Technology Skill for Business Students: The Next Level

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ABSTRACT

Most institutions of higher learning have recognized and adjusted their business curriculum to address the need for business technology skill in today's dynamic business environment. This study looks at the metamorphosis of the need for technology skill in business curriculum and the assessment of student learning by addressing some relevant questions. It specifically looks at the school's basic pedagogy relating to the area of technology, the development of technology-based courses in the curriculum over time and the reasons for changes. The overall assessment process for continuous improvement in this area is also reported. Some recommendations for future research opportunities in technology skill are proposed. The study contributes a valuable perspective on the importance of information systems education and technology skill for business students.

Keywords: technology skill, technology learning assessment, business technology pedagogy, technology learning outcomes.

Teaching Leadership and Strategy

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ABSTRACT

Modern academic links between leadership and strategy were forged in the early 1960s with the heightened application of strategy to business planning. These links were soon dissolved by the strategy consultants who came to dominate the field of business strategy in the mid-1960s. The consultants dismissed the role of leadership in strategic planning in favor of objective analyses of the external environment that eliminated any need for leadership skills, judgment, values, or intuition. Failures to implement strategy in the 1980s led to limited roles for leaders in implementing strategies they had no role in creating, but the gulf between leadership and strategy has steadily widened.

This paper traces the consequences of this widening gulf for teaching leadership and strategy in the classroom. It explores how an integrated approach to teaching leadership and strategy would better prepare today's students for the challenges they will face as future business leaders.

Keywords: leadership, strategy, management, globalization

Ratio-Analysis Challenges Resulting from Retailers' Outsourcing of Their Credit-Card Operations

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ABSTRACT

This case examines how a retailer's accounts receivable amounts and its days' sales in accounts receivable (DSAR) are affected by the firm's choice of whether to maintain the administration of its credit-card operation in-house or outsource it to a financial institution. The growing trend toward outsourcing of credit-card operations creates major challenges for analysts as they attempt to make intra- and inter-firm comparisons of retailers' using the DSAR metric. The Teaching Note includes questions that can be addressed using the case-specific information, but also contains questions that give students the opportunity to research actual retailers' SEC 10-K filings to calculate DSARs and discover whether their store credit cards are administered in-house or by a financial institution. The case is appropriate for use in intermediate accounting and introductory financial accounting for MBAs as well as courses in financial statement analysis and financial management.

Keywords: Accounts receivable, trade receivables, retailers, ratio analysis, liquidity analysis, working capital management, credit-card sales, credit-card operations, Macy's, Nordstrom, Office Depot, OfficeMax, Staples

Social Media: A Viable Source for Collecting Research Data

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become the primary source for connecting with others internationally. Professional Social Media Networks (SMN) such as LinkedIn attract business professionals globally. This paper introduces the methodology as it was used in conducting and collecting research data for a sample of 714 participants. Results demonstrate that social media is a viable source for collecting original research data. Further, results showed that using SMN has many advantages that conventional data collection cannot offer such as speed of response, international reach, and access to a diverse group of multinational professionals who are viewed as experts in their fields. Use of SMN as a research medium represents a powerful new tool for teaching and conducting business research.

Keywords: Social Media Networks, LinkedIn, Reflective Leadership and Reflective Learning

Using Monte Carlo Simulation to Teach Students about Forecast Uncertainty

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ABSTRACT

Business students make use of electronic spreadsheets to learn about, and perform, many kinds of financial and business analyses. Traditional spreadsheet analysis, however, often uses a single cell value (like an average) to represent uncertain or variable inputs. This results in a static, or deterministic, outcome that might be unrepresentative of the range of possible forecast values. This in-class discussion and demonstration makes use of Oracle© Crystal Ball to demonstrate the power of simulation to improve forecast models.

Keywords: Monte Carlo simulation, stochastic forecasting, spreadsheets

Create-Your-Own-Cipher Assignment to Return Creativity to Cryptography

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ABSTRACT

Business has always had a need to communicate securely over short and long distances. The industry has come to rely on technology-based encryption systems. This article presents an assignment that teaches students to use creativity instead of technology to design and execute a substitution cipher to securely communicate a short message using knowledge of their campus as the cipher key. This assignment works across several levels of Bloom's taxonomy and meets higher level learning objectives. Several extensions to the assignment are presented along with a suggested grading rubric.

Keywords: Creativity, Assessment, Secure Communications, Cryptography

Using a Retail Location Game to Explore Hotelling's Principle of Minimum Differentiation

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ABSTRACT

An agent-based simulation game facilitates student discovery of the counter-intuitive logic and sub-optimal social welfare outcome of Hotelling's principle of minimum differentiation (Hotelling's Law) as an explanation for observed clustering of retail locations. Three-player, non-linear, and complex competitor behavior versions of the game then lead students to discover the limited applicability of the principle under more realistic assumptions. Finally, students use the game to see how the introduction of uncertainty improves the applicability of the principle in the multiple player version.

