

Video Bridges in the Management Classroom: A Resource Exchange and Roundtable Discussion on Analogical Learning via Video Bridges

Abstract

The traditional approach to using videos involves the so-called “movie sandwich” which focuses on the use of a single video clip. We highlight the possible benefits of constructing what we call video bridges, or the selection of analogous videos with the focus of instruction and assignments centered on comparing the underlying linkages between clips, rather than analyzing the videos individually. In this session, we will review research that supports the benefits of analogical learning, highlight teaching implications, provide a specific example of a video bridge, and engage in roundtable discussions on the topic including brainstorming and exchanging possible video bridges.

Keywords: analogical learning, films, video

Videos have been established as best practice resources to enhance learning in management classrooms (e.g., Liu et al., 2022). Traditional approaches to utilizing videos in management education have been described as a “movie sandwich” wherein “instructors provide background on theoretical concepts before showing a movie clip, and following the illustrative clip, the class engages in a brief reflection or debrief designed to drive home key points” (Sprinkle & Urick, 2016, p. 106). While undoubtedly beneficial, individual videos may be loosely integrated in these conventional approaches. Perhaps in the extreme case, each video is utilized in isolation from other videos. Drawing from analogical learning research, which highlights the benefits accrued when learners compare two objects, we propose an additional option for management educators to select and arrange their videos in a way that adds unique value to learners.

In particular, management educators have the potential to improve learning through the comparison processes inherent to analogical learning (Gentner, 1989). This involves creating what we term *video bridges*, which is the selection of analogous videos with the focus of instruction and assignments centered on comparing the underlying similarities between clips, rather than analyzing the videos individually. We first review research on analogical learning and apply these findings to videos. We follow with teaching implications and provide an example of a video bridge based on the films *American Factory* (Bognar & Reichert, 2019) and *Gung Ho* (Howard, 1986). In the session, we hope to co-create a list of additional video bridge ideas with participants that will be disseminated after the session.

Literature Review

Analogical learning was developed based on research in cognitive psychology which recognized that analogy is a source of new ideas and a method for conveying new ideas (Gentner

et al., 2001). At its most simplistic level, analogical learning involves analogies, or comparisons between a given subject and a given target for the purposes of learning. “Analogies thus capture parallels across different situations. When such a common structure is found, then what is known about one situation can be used to infer new information about the other.” (Gentner & Smith, 2013, p. 668). A study by Loewenstein et al. (2003) provides an illuminating example of the potential power of analogical learning to enhance student learning.

In particular, Loewenstein and colleagues (2003) examined the use of cases to teach contingency contracts in negotiation. In one condition, participants were asked to read two cases on contingency contracts separately, with instructions for each case that read “What is going on in this negotiation? Please describe the solution and say how successful you think it is.” In the analogical learning condition, participants were asked to compare the two cases with analogical learning being prompted through instructions that read: “What is going on in these negotiations? Think about the similarities between these two cases. What are the key parallels in the two negotiations? Please describe the solution and say how successful you think it is.” After analyzing the cases, participants engaged in a simulated negotiation. Results indicated that analogical use of two cases resulted in learners being more likely to apply the lessons from the case to perform better on the negotiation task (i.e., they were able to correctly structure the negotiation solution as a contingent contract). In fact, almost twice as many learners in the analogical learning condition (versus the separate cases condition), successfully applied the lessons from the case studies.

As illustrated, analogical learning suggests that “comparing two or more instances that embody the same principle can promote abstraction of a schema that can be transferred to new situations” (Loewenstein et al., 1999, p. 586). This is particularly important given that

management is an applied field and the content and concepts we teach in courses are meant to be applied to new situations, rather than necessarily repeated in the exact same conditions or contexts initially taught in the classroom. Overall, a large body of research supports the potential benefit of incorporating analogical learning into course designs (Gentner & Smith, 2013).

Teaching Implications

The body of research on analogical learning has direct, actionable teaching implications that immediately impact management educators. We detail these implications below and utilize a video bridge based on the films *American Factory* (Bognar & Reichert, 2019) and *Gung Ho* (Howard, 1986) as a recurring example to illustrate the implications of analogical learning via video bridges on courses such as principles of management, human resource management, or international management/business. Briefly summarized, *American Factory* is a documentary film depicting the acquisition and re-opening of a former General Motors plant by a Chinese multinational enterprise, and the challenges experienced by the newly hired American employees working with their Chinese colleagues. Sharing striking similarities, *Gung Ho* is a fictional, comedic portrayal of the takeover and re-opening of a shuttered American car plant by a Japanese corporation with Michael Keaton playing the role of a liaison between Japanese top management and American workers. The parallels between these two films makes them ripe for the creation of a video bridge that prompts analogical learning through comparisons of parts (or the entirety) of these films.

Supplementing Conventional Video “Sandwiches” with Analogical Learning

While past research on analogical learning in management education has emphasized the use of written cases (Kurtz et al., 2001), the same insights can be applied to videos which share many parallel uses in the management classroom and can be thought of as audio-visual mini-

cases (cf. Liedtka, 2001). Therefore, based on the tenants of analogical learning, management educators might consider the implementation of video bridges in their course designs. Such video bridges could involve showing two or more different videos that share some underlying similarity in the concepts or relationships demonstrated. While educators can utilize conventional approaches by first debriefing students on each video individually, an analogical learning approach would supplement these debriefs with discussion questions and elaboration intended to evoke learners to engage in critical thinking focused on comparing the two videos. This comparison cognition captures the essence of analogical learning and should provide benefits to learning above and beyond simply debriefing each video individually.

