

Leadership Simulations and OB: Improving the Student Experience

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this session is to introduce and discuss a new, interactive leadership simulation that provides a scalable, experiential learning opportunity for students in OB courses. The facilitators will present a simulation that complements OB text books which provides students with the chance to directly experience key OB learning objectives. The session will focus on the use of this simulation to provide students with an opportunity to practice OB concepts in a realistic simulated environment. The facilitators share how integrating simulation technology with other traditional learning methods has improved the learning experience for students. The facilitators also discuss how simulations can be added to current course models of any class size. The audience will have the opportunity to view and experiment with the simulation and ask questions on implementation and effectiveness.

Teaching Implications

The presented simulation provides students to opportunity to experience and practice OB topics. The scalability of the simulation allows instructors to implement the simulation in small and large classrooms. Incorporating gamification techniques provide the students with instant feedback. These techniques also provides a new method to establish assurance of learning. The simulation allows instructors to apply the Experiential Learning Model to large classrooms.

Innovative Pedagogy

- Hands on application of OB knowledge, skills and abilities
- Technology allows for teaching OB and leadership skills in a large-scale active classroom
- The simulation provides immediate feedback for students on their performance
- The simulation emphasizes a crawl-walk-run multi-stage learning approach that allows the students to face increasingly challenging leadership problems
- Results orientation facilitates students' development and growth
- Technology allows for cost-effective repetitions
- Game format provides a modern, engaging learning platform for students

Session Outline

1. Introduce simulation
2. Discuss integration with traditional OB courses, and implementation
3. Discuss how this simulation can provide assurance of learning
4. Discuss how the simulation can be scaled to fit various class sizes
5. Demonstrate the simulation and allow audience to interact with it
6. Question & answer from audience, encourage contributions from audience

Application to *Navigating the Changing Currents*

Students are increasingly adept at using technology. This proficiency provides instructors a way to meet their expectations and improve their experience. Improvements in technology have allowed instructors to provide experiential activities efficiently in classrooms (large and small). This provides instructors with a way to reinforce the lessons taught in class. The cost effectiveness of the simulation allows the instructor to provide more repetitions and practice for students. The simulation helps the instructor meet the learning expectations of the students.

This proposal is unique to the OBTC and has not been proposed elsewhere.

Simulation Overview

The simulation compliments the topics traditionally covered in most OB textbooks and courses, providing the student with the opportunity to address the topics experientially. The first-person simulation allows students to practice the implementation of key OB topics such as performance management, teamwork, ethical decision making, motivation, leadership, conflict management and several other key areas. The simulation creates a safe environment that allows a student to gain invaluable experience. The simulation replicates person-to-person interactions allowing the student to make decisions and apply what they have learned in their course. The students are challenged through a crawl-walk-run methodology that allows them to gain confidence and skills as they practice increasingly difficult challenges within each module. Using gamification increases the 'fun factor' for the course and makes the learning experience more enjoyable for the student.

Course Integration and Implementation

The simulation is designed in modules which complement topics in traditional OB textbooks. The simulation is first-person, allowing each student to complete the module at their own pace. The game-play is designed to take 1-3 hours per module in order to align with a three credit hour course. The instructor interface allows the instructor to monitor each student's progress and identify areas of concern. The simulation modules parallel the chapters of leading OB texts, to provide the instructor with a means to reinforce the lessons learned through the experiential learning model. Moreover, the simulation is being designed to provide the student the opportunity with multiple repetitions, thus strengthening the learning dynamic. The instructor will have the ability to pick and choose which modules to include, as well as customize the order in which they are conducted.

Assurance of Learning

The simulation provides an experiential way to measure assurance of student learning, a common concern for institutions facing accreditation. Incorporating the simulation helps instructors answer; "How will we know whether the students have learned it or not?" Demonstration of skills and abilities are important learning goals and objectives. The students have to demonstrate proficiency in order to successfully complete a module. Their individual and collective performance provides the instructor with feedback on how well the students have learned a given topic. This will be a very powerful assessment tool to help measure what each student has learned and the overall level of class learning. Completion of the simulation provides another way for instructors to demonstrate what the students have learned in the course.

Scalability

The simulation allows the instructor to conduct significant experiential activities in large classes. The first-person nature of the simulation allows it to be applied to classrooms of any size. This is especially beneficial to large classrooms that are heavily reliant on lectures to present material. The individual nature of the simulation allows the student to complete learning assignments outside of the classroom. The instructor can incorporate debriefs to maximize the learning opportunity.