out that, if students cannot agree in an exercise for which they were given much of the necessary background information, how much more difficult getting to a decision is for a top management team in the real world: "*Think of the following: if you are a member of a top management team you might have different views from another member ... And this disagreement ... might SLOW DOWN the decision making process. Got it .... how difficult it is?*" (vr). In addition, the lecturer urged students to try to achieve agreement in their group work: "*if you disagree you need to convince the other members of your group*" (vr) so that "*you learn from those discussions*" (L4). There is, therefore, legitimation of disagreement, however only between students in their groups.

In contrast, the MBA module lecturers deliberately legitimized disagreement, and they demonstrated this by challenging each other, as well as students. For example, lecturers would "*encourage open challenge in the classroom amongst ourselves. Because we want to get across* [that] *there's no perfect solution.*" (L3). Lecturers expected students "*to understand that that's perfectly normal…the fact that people have different views and they are going to argue them out…and that they had to cope with that*" (L1). Lecturers also don't "*pull a lot of punches*" towards students; "*the typical problem [is] that they… trot out the analyses as though they are self-evident…'we've done a Porter's Five Forces; here it is'. Well, that's meaningless, and we will **tell** them so*" (L1). By making disagreement acceptable and even desirable this way, students are seen to start challenging and experimenting with this as well. For instance, a student replies to a lecturer's challenge: "*I don't agree*", to which the lecturer replies: "*Can you explain why I'm wrong then?*" (vr). A physical manifestation of disagreement is also visible on day six, when a student chops the air to make her point, as if waving away the lecturer's concern.

Professionalisation as expressed through purposeful orientation. In the MSc module the lecturer tells students that their perspective should be that of a top manager:

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"*You will apply all of them* [strategy tools] *and you will make decisions. You will become CEOs, actually*" (vr). However, students in the MSc module never embody this role, and cannot therefore experience professionalisation. In the MBA module students are not just instructed to act like strategy consultants, but they get the chance to experience this by embodying the role of consultants. The course simulates the conditions students might face as a consultant or manager analysing the strategy of an organization, and assumes that in their group case study students work "*as a team of consultants*" (MBA module handbook). Lecturers expressed this as follows: "*It was about students experiencing what it's like to do it. … they get dressed up in all their business clothes, and present as if they're presenting to the board… And being critiqued… And they've done that. So they should be very confident that they can go into situations and participate, be part of, lead*" (L3), "*more so than someone who's just armed with a bunch of analytic methods*" (L1). One lecturer reflected that "*The whole rationale of the studying and teaching of strategy is that students go out and hopefully do better strategy*" (L3).

    Professionalisation as expressed through material arrangement. This is achieved through redefinition of spatial and material arrangements, however this is evident in the MBA module only. Prefiguration can be seen in the lecturers' preparation, in which they based the number of lecturing theatres and group work spaces on the number of students, and prebooked these spaces accordingly. Prefiguration is also evident in the fluidity of movement, enabled by the amphitheatre shaped lecturing room, but also legitimated by the lecturers progressively moving towards a collegiate and collaborative working approach of equals. Student and lecturer mobility is enhanced with the use of clip-on microphones during presentations. Redefinition of the spatial relationship can be observed , for example through student and lecturer positionings during a plenary, where a student stands next to

one of the lecturers whilst they discuss her question, and when the other lecturer comments, the student walks across and positions herself next to him.

Conceptualisation of Teaching Practices

In this section we present a conceptual model (the model and further findings are available from authors on request) that builds on the findings to summarize how the five practice concepts relate to the two additional dimensions of immersed repetition and professionalisation. It shows the five existing practice-theoretical concepts enveloped by an Immersed Repetition layer and a Professionalisation layer. The activity site concept is thus enhanced with immersed repetition (through knowledge accumulation and enactment, and room permanence), and with professionalisation through time pressured knowledge presentation. Immersed repetition is achieved for the temporality concept through a temporal focus towards both module assessment and students' future roles, whilst professionalisation is achieved through overtime pressure. For relational deliberation we can see that repeated feedback helps understanding of connectedness, which leads to immersed repetition, whilst legitimized disagreement helps create professionalisation. The changing nature of feedback over time helps facilitate insight in students; this is how purposeful orientation achieves immersed repetition. Students embodying the role of consultants, meanwhile, creates professionalisation through purposeful orientation. Material arrangement, finally creates immersed repetition through prefiguration for a consistent learning experience, and professionalisation through redefinition of the spatial and material arrangements.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to contribute to several calls (e.g., Bell et al., 2018; Mintzberg, 2004; Priem, 2018) to enrich our understanding of the practices of teaching strategy. We followed prior examples proposing a practice approach to improve strategic management

teaching (Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008; Vaara & Faÿ, 2011) and sampled two outstanding strategy courses that claim to address strategy practices and appear similar in content, aims and educational level. We further adopted a practice-theoretic lens to analyse the courses and found several ways in which a practice-based approach can help advance our understanding of how to bring practice back into the teaching of strategic management without sacrificing the theories, models and concepts we teach (Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). Indeed, from a practice approach the separation between theory and practice is not only unfruitful, but squarely at odds with the ontological nature of practice. In theorizing the nature of action and practice, Heidegger (1962: 99) rejected the polarization between theory and practice; "action must employ theoretical cognition if it is not to remain blind", noting that "theoretical behaviour is just looking, without circumspection. But the fact that this looking is non-circumspective does that mean that it follows no rules". Our study directly addresses this inseparable alliance between theory and practice in strategic management teaching in several ways.

