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TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING: PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Jan Welker, SUNY Oswego
Lisa Berardino, SUNY Institute of Technology

ABSTRACT

Management literature and the popular press are implicating colleges, and especially business schools, in the preparation of decision makers in organizations who are able to identify problems and make recommendations to solve these problems. This paper responds to the challenge of teaching critical thinking by promoting the integration of whole in-depth company audit in multiple courses within a college degree program. The learning goal is for students to have the ability to identify problems, critically analyze the evidence, and to make a clear set of implementable recommendations.

Using a collection of concepts, this paper defines critical thinking as cognitively processing and evaluating information. Critical thinking also includes coming to a conclusion based on analysis (i.e., fixing the problem).

This presentation highlights the authors' combined twenty plus years of teaching company audits projects. Textbook approaches are blended with project based learning techniques. A three step format forms the center of the project: Problem Identification, Analysis (including Industry and Company analysis), and Alternatives and Recommendation. Students are provided with step-by-step guidelines and the project involves interaction with faculty and managers.

The presentation answers questions such as: Where do students and employees typically struggle in company project analysis? How can these roadblocks be overcome? How can instructors and employers evaluate critical thinking?

This presentation concludes with recommendations to professors, students, and company managers about how to improve student and employee critical thinking.

Keywords: critical thinking, problem solving, company audit

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TEACHING MANAGEMENT AS ART, SCIENCE AND CRAFT USING AN EVIDENCE BASED PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Evidence-Based Management has emerged as an important perspective that emphasizes the use of available evidence to inform decisions and guide practice. Management educations is finding ways of incorporating evidence-based management into the curriculum and classrooms. The central issues are 'when is evidence needed by managers?' and 'what form should it take?'. In this paper we adopt a philosophy that management is some combination of science, art and craft. Science depends on the development, analysis and application of theory, art is inspiration, creativity and innovation and craft is experience. We examine the need and uses of evidence for each of the three perspectives and how and where to incorporate it into classes.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS: DOES TRAVEL-STUDY PRODUCE ACADEMIC RESULTS

Stephen Carlson, Piedmont College

ABSTRACT

Results of a CPC based comprehensive exam in global business are compared between students in a traditional classroom setting with those participating in a travel-study program. Research questions regarding commonality in measurement and equivalency in outcomes are addressed in the context of using either approach as a means of fulfilling accreditation requirements for program content and student learning outcomes in the field of international business. This paper also examines differences between content, pedagogy, and student learning in a travel-study program and a traditional classroom setting. The author has led travel-study programs for his institution since the 2006-2007 academic year.

INTRODUCTION

Piedmont College has a history of sponsoring international travel-study programs beginning in the 1930's. In recent years, the college sponsors a variety of ten-fourteen day travel-study programs during Maymester. Both school administrators and faculty associated with the program have continually argued that the benefits of the program warrant course credit. However, travel-study for college credit has also been criticized as lacking in academic rigor thereby reducing its value and being unworthy of equivalent college course credit.

Even though the college's travel-study program is available in multiple schools of the college, this study focuses exclusively on the travel-study program sponsored by the Walker School of Business. Beginning in the 2010-2011 academic year, students in the Walker School of Business have been able to substitute three of the six hours of course credit earned in the travel-study program for a required classroom based international business course. Previously, only credits within a concentration or elective were available. This study examines whether it is appropriate to substitute travel-study for a traditional core course in international business. Is there equivalency in the outcomes? Can the outcomes be measured on common terms?

TRAVEL-STUDY PROGRAM

Travel-study itineraries vary from year to year, however, within any given year the program focuses on ten days of travel to a region that includes a combination of meetings with business and governmental agencies, plant visits and factory tours, historical sites, cultural events, and "free time" for individual experiences.

Four Saturday meetings are held approximately one month apart during the Spring semester in preparation for the trip. Meetings cover the logistics of international travel including verification of travel documents (passport, medical insurance, emergency notification), dress and packing instructions, and roommate assignments. While there is no accompanying textbook, professors conduct a limited number of lectures on key international business issues. Students prepare presentations on international business topics (e.g. compare and contrast GAAP and IFRS financial reporting requirements) and scheduled travel sites and meetings (e.g. European Central Bank). Students are also required to complete an applicable research paper on an international business subject related to their area of concentration.

For the majority of students, these trips are their first international trip. Sometimes it's the first airplane trip or even the first trip more than 100 miles from home. Prior exposure to other environments and cultures is often severely limited. Throughout the preparatory meetings, professors leading the trip continue to emphasize the need for student flexibility and adaptability. Exhortations include; "expect the unexpected, put aside prejudices, be open to the experience, try different foods, reserve judgment, and reflect on what you see and hear".

During the trip, students are expected to complete a daily journal of their activities, observations, and reflection on the day's events. At the end of the travel, students are required to complete a paper on their observations and experiences during the ten day period. Reflection papers usually included comments that indicated how students connected the planned events and activities with previously completed courses in their respective programs. However, reflection papers frequently included comments about "the unexpected" and those experiences that connected with them on a personal level.

TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM VS TRAVEL-STUDY

The proposition that travel can be educational has been well accepted over the years. The Institute of International Education reports 289,408 U.S. students participated in international travel-study programs in the 2012-2013 academic year (2014). Of this total, approximately 20% were in travel-study programs in the field of business. Equally important was the institute's finding that 9% of all U.S. undergraduates participate in a study abroad program prior to graduation.

Increasing interest in travel-study research is evident in a recent literature review (Stone & Petrick, 2013) summarizing fifteen studies of student experiences. The foundation for the research is based on concepts and theories associated with experiential learning. These include Dewey's definition of experiential learning to Kolb's application of experiences in an inductive / deductive cycle of logic to the observational learning construct in Bandura's social learning theory.

Some forms of learning arising from travel-study expand upon prior classroom instruction by providing concrete examples illustrating particular concepts and methods of implementing them. Our trips usually included at least one factory tour with a European auto manufacturer. Most students have never been in a large-scale factory environment. Journals and reflection papers indicated how the experience gave them a new perspective on quality management concepts and practices. Peppas (2005) noted a similar circumstance where the travel experience enhanced the student understanding of concepts from the classroom. Peppas focused on short-term travel-study programs for business students similar to the make-up of our program and student mix.

Even though students make a connection to previous course, there is more at work in a travel-study setting. Traditional classroom based pedagogy is an exercise in causal or cause and effect logic. The professor passes knowledge to students through lectures and readings. When more activities are added such as case studies, in-class discussions, or problem-solving assignments, the philosophical basis remains the same set of exercises in cause and effect or causal logic within a structured environment. In a travel-study setting, the learning environment is no longer limited to the content of a course structure. Group dynamics, interaction with the various players, observation of the surroundings and culture have an effect.

Sarasvathy (20012) offers an interesting perspective with her critique of the limitations of causal logic. She poses a theory that advancement in business and economics can be traced to effectuation logic. She defines "effectuation processes as a set of means as given and focus on selecting between possible effects that can be created with that set of means" (p. 245). Sarasvathy uses the metaphor of a chef versus a line cook to illustrate the differences where the line cook follows a given recipe and the chef assesses a set of ingredients to select an outcome from all the possibilities. Use of effectuation logic has implications for innovation and entrepreneurship as illustrated with the work of Czaplewski, Duening and Olson (2015). These authors challenged traditional causal logic as they addressed the marketing community on the use of effectuation logic to inform the new product development process.

Sarasvathy's approach may offer an explanation of the differences in learning through classroom instruction versus travel-study beyond the traditional "experiential" learning explanation. Even though travel-study programs have a certain level of structure with scheduled meetings and events, circumstances occur that provide different experiences for students. Often it's a combination of individual personal insight about self, their environment, or other cultures or the culmination of the trip as a life altering experience. Students combine prior and current experiences, observations and events to arrive at a higher level of understanding. This is consistent with a study of student journals finding more "learning" outside the bounds of traditional academic boundaries of knowledge. Often this was finding meaning and understanding from a variety of observations and experiences (Gmelch, 1997).

ACCREDITATION AND ASSESSMENT

Within schools of business, common professional component (CPC) requirements for three of the major accreditation programs include a requirement for competency in global dimension of business. This requirement may be fulfilled by inclusion of an international business course, a global dimension included in other core courses, or a combination of the two approaches. Piedmont College has elected the third option including credit for two courses through a travel-study program.

Accreditation standards for the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP, 2014, Standard 6), the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB, 2013, Standard 9), and the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE, 2014, Principle 3.2) call for competency in the global dimension of business and include it as a CPC construct for purposes of program assessment.

Piedmont College's Walker School of Business was accredited by the ACBSP in 2007 and conducts annual program assessment as part of its continuous improvement program. Using third-party assessment exit exams for both undergraduate business and graduate MBA programs, all graduating students are tested for competency across the common professional components. The CPC exam for global dimension of business includes the following topics;

- Foreign Direct Investment and Trade; FDI policies, vertical FDI, and job creation,
- International Corporate Strategies; Multinational Enterprises (MNE), market entry, and globalization strategies,
- International Governance and Regulation; price regulation, incentives, and market balance,

- International Patents and Protections; antidumping, tacit collusion, and fair competition,
- Multinational Culture; nationalism, free-market based, and culture influences.

