1) **"Ripped from the headlines": Problem-based learning through real-time scenarios**

Abstract

The case method, while instrumental in business education, can be improved when teaching management/business practices by utilizing real-time scenarios. The pedagogical practice of creating assignments on real-time and real-world scenarios stems from problem-based learning, and places greater emphasis on skill development necessary for employment in today's dynamic work environment. Therefore, the interactive session will lead participants through the process of developing problem-based learning with data and examples "ripped from the headlines" to help them bring their lessons to life. Participants will learn how to search, assess and develop material for facilitating real-time assignments relevant to all functions of business.

Key Words: Real-time Problem-based Learning, Case Method, Current Events

2) **Teaching Implications**

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a learner-centered instructional approach designed to enhance student's skills by having them use their knowledge base from business courses for assessing and developing solutions to ill-structured problems (Major & Palmer, 2001). The practice of integrating real-time or real-world scenarios instead of traditional published case studies or historical examples provides a unique experiential element to management instruction that more closely illustrates the challenges of the work environment (Gallagher & Gallagher, 2013). If students are consistently provided a neat framework or a historically determined situation, they may be ill-prepared to tackle real-life challenges that are accompanied by undefined parameters. In emerging industries such as those in Silicon Valley, students will need the skills for framing a problem while sifting through an overload of ambiguous information to find unique and competitive solutions. Therefore, the practice of using current events and developing business scenarios in various assignments provides an invaluable educational experience that allows students to hone problem-solving and decision-making skills necessary for "navigating the changing currents".

The pedagogical practice of PBL through real-time cases/examples is considered an improvement from the traditional case study for management education. Traditional cases and

historical scenarios can be outdated, overused and limited in scope and experiential relevance (Yeaple, 2012) as they are guided more by academic agendas than real issues (Rayment & Smith, 2013). AACSB has also found that traditional teaching methods have failed to adequately prepare future business leaders and has called for an educational process focused more on Knowing, Doing, and Being (Datar, Garvin & Cullen, 2010) consistent with real-time learning. It is clear that a new approach to learning is imperative for all management instructors and using PBL is a great addition to our pedagogical toolkit.

The objectives of the presentation will allow participants to:

1. Clarify the relevance of problem-based learning for creating a learner-centered pedagogical approach,
2. Understand the process for developing problem-based assignments relative to their instructional topics, and
3. Understand the requirements for facilitating problem-based assignments.

3) **Session Description and Plan**

TIME: 90 minutes

DESCRIPTION: Participants will be provided a base of information on the relevance of Problem-Based learning and an overview of PBL in action. Participants will then be taught how to create and facilitate PBL assignments.

MATERIALS: Current events, sample articles, sample cases, assignment outline sheets

INTRODUCTION (15 minutes): The session will include a brief intro on how and why problem based learning is helpful in teaching content. Examples will be provided on how this technique can be designed and implemented in multiple content areas.

ACTIVITY (75 minutes): Participants will be provided brief data regarding current events and will then develop outlines for activities for various business topics/courses.

Working in small groups, participants will be led through a hands-on demonstration for creating a PBL assignment. Base material will be provided and participants will be led through the actual design process for creating these assignments. Discussion and de-briefing will also include

guidelines for creating the assignment instructions and key factors for facilitating the PBL assignment (including pros and cons). Multiple examples will be provided to demonstrate how PBL is multidimensional and relevant for all teaching disciplines.

4) **Application to Conference Theme.**

This practice and presentation are relevant to the conference theme in that as educators we need to challenge business students to be able to assess the currents of the dynamic business environment. As business is impacted by exogenous factors, students must be able to navigate the current trends and apply sound decisions in an unstructured world. Using real scenarios with undefined and ambiguous parameters will teach a more holistic approach for assessing the multiple facets of business.

5) **Unique Contribution to OBTC**

The presentation at OBTC would be unique to the OBTC conference as it would be an experiential presentation rather than a mere discussion around a research/theoretical pedagogical method. This teaching method was presented at the Southern Management Association conference as a concept based pedagogical approach but did not include a hands-on demonstration. The complete paper (with theoretical support) will also be submitted for publication to the Organization Management Journal for consideration shortly. This presentation would be very different in that it will be highly experiential with a hands-on participant activity using sample material to learn how to create actual course assignments relevant for all topics in business.

References

Datar, S.M., Garvin, D.A., & Cullen, P.G. 2010. *Rethinking the MBA: Business education at a crossroads*, Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.

Gallagher, S.A., & Gallagher, J.J. 2013. Using problem-based learning to explore unseen academic potential. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning*, 7 (1): 111-13.

Major, C.H., & Palmer, B. 2001. Assessing the effectiveness of problem-based learning in higher

    education: Lessons from the literature. *Academic Exchange Quarterly*, 5 (1), (Spring):

    retrieved from http://www.rapidintellect.com/AEQweb/mop4spr01.htm

Rayment, J., & Smith, J. 2013. The current and future role of business schools. *Education and*

    Training, 54 (4): 478-494. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/00400911311326081

Yeaple, R. 2012. Is the MBA case method passé? *Forbes*, retrieved from

    http://www.forbes.com/sites/ronaldyeaple/2012/07/09/is-the-mba-case-method-

    passe/print/