First, we demonstrate how teaching activities informed by *prefiguration* are an essential part of educating strategy students by overcoming the inhibiting consequences of *spatial embeddedness* (Lohrke et al., 2021; Szyliowicz & Green, 2019), or boundedness of teaching to classroom activities. Our comparison of the two courses shows the differences that spatial embeddedness caused. In particular our analyses reveal that *prefiguration* stretches across several action domains involved in both the preparation of teaching activities and performing them. These include *lobbying* and *influencing* administrative staff for the best possible teaching spaces for flexible rearrangements of teaching activities— from lecturing to group activities; *aligning* timetabling, planning, preparation and performance of group activities keeping in mind the influence of student numbers on presentations and prebooked workspaces as well as; enabling *fluidity* of movement across

different spatiotemporal activity sites (physical localities, after hours, etc.). Indeed, the MBA course provided many examples of extending beyond the classroom.

Second, both courses provided evidence of experiential learning. This involved significant use of different types of video material and in the MSc a practitioner was brought into the classroom to deepen student's relationship with a company and expose them to a senior strategist and real-life challenges. For the MBA course experiential learning took a different form, through immersion in the work of strategy consultants over time. Moment by moment students were encouraged to produce materials to an industry standard and to industry type deadlines, with attention to analytic content and quality of presentation to improve communication, negotiating and leadership skills. As noted, immersed repetition, while playing out differently in both courses, fundamentally reproduced not only the knowledge outcome (analytic tools and frameworks) but also reinforced the social structures (Reckwitz, 2002) constituting those practices within which the knowledge content transpired and transposed from lecturers to students.

Third, the MBA course stood out in terms of active learning. Whilst the MSc class seemed to show the lecturer doing most of the thinking and analysis, acting as a 'sage on the stage', things were quite different on the MBA course, where very early on lecturers moved from dominating the class as experts to being 'guides on the side' as students engaged in learning, indeed often becoming more expert on some points than the professors. Greater socialisation and interaction was very evident with students progressively generating greater energy which was not the case in the MSc course, where there was some evidence of disengagement. One learning device of importance to both courses was repetition. Whilst repetition played an important role in the MSc course, with the lecturer constantly reinforcing key points, the MBA focused upon immersed repetition, with lecturers constantly reinforcing the expected quality, or professionalisation, of

consultancy work, which ranged from conduct in the classroom, interaction approaches to actual presented materials. Our analysis revealed that when strategic management teaching is embedded into an expectation of *professionalisation* of strategy students, an additional practice category observed in our findings, students took on a more active learning approach and become self-critical. Therefore, we expect that expectations of professionalising strategy students equips them better for addressing wicked problems (Grewatsch et al., 2021) embedded in tightly knit nexuses of practices (Jarzabkowski et al., 2016; Seidl & Whittington, 2021).

Fourth, our analyses reveal a significant difference in strategic thinking (Liedtka, 1998; Mintzberg, 2004; Porter, 1987) among students. Conventional case study thinking has been criticised for not leading to critical thinking and there is evidence on the MSc programme that there followed a continuous progression of new cases and new lecture material. Whilst this allowed knowledge accumulation, the MBA's focus upon continuous shaping of student understanding through frequent reflective conversations generated much richer understanding. In other words, the MBA course encouraged students to acquire knowledge- in-action through learning by doing. By continually refocusing on the core strategy issue, students developed deeper understanding, greater critical abilities and had their current beliefs and assumptions challenged. Complementing these different approaches there was a most notable difference between the courses in terms of the *purposive orientation* of student identities in pursuing strategy case analyses. MSc students were deliberately asked to "act as CEOs of a company". MBA students were repeatedly reminded and strongly encouraged to "take the role of a junior consultant".

