City Research Online

City, University of London Institutional Repository

This is the published version of the paper.

This version of the publication may differ from the final published version.

Permanent repository link: https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/17784/

Link to published version:

Educating innovative leaders for the unordered world of VUCA

Clive Holtham, Ann Brown,
Mary Ann Kernan, Martin Rich
Cass Business School
City, University of London

Structure

- Systemic leadership failures
- Over-belief in "ordered" solutions in a world of increasing "unorder" (VUCA)
- Key leadership qualities for unorder
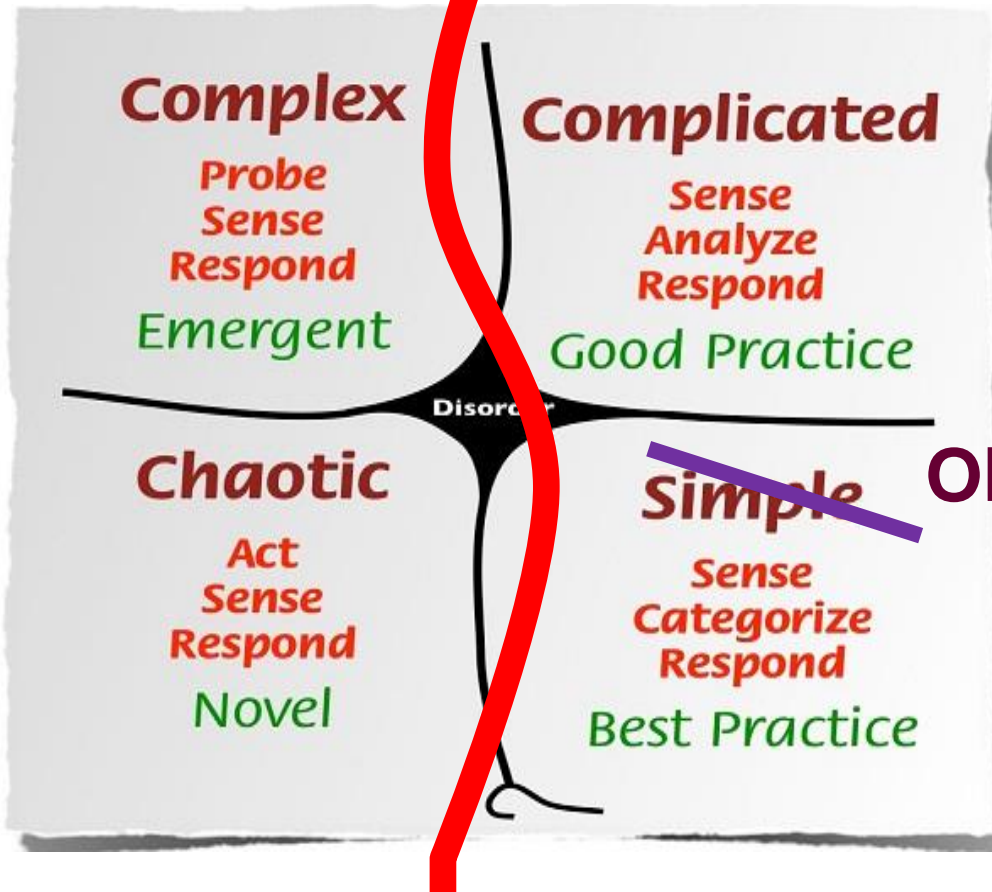- 3 learning methods to develop those qualities

Contrasting Elements		Bennett and Lemoine Definitions
Stability **S**	**Volatility** **V**	The challenge is unexpected or unstable and may be of unknown duration, but it's not necessarily hard to understand. Knowledge about it is often available
Certainty **C**	**Uncertainty** **U**	Despite a lack of other information, the event's cause and effect are known. Change is possible but not a given.
Simplicity **S**	**Complexity** **C**	The situation has many interconnected parts and variables. Some information is available or can be predicted, but the volume or nature of it can be overwhelming to process.
Clarity **C**	**Ambiguity** **A**	Causal relationships are completely unclear. No precedents exist; you face "unknown unknowns."