Keywords: Hotelling's Law, location theory, simulation

Creating Entrepreneurial Learning Communities in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The Kauffman Foundation reported in 2006, "Increasingly, universities themselves are agents of entrepreneurship." According to the University of Michigan, "entrepreneurship promotes, implements, and rewards innovation," and is the catalyst behind the creation of the university's entrepreneurial learning community. This community is a university-wide network designed to "enable the free flow of ideas between students" and "concentrate students in a culture of innovation." By connecting academic disciplines, entrepreneurial learning, and business opportunities, this web of innovation facilitates the creation of interdisciplinary learning, creative initiatives, and market-focused entrepreneurship. A proposed framework of entrepreneurial learning (Lugar-Brettin, 2013) provides a starting point for creating university-based entrepreneurial learning communities by identifying objectives for these innovation networks based on research on market-driven innovation.

Keywords: centers for creative collaboration, centers for entrepreneurship and innovation, centers for experiential learning, culture of innovation, entrepreneurial learning communities, exploratory learning, opportunity identification, radical innovation

Teaching Management Principles by Integrating Video Clips to Enhance Learning

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ABSTRACT

This article gives management instructors a visual method to help students more clearly understand key management principles. This teaching methodology utilizes movie clips to reinforce concepts in a vivid, memorable way.

We present briefly key management principles found in popular management textbooks. With each video clip, we provide summary detail (e.g., video clip time) for instructors to help them in their decisions to integrate specific movie clips into their lectures. We have explained how management topics are emphasized in specific clips. Further, we have shared discussion questions and assignments found to be effective.

Today's students are bombarded with visual images and adapt quickly to visual presentations in the classroom. We have found video clips to be a very effective method of teaching management concepts. These video clips have helped our students gain a memorable understanding of how a management principle can be applied in business situations. We have received very positive student feedback on the use of short, powerful video clips.

Key Words: film, video clips, management principles, teaching methods

Developing undergraduate construction management students' abilities to manage projects through a computer-based simulation

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ABSTRACT

Construction management is a relatively young profession with a curriculum that is continually evolving. The multiple accreditations that are sought by universities in Australia mean that curricula are frequently overcrowded and financial management is a subject that is challenging to deliver. This paper describes the approach adopted at one university where final year students' knowledge, skills and abilities about financial management are developed by simulating the operations of a hypothetical construction company.   The paper describes the way it is delivered and the challenges experienced over the years.

Keywords: Financial management, construction industry, simulation

Student-led Consulting Projects Succeed as Experiential Learning Tool for MBA Marketing Strategy

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ABSTRACT

In this article, information from an MBA-level marketing strategy course taught with and without a major experiential learning assignment is analyzed. Empirical analysis of data about learning outcomes, student satisfaction, and student self-efficacy are compared. The study reveals that students engaged in these projects perceived them as valuable learning exercises that: (1) supported their mastery of class materials and their ability to apply theoretical concepts to practical situations; (2) enhanced their satisfaction with the course and instructor, and (3) increased their self-confidence with regard to their own business capabilities.

Keywords: Experiential learning, marketing strategy, consulting, learning outcomes

Measuring Student Ethical Behavior at the Micro Level

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ABSTRACT

Teaching students what constitutes ethical behavior and to recognize the existence of an ethical dilemma can be a challenge. But measuring the ethical behavior of students is even more challenging. This article examines how vignettes were used to measure the ethical behavior of 798 junior-level pre-accountancy majors. The results revealed that the majority of these students (1) appeared to be honest and believe in the Golden Rule, (2) were reluctant to accept responsibility for their actions, (3) used rationalizations to justify their behavior, and (4) did not believe in the existence of a universal standard of ethical behavior. Measuring ethical behavior at the micro level can be a useful approach for introducing the subject of ethics, and enabling students to calibrate and compare their ethical behavior with peers.

Keywords: ethics, ethical behavior, measurement, vignettes, undergraduate students, moral compass, universal standard, ethical dilemma

Impact of Undergraduate Business Curriculum on Ethical Judgment

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ABSTRACT

As the business news continues to be inundated with scandals, business schools must find a better way of impacting the attitudes of their graduates. While a variety of approaches can be taken, a hybrid approach appears to have the best impact. A study comparing the attitudes of freshmen and seniors reveals an improvement in their ethical awareness. However, for the most part, the impact of the curriculum was not statistically significant.

Keywords: ethics education, undergraduate curriculum

Does Short-Term Travel Impact Student's Cross-Cultural Aptitude?
A Quasi-Experimental Study of Organizational Behavior Students

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates augmenting the organizational behavior course using short term travel as a mechanism for cross-cultural learning. Data were gathered concerning students' locus of control, tolerance of ambiguity, a self-assessment of learning outcomes of the organizational behavior course, and perceived importance of, as well as perceived accomplishment of, applied learning outcomes.

Keywords: Short-term travel, locus of control, tolerance of ambiguity, learning outcomes

Energize Teaching: Get Back to Basics and Get Real

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ABSTRACT

The types of assignment that faculty members employ can make a significant difference in the engagement of students and the amount of learning that takes place. A brief review of how students learn, and what we want them to learn is presented, and an argument to move towards service learning is made. A 2X2 matrix is presented that incorporates nature of assignment (abstract to real) and primary skill orientation required of students (cognitive to experiential). The quadrants are evaluated for alignment to learning styles and level of learning according to Bloom's Taxonomy, and examples of assignments are provided for each quadrant. The paper concludes with benefits of service learning to student, instructor, institution and society.

Keywords: Student engagement, community engagement, experiential learning, service learning, energized teaching, innovative teaching