While these two *purposive orientations* of students' strategic roles may seem insignificant, our analyses reveal that the former (CEOs) would tend to fall into an "identity gap"—being or becoming a CEO is for many students a stretch, neither desirable

nor necessarily achievable given their career aspirations. Indeed, there was nothing in the MSc course that indicated the activities of a CEO in order for students to gain an appreciation of that, and their role. Furthermore, the CEO role has repeatedly been associated with only marginal strategy work (Mintzberg, 1973), often delegated to strategic planners (Whittington et al., 2011) and Chief Strategy Officers (Angwin, Paroutis, & Mitson, 2009; Powell & Angwin, 2012). Hence, this misdirected purposive orientation of role identity may inhibit students' engagement in strategic tasks in the classroom but also the expected engagement and critical thinking devoted by students in analysing strategic options and developing strategic recommendations. On the MBA however, students were constantly reminded of the nature of consulting work; the standards of behaviour, the expectations around presentation quality, the ability to challenge and debate concepts and ideas, and the importance of persuasion and negotiation.

In essence, whilst both the MSc and MBA courses contain elements of strategy practice, they differ substantially in the extent to which these are lived and experienced. From the MBA course analysis there is abundant evidence that there is substantial focus not only on the logic and analysis of strategy, but also on the art and craft of strategy – the mundane, effortful, nitty gritty of everyday strategy work.

CONCLUSION

Both strategy modules analysed in this paper are outstanding as attested to by their students and external reviewers, with one being voted the best strategy course in the world on two occasions. All of the lecturers are also excellent with many individual accolades. On the face of it the modules aim to teach very similar strategy content and claim to address very similar issues. This paper though has specifically focused upon a practice perspective in order to address general criticisms of strategy teaching. From that perspective the MSc presents an effective and successful approach to strategy teaching that

is widely used throughout business schools, and whilst it clearly embodies many features of strategy practice, the comparison with the MBA module shows large differences in degree and outcomes from a practice perspective. This paper therefore makes two contributions to understanding the teaching of strategy practice. The first contribution is that there are substantial differences between the more traditional lecture-based approach to strategy teaching, the MSc, and the MBA module. Whilst the former appears to indicate that students will gain practical knowledge of strategy, the MSc module focuses upon the communication and retention of core disciplinary knowledge in order for students to pass their final assessment. The MBA on the other hand is focused upon students living and experiencing strategy work to enable them to go on to become practicing strategists. This difference between the two modules is clearly detectable in all of the five core practice concepts analysed in this paper.

The second contribution flows from the use of an abductive method, that enabled the identification of two practices that are not fully captured in the five core practice elements used as lenses to examine the two strategy modules. These two new practices are immersive repetition and professionalisation. Whilst there are elements of repetition in the MSc module, this is purely aimed at the retention and recall of disciplinary knowledge and so is not an immersive practical experience, unlike the MBA, where students are immersed in cumulative repetition that enables them to both retain, challenge and create strategy insights. Through immersive repetition, students are continuously confronted with standard strategy tools and techniques, and through living with them, they develop fine grained appreciations and deeper insights than can be achieved through simple reproduction alone.

This paper, therefore, shows that using a practice lens to examine strategy modules can reveal the extent to which strategy practice is really part of student learning, or whether the claims made rely on assumed learning or experiencing practices. It also

reveals how lecturers might begin to foreground the importance of strategy practices in their teaching in order to prepare students for careers as strategists. The detailed analysis of the MBA strategy module also shows that this very successful approach to teaching strategy practices requires profound changes to teaching practices, rather than cosmetic adjustment. Attention needs to be paid to the activity sites, temporal aspects, relational deliberation, purposeful orientation and material arrangements, as well as immersed repetition and professionalism. Through embodying these practices, there are important implications for the relationship between lecturer and student, evolving from 'sage on the stage' to 'guide on the side' and indeed with the student becoming the expert.

Finally, this practice analysis addresses specific criticisms of traditional strategy teaching that were raised earlier in the paper, of losing its practice origins, of reductionism, problems of spatial embeddedness and passive, static and non-reflective learning. Bringing strategy practice back into strategy teaching can help bring back the relevance of strategy teaching to students and to employers.

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Table 1

Main data sources and their use

Data sources	Type of data	Use in the analysis
Video recordings	6 Recordings of lecturer moderated content for MSc. Total 10:33:40 lecture content. Recorded October-November 2018, analysed March-August 2021	Gathering data on practice informed methods of teaching strategy. Gaining an initial understanding of the extent of practice perspective used in these modules.
	15 Recordings of lecturer moderated content for MBA. Total 08:56:01 lecture content and 11:16:42 case study presentations and interaction content. Recorded January-February 2019, analysed March-August 2021	
Module documentation	Relevant course materials, including course profile, PowerPoint slides, course handbook, and student feedback. Analysed March-August 2021	Gathering background data on both modules
Semi-structured interviews (66 pages, *verbatim*)	Interviews lasted between 54 and 78 minutes (Total 04:13:23 interview time) and were digitally recorded through Microsoft Teams.	Triangulating facts and observations from the video recordings and module documents. Gaining a deeper understanding of lecturers' aims and pedagogy for the modules. Enhancing understanding of course elements that were not recorded in the videos or described in the module documentation, e.g., spaces excluded from the camera angle, and timescales for group work outside module time.