N. Bennett and G.J. Lemoine, "What VUCA Really Means for You," Harvard Business Review, 92/1,2 (2014): 27

David Snowden (Cynefin) 2013

Un-order   **Order**

Complex	Complicated
Probe Sense Respond	Sense Analyze Respond
Emergent	Good Practice
Chaotic	Simple
Act Sense Respond	Sense Categorize Respond
Novel	Best Practice

Disorder

Obvious

Top Executives   **Junior Managers**
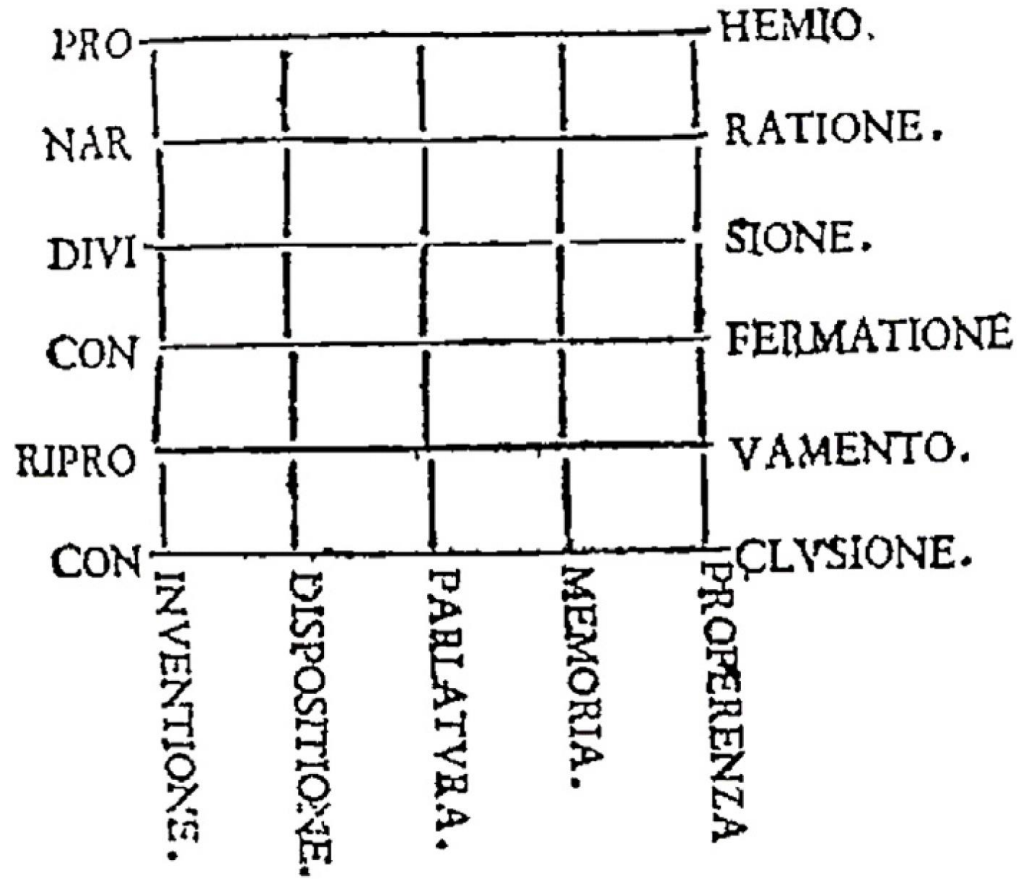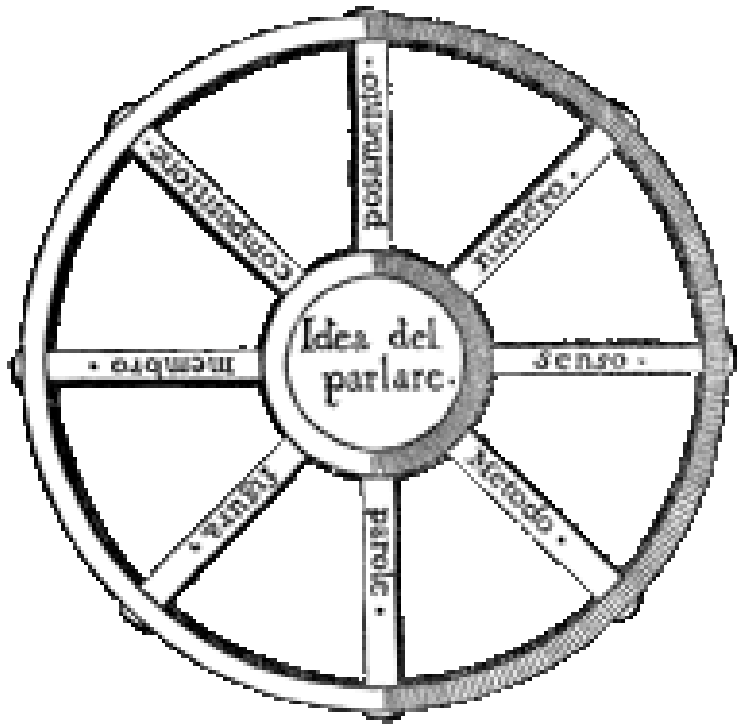
Medieval Rhetorical tools which shape modern accounting

Fig. 1. A rhetorical grid.
(Source: Bolzoni, 2001; p. 44).

