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# Knowledge and Learning in Organizations

A Knowing-In-Practice  
Perspective of University  
Academic Managers

Fabiano Larentis  
Claudia Simone Antonello

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## PREFACE

This book is about universities, their complexities, and dynamics, specifically university management. It is about a special agent in this context, who is fundamental for the university processes, strategies, outcomes, and sustainability. It is about the academic manager, the one who works at university management, either temporarily or permanently, without abandoning the identity as a professor. The one that is supposed to deal with the balance between teaching, researching, and managing.

We present and deepen in this book the findings of a research study we developed in southern Brazil, in a community university. The research, a qualitative study, was performed by Professor Fabiano Larentis (University of Caxias do Sul) in his post-doctorate, advised by Professor Claudia Simone Antonello (Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul). Its purpose was to analyze the configuration of academic managers' knowing, taking into account the knowing-in-practice notion as theoretical and analytical lenses.

It is necessary to mention that knowing goes beyond knowledge. Symbolically it is a transition from a noun to a verb, since knowledge is considered as a process and a collective activity in situated contexts—it goes beyond the generation and transmission of knowledge. Knowing is knowledge as an activity that itself constitutes practice. It is therefore about learning as a social and cultural phenomenon, not just cognitive and individual, stressing the role of human action in complex organizational work.

Why the interest about academic managers? Besides the importance to investigate this agent and the research gaps about this topic, detailed in the first chapter, we have had experiences as academic managers in our paths as professors and researchers in Management. We have realized in practice how complex and interesting managing a university is, in its diverse hierarchical levels, structures, relationships, and operations, with its traditions, challenges, and idiosyncrasies. As researchers specially in the theme Learning in Organizations, our practice has provoked us to explore and to deepen the way the academic manager's role and knowing are accomplished.

Lastly our research proposes a framework, which we nominate as "The cauldron of knowing of the academic manager", in which a culinary metaphor is associated to the academic manager's path entangled with aspects of the situated context. The book is the opportunity to explore this framework and recommend some guidelines, serving not only researchers interested in university and university management, but also practitioners at HEI, in their diverse formats.

We thank our spouses, sons, and daughters, as well as some university colleagues, for encouraging the development of this book. Also, we are grateful to the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) for the financial support. Lastly, we appreciate the invaluable support of both Marcus Ballenger and Geetha Chockalingam, our editorial team at Palgrave Macmillan Publisher, since they first proposed to elaborate a book based on a research carried out in Brazil. Thank you for the indispensable observations and recommendations to make this project possible.

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