

This We Believe About the Emerging Roles of the Business Educator

Policy Statement 68

We Believe That the 21st century presents a host of opportunities and challenges in business education. The profession of teaching for and about business is emerging from the classroom to cyberspace, work sites, boardrooms, community centers, and legislative halls. Teaching professionals need to meet global accountability standards in an era when basic skills competence and technological literacy are desperately needed. The global knowledge economy affects the way business educators live, work, and think. Effective responses depend on business educators' abilities to learn, adapt, and change. Success depends on how well business educators meet the needs of students, business, and society.

Educating students to learn, think, and embrace the challenge of continual societal and technological changes must be a top priority. Individuals best able to communicate, collaborate, value diversity, and harness the efficiencies of technology will be in great demand. Dramatic changes in students, learning environments, delivery systems, and technologies will continue. These changes will transform the business educators' roles of facilitator, educational designer, collaborator, mentor, political advocate, and continual learner.

Facilitator

We Believe That the focus of education using any delivery system must be on learning (what students know and are able to do) rather than on teaching. Therefore, business educators must facilitate experiences that allow students to become independent learners and team members who are accountable for their own knowledge and performance.

In an environment of growing diversity (cultural, skill level, attitude, and experience), business educators should

- Use collaborative, project-based learning activities in which students share thoughts and ideas to solve problems;
- Encourage students to locate, retrieve, evaluate, and use information from traditional and emerging resources;
- Create a positive environment in which learners take educated risks and experience trial-and-error learning;
- Encourage students to develop and apply criteria for assessing individual and group achievement; and
- Assist students in the development of a their educational plans.

Educational Designer

We Believe That as educational designers, business educators must provide meaningful and relevant learning experiences regardless of the venue. Business educators must design content, delivery, and assessment in view of what is best for individual learners, business, and society. Business educators must use and model effective design, development, and delivery of experiences that

- Incorporate new pathways and modalities that enhance student learning opportunities,
- Create learning and assessment strategies based on standards,
- Use digital tools to access globally information and human resources, and
- Provide real and relevant contexts for learning.

Collaborator

We Believe That successful education requires collaboration. Participants in collaborative learning communities may include educators, learners, parents, administrators, employers, community members, governmental representatives, and professional association members. With expertise in business, technology, and education, business educators provide a work world context for collaboration. Business educators are in a unique position to provide a bridge among collaborative partners. Therefore, business educators collaborate by

- Seeking input and support from constituents who have the resources and capabilities to influence and enrich learning experiences,
- Planning, initiating, and nurturing collaborative learning environments,
- Maximizing appropriate technology usage,
- Promoting assigned planning time to develop interdisciplinary activities, and
- Implementing articulated curriculum.

Mentor

We Believe That mentoring and counseling are increasingly important to prepare students for and about business. Business educators, by modeling competence and professionalism, provide support focused on students' individual and professional aspirations. Recognizing the diversity that exists in the learning environment, mentors should advocate for individual students.

We Further Believe That business educators have an obligation to serve as mentors for new professionals. Therefore, business educators should develop meaningful relationships with students and new professionals. Strategies for developing these relationships include:

- Inspiring individuals to plan for the future, resulting in improved academic and performance outcomes,
- Providing support and encouragement,
- Sharing frustrations and successes,
- Giving constructive feedback, and
- Listening.

Political Advocate

We Believe That the future success of business education (and often its very existence) depends on partnerships between teachers and policy makers. Business educators must have input to standards, employment regulations, and funding for educational initiatives. Therefore, business educators must communicate to decision makers at all levels the concerns, challenges, and benefits of the profession.

Political advocacy may include:

- Building support coalitions for educating the workforce,
- Participating in school governance,
- Marketing business education and work-based learning programs,
- Maintaining an open dialogue with policy makers, and
- Expressing appreciation for support.

Continual Learner

We Believe That in this fast-paced, changing world, business educators must implement a professional development plan designed to keep them current in business

content and instructional delivery systems. In this plan varied activities enhance educators' abilities to provide rigorous, academically integrated business instruction.

Professional development may include participating in:

- Technology-driven learning opportunities modeling the delivery systems that students experience;
- Workshops and work experiences in which educators obtain training and development in current business practices, technological applications, and pedagogy;
- Certification (or licensure) opportunities that denote expertise in the field; and
- Professional organizations, such as Association for Career and Technical Education, Delta Pi Epsilon, International Society of Business Education, National Business Education Association, and their respective local, state, and regional affiliates.

We Believe That educational policy makers must recognize that business educators, as professionals, must be continual learners. Therefore, effective professional development can be realized only through the allotment of sufficient time, funding, and resources.

Summary

Thus, We Believe That in this ever-changing environment, business educators must embrace new paradigms, tools, and methods. It is paramount, however, that effective learning remain the focus. Business educators must assure that professional performance in the emerging roles meets the needs of students, business, and society.