In Search of the "Perfect One": How accounting as a maieutic machine sustains inventions through generative 'in-tensions'

Cristiano Busco [a,b,*], Paolo Quattrone [c]

Intuitive Qualities

Rational Qualities

Persuasive

Critical

Imaginative

Perceptive

Reflective

Interpersonal

Self-Aware

Enactive

Knowledgeable

Analytical

Synthesizing

Articulate

MINDSET

PROCESSING

AWARENESS

ACTIVITY

THINKING

COMMUNICATION
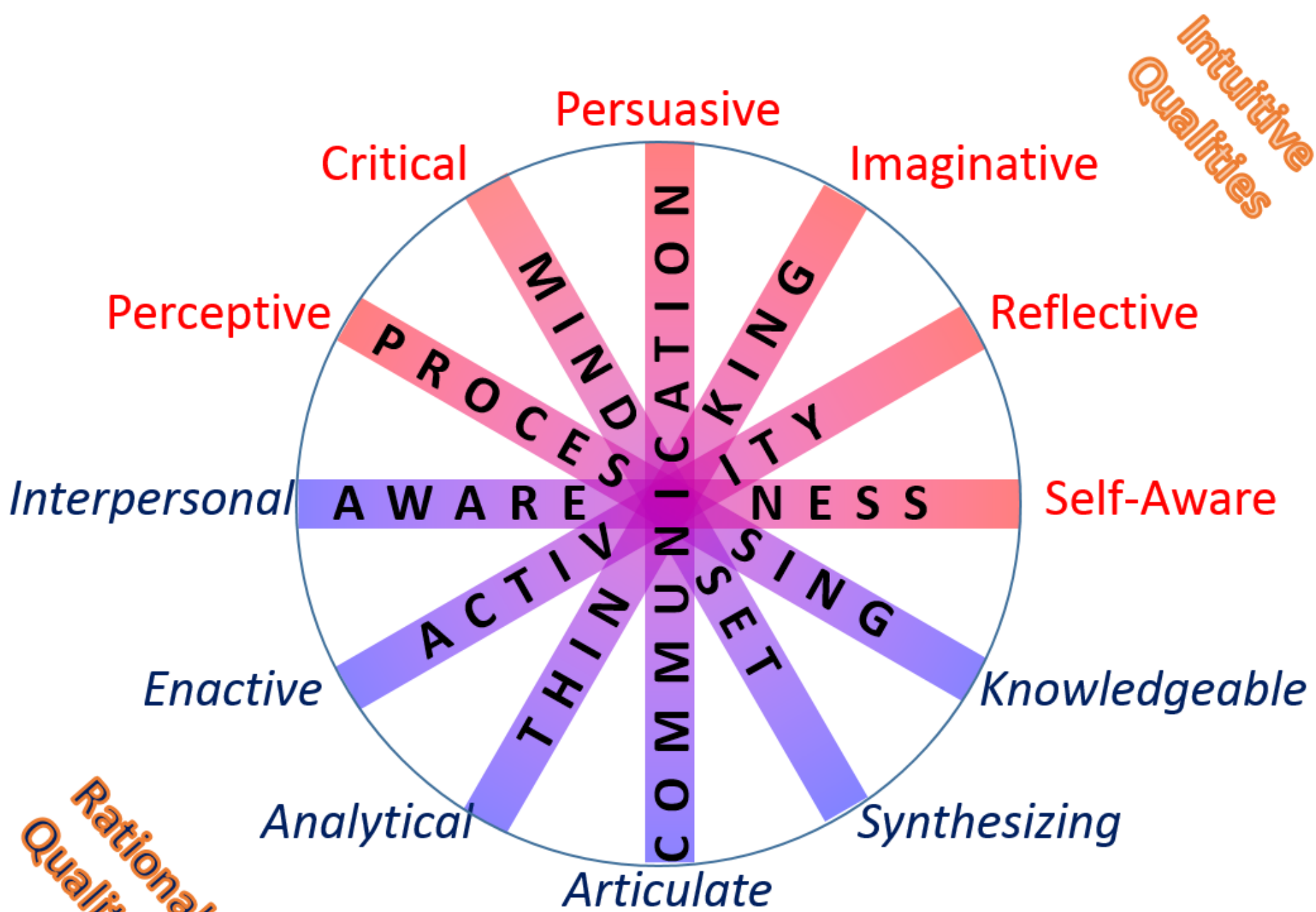
Intuitive Manager Qualities
Holtham & Dove (2016)

