

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT & MARKETING
DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH SEMINAR

**Revealing the Internal Logic of Practice
Using Personal Construct Theory:
Two Studies from the Strategy Practice Field**

By

Dr Robert Wright

Date: Monday, 31 October 2011

Time: 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Venue: M802

All interested are welcome

Revealing the Internal Logic of Practice Using Personal Construct Theory: Two Studies from the Strategy Practice Field

Abstract

After much scholarly attention on strategy-as-practice, we still lack a deep understanding about how strategy is accomplished in practice. Building on current debates, this Departmental Research Seminar will share the results of two separate studies to demonstrate how Personal Construct Theory and its accompanying repertory grid methodology taps into managerial internal logic of practice and thereby develop more engaged theories of strategy practice. Study 1 investigates an under-researched praxis of driving innovation and change to help improve the business and the bundle of practices that managers must work through to perform this strategic work. Study 2 asks an important question to our own practice as strategy teachers: How useful are the strategy tools and techniques we teach in business schools in helping managers make better decisions? This study designed a strategy capstone course around action learning using real-time data of listed companies and asked participating managers to reflect on their practice about their lived experiences with strategy tools usefulness. To both of these studies, we used Personal Construct Theory and Repertory Grids to elicit the internal construct systems of managers. Using first-, second- and third-order analysis, we develop integrated cognitive models of the internal logic of strategy which generated two sets of opposing cognitive mediating factors that paradoxically helped and hindered the effective performance of strategic work. We discuss these findings with a view to encouraging more strategy-as-practice research that examine not only the doing, but also the thinking that goes on behind important strategic work.

Keywords: Being-in-the-world; Internal Logic of Practice; Paradoxical Tensions; Personal Construct Theory; Repertory Grids; Theory Building