For example, *American Factory* and *Gung Ho* both depict organizational change events wherein a foreign multinational enterprise acquires a domestic American facility. An *American Factory-Gung Ho* video bridge, which contrasts fiction versus nonfiction accounts of an international acquisition in the automotive industry, may serve to generate discussion and reflection amongst learners that would not be possible if these video clips were shown and discussed in isolation. For instance, learners might compare *American Factory* and *Gung Ho* to appreciate common frustrations and challenges experienced by employees during such significant organizational changes, while also highlighting differences between a fictionalized portrayal of a corporate acquisition and what happens in the “real world” based on the documentary film. Further discussion might involve weighing the representativeness of the video clips and discussing the lessons from both clips that are most likely to apply to other organizational change endeavors.

Reimagining Time-Tested Videos

Based on the case method of teaching, analogical learning research finds that when two cases are compared, the comparison takes on a life of its own and results in unique, value added learning above and beyond the two original cases in isolation (Gentner et al., 2003; Loewenstein et al., 2003). Thus, while learners might glean important insights by viewing video clips in isolation, displaying two or more video clips together and prompting comparisons between these clips represents an entirely new, additional resource. For management educators, this presents an opportunity to breathe new life into tried-and-true video clips.

For example, *Gung Ho* has been reviewed by multiple management education outlets throughout the years (e.g., Mallinger & Rossy, 2003; Pendergast, 2010; Stelzer & Banthin, 1992) and has been referred to as a “classic” management education video (Pendergast, 2010). While we agree that this resource is still useful, the film itself is close to 40 years old. Thus, management educators might face a conundrum in trying to balance the useful content and concepts underlying the film, with its superficial outdatedness. To this end, a video bridge spanning *American Factory*, a 2019 film, and *Gung Ho* may help maintain the learning outcomes associated with an older film while potentially increasing the perceived relevance of the concepts illustrated. Indeed, engaging learners in analogical learning through comparisons between older and newer videos may actually add an additional facet of learning that is unachievable with a film shown in isolation. For instance, the significant time span between *American Factory* and *Gung Ho* can be used as a springboard to discuss changes in perceptions regarding globalization throughout time. This highlights the potential of video bridges to leverage resources that management educators might already be comfortable with to increase learning. Given the ubiquity of movie and television show reboots in recent years (Herbert & Verevis, 2020), video

bridges represent an increasingly feasible source of management education innovation and impact.

Promoting Greater Learning by Constructing Video Bridges with Assignments

Research in analogical learning finds that deeper, more intensive comparison processes promote greater learning (Kurtz et al., 2001). Thus, management educators can further leverage the benefits of analogical learning by supplementing the traditional “sandwich” approach of debriefing videos with video bridges consisting of high involvement assignments. For example, one of the authors of this article has previously assigned the viewing of both *American Factory* and *Gung Ho* in their entirety as part of a movie club requirement (Sprinkle & Urick, 2016) for an international human resource management course. The deliverable for this movie club was a reflection paper that was accompanied by several guiding discussion questions. Similar to the research reviewed above, the first few discussion questions focused on engaging students in analogical learning by asking them to compare both films (e.g., How similar or different are these two films? In what ways are they similar or different?). Beyond in-class debrief and discussion, assignments such as the one described may bolster analogical learning by engaging learners in deeper, prolonged comparative cognitions. Other possible assignments to encourage these deeper comparisons might involve students creating their own sequel to the video clip bridge that demonstrates the concepts learned in an alternative context (Black et al., 2019).

Session Description

We plan to divide the 45-minute session into several parts. We will start by introducing analogical learning and briefly reviewing relevant research. Applying analogical learning to the video context, we will introduce the construct of video bridges by defining it and providing a specific example of this technique based on the films *American Factory* (Bognar & Reichert,

2019) and *Gung Ho* (Howard, 1986). During the presentation of this example, we will highlight the benefits of this approach and provide an example assignment used in previous instruction. Participants will then be assigned to roundtables (groups of 3-5, depending on attendance and based on courses taught) to discuss video bridges. Topics may include the extent this is a technique participants have personally experienced, differences between institutions/student populations, the effectiveness of analogical learning, etc. Within the roundtable group, participants will also brainstorm videos they use for specific topics, and attempt to create a video bridge with other participants. Participants will also exchange any video bridges they have built in the past and exchange possible video bridge ideas. The presenters will serve as facilitators and participants in the roundtable discussions. After this roundtable session, each roundtable will share one video bridge identified in their groups with the entire session while identifying possible limitations with the suggestions. Finally, we will summarize the takeaways. Below is the detailed proposed timeline:

Agenda	Time
Introduction and Review of Analogical Learning	5 minutes
Presentation of <i>American Factory</i> and <i>Gung Ho</i>	10 minutes
Roundtable Discussion	15 minutes

Resource Exchange and Discussion	10 minutes
Wrap-up	5 minutes
Total:	45 minutes

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