DIMENSION	INTUITIVE QUALITY	WHAT NEEDS TO BE LEARNT TO COPE WITH AMBIGUITY
Awareness	Self-aware	Awareness of self-doubt and lack of personal certainty is a forerunner to applying the same thinking in a corporate context
Processing	Perceptive	Heightening awareness of the unacknowledged ubiquity ambiguity during perception lies at the very heart of the "problem" of ambiguity
Thinking	Imaginative	Ability to develop alternative and unusual perceptions
Mindset	Critical	Not accepting the obvious perception Consciously seeking out extreme worst cases
Activity	Reflective	Understanding how to slow down especially in crisis. How to make time for deep reflection.
Communication	Persuasive	Classical Rhetoric explicitly incorporates tools of tension and ambiguity

Learning Method	Location	Approach
Dérive	Street, Classroom	Learning By Wandering Around; Story; Presentation
Intensive Reflection	Studio, External Visit	Individual Journal; Artefact; Group Exhibition
Roleplay Simulation	Online	Teamwork, assessed individually; 9 half weekly rounds

Dérive: four explicit skills

- To enhance close "**noticing**" of the ambiguous physical world

- To simulate "**management by wandering around**"

- To address **uncertainty and chance** in an unfamiliar setting

- To develop **conversational skills** outside conventional meeting settings

Not high school

Dérive: challenge

Be Curious
Be Imaginative
Tell a persuasive story

Reflective Practitioner Elective

WEEK 5

HOW CAN I QUICKLY MAKE SENSE OF AN UNFAMILIAR BUSINESS?

- This session took place at The London Metropolitan Archive, London's foremost Historical Business Archive.

"Note taking is one of my favourite pastimes. I can't tell you where I'd be if I hadn't had a pen on hand to write down my ideas (or more importantly, other people's) as soon as they came to me. Some of Virgin's most successful companies have been born from random moments – if we hadn't opened our notebooks, they would never have happened."
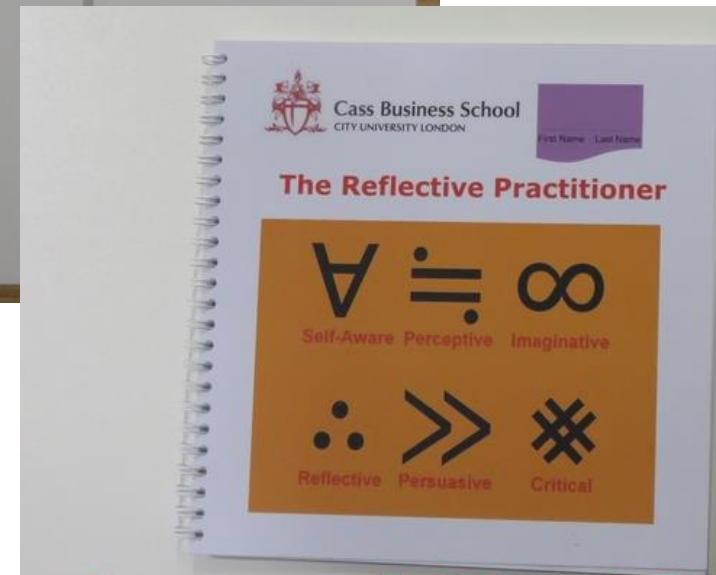
Richard Branson
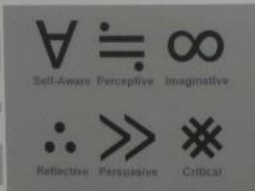
Week 1
Reflection, Employability, Success

"Intuition becomes increasingly valuable in the new information society precisely because there is so much data."
John Naisbett, Futurist

∀ ≒ ∞
Self-Aware Perceptive Imaginative

∴ ≫ ※
Reflective Persuasive Critical

8

Cass Business School
CITY UNIVERSITY LONDON

First Name Last Name

The Reflective Practitioner

∀ ≒ ∞
Self-Aware Perceptive Imaginative

∴ ≫ ※
Reflective Persuasive Critical

Reflective Journal

Journal 21x21

Online roleplay simulation
Nursing + Business + Ed.Devt
Workshop to Prototype

# Key decision: to hire a novelist to write the challenges

Dr Douglas Board

1. Brexit
2. I, Robot
3. Turf War
4. Turf War 2
5. Privacy
6. Design
7. Bird's Eye View
8. Cash in Hand
9. Trump Card

Millcaster Global Industries

Function Leader

o Accounting & Control
o Design & Innovation
o Human Resources
o Internal Communication
o Procurement & Supply Chain

