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It's Like Cycling: The Application of Threshold Conceptions to Teaching an Introduction to Human Resource Management

Abstract: Threshold conceptions bind different aspects of concepts (Land, Cousin, Meyer, & Davies, 2005). Individuals may have a basic understanding of concepts, but not the interrelatedness within these concepts (Perkins, 2006). Therefore, the purpose of this exercise is to discuss the importance of threshold conceptions in learning, and provide a detailed cycling framework for the conceptualization of human resource management. Additionally, frameworks that may be used in management to assist learning and overcoming threshold conceptions will be discussed.

Keywords: Human Resource Management, Threshold Conceptions, Framework, Management

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Introduction

Once a student learns basic concepts of a topic, they may experience barriers by not understanding the synergy of how these concepts work together. Threshold conceptions may act as barriers to learning and reduce the possibility of a student excelling to higher levels of understanding. This exercise is designed to facilitate learning for undergraduate and graduate students, across cultures, for both non-traditional and traditional students.

Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications

This exercise is based in the threshold concepts and threshold conceptions literature. Threshold concepts are topics that when learned result in the student “seeing things in a new way” (Meyer & Land, 2003, p. 1). Although individuals may have a general understanding of concepts, they may not grasp the interrelatedness within these concepts (Perkins, 2006). Threshold conceptions bind different aspects of concepts (Land, Cousin, Meyer, & Davies, 2005) which may facilitate learning at higher levels.

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives are to: (a) gain a further understanding of threshold concepts and conceptions, (b) provide a cycling framework for the conceptualization of human resource management, and (c) discuss additional frameworks that may be used to assist learning and overcoming threshold conceptions. All teaching topics are relevant to this session.

Exercise Overview and Session Description

First, we will provide the definitions of threshold concepts and conceptions (5 minutes). Second, we will provide a broad framework explaining the commonalities of cycling and human

resource management (30 minutes). Third, we will get into small groups and propose other frameworks that can be applied to other management topics (20 minutes). Finally, we will discuss teaching experiences with providing these frameworks (5 minutes).

References

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