o Corporate Social Responsibility
o Coordination & Legal
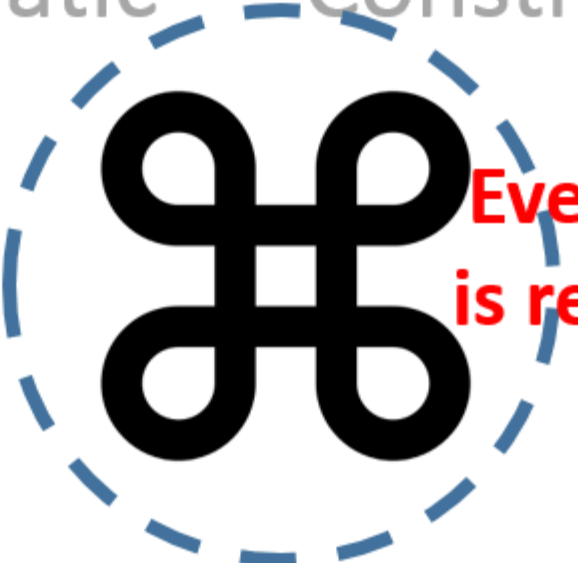o Info Systems & Project Mgt
o Marketing & Sales
o Production & Quality

Cass Business School
CITY UNIVERSITY LONDON
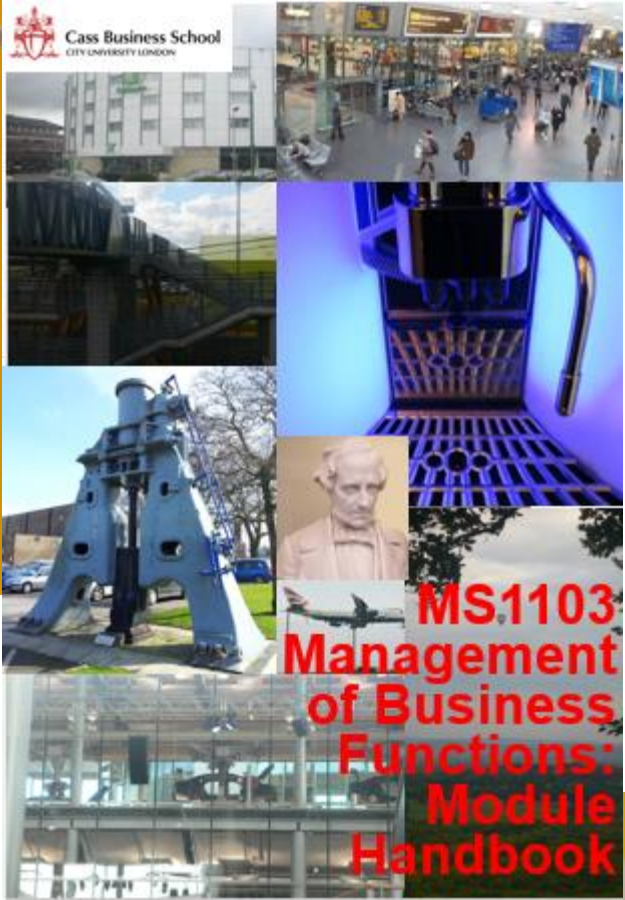
MS1103 Management of Business Functions: Module Handbook

Democratic   Constructive

Global   Everything is recorded

Responsible   Determined

Millcaster Global Industries

VUCA Themes arising from each learning activity

Learning Method	Intuitive qualities in priority	Key exposures to un-order or ambiguity	VUCA Themes
Dérive	Noticing Imaginative Persuasive Critical Reflective	Going to a "familiar" place (urban landscape) and asked to uncover a hidden story Unable to use any conventional research tools; entirely dependent on direct experience	Complexity Ambiguity
Intensive Reflection	Reflective Noticing Self-aware Imaginative Critical Persuasive	Need to develop a public identity, which is then persuasively presented through a 3D artefact Making sense of unfamiliar weekly learning experiences and reflecting on those artfully Expanding repertoire of persuasive communication beyond conventional business formats	Volatility Uncertainty Complexity Ambiguity
Roleplay Simulation	Critical Noticing Persuasive Imaginative	Confronted with challenges that do not necessarily have a single clear solution Faced with disjointed, incomplete and conflicting advice from different departments	Uncertainty Ambiguity

Challenges

1. Why will business schools continue to struggle to accept "unorder"?

2. What are other methods for preparing leaders for a world of "unorder"?

3. What happens to business schools that fail to take on board "unorder"?