(Peregrine, 2014)

RESULTS

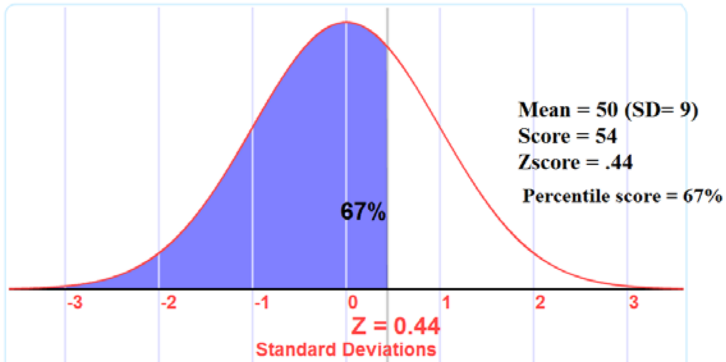
As part of its assessment and continuous improvement program, Piedmont College utilizes a third-party service for an external CPC based competency exam given to all business students graduating from either the undergraduate business or MBA programs. Over the past five years, the enrollment has ranged from 16 to 22 students for the Maymester business travel-study program. As rising seniors, most student CPC COMP exam scores are reported in the following academic year. The exam is not a mandatory degree requirement. Therefore, there are periodic exceptions where either the student was delayed in graduation or did not take the exam. The following table summarizes the mean percentile scores for students taking the CPC Comprehensive exam in the global dimension of business. Results were divided into two groups. First were those completing the core course in international business. Second were those substituting three credit hours earned in the Maymester business travel-study program for the required international business course.

Table 1
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS
CPC COMP Exam Mean Scores

AY12-13	Mean	N	SD
Classroom	53	30	
Travel-Study	61	12	
AY13-14	Mean	N	SD
Classroom	54.3	23	13.13
Travel-Study	54.3	21	16.5

Student CPC comprehensive exit exam results for the previous two academic years show no significant difference between those students completing a traditional classroom lecture based course in international business and those students fulfilling the international business course requirement through participation in the college's travel-study program for business students. Sample sizes were similar. Mean percentile scores for the 2013-2014 for the two groups were the same therefore no t-test was conducted for differences in the means.

Figure 1
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS
CPC Comprehensive Exam Z-score



During the current assessment period, the program goal for each of the common professional components is a 50% mean percentile score. The results indicate both groups exceeded the program goal. The resulting Z score is .44 indicating a percentile score covering 67% of a standard distribution.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The CPC comprehensive exam scores demonstrate there is no difference in the learning outcomes for the global dimension of business for undergraduate students participating in a travel-study program instead of the standard classroom based core course. The evidence supports the practice of allowing students to substitute course credits for the business travel-study program as satisfactory completion of the business core requirements in international business. The results also suggest that while there are differences in course content and pedagogy, when combined with the global emphasis in the remaining core courses, there is no significant difference in student outcomes. Similarly, a common measure has been identified and deployed for assessment of student learning outcomes for the global dimension of business.

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PRIORITIZING KEY ACADEMIC SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR LATINO ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Lara Christoun, Carthage College

This study examined potential factors that contribute to the academic literacy success of Latino English Language Learners (ELLs) in varying public school districts throughout Northeast Illinois. This goal was accomplished in several phases of analysis.

A description of the historical background of the educational framework and programming options available for English Language Learners coupled with learning theories and the second language acquisition process created a foundational background for this study. The review of literature included an examination of the Common Core Standards, English Language Proficiency standards, the Illinois Five Fundamental's Framework, and national academic success stories of Latino ELLs.

The study was conducted in several phases. It entailed an institutional review of state reading scores of at least two hundred public school districts throughout Northeast Illinois at two grade level benchmarks in 2007 and 2011. The results of this "cohort" approach were, subsequently, merged in a statistical analysis with an anonymous teacher and administrator survey of a subset of participating districts. This survey, conducted initially as a pilot study, was comprised of variables derived from the literature review as being, potentially, highly supportive of the academic needs of Latino ELLs. The findings enabled the researcher to determine, statistically, which support systems, educational policies and practices were most relevant to the academic learning needs of Latino ELLs. An examination of current Northeast Illinois state reading assessment scores, for participating survey districts at the eighth grade benchmark, provided both a conclusion and recommendation for further study.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: THE LINK TO SUCCESS AND FAILURE OF LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Leadership training is a multi-billion dollar business in the United States. Despite the huge investment by organizations, an increasing number of studies have been showing that leaders have not been performing well in their leadership capacities. The role of IQ has been questioned and the demand for answers has led to the proliferation of studies on emotional intelligence (EI). Recently, EI is being identified in the Leadership and Organizational Behavior literature as accounting for the success and failure of leadership. Even though the debate is still ongoing, there are neurobiological explanations attesting that emotions are largely responsible for decisions made during complex and challenging times, similar to what leaders face. Some leadership training programs are now being tailored with these neurobiological explanations in mind. Despite resounding results with successful leadership development programs that incorporate the principles of emotional intelligence in their training, skepticism still abounds. Therefore this article looks at the neurobiological contributions in emotional intelligence training programs and proposes a model explaining these interactions.

***Keywords**: Emotional Intelligence, Leadership, success, training*

UNDERSTANDING SUCCESSFUL USE OF SMARTPHONES IN AN ACADEMIC CONTEXT: HBCU STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

As the capabilities of smartphones and the readiness of universities for Mobile learning (M-learning) grow, M-learning becomes an increasingly-important research topic. Compared with notebook computers and PDAs, smartphones provide improved mobility and access to learning, regardless of time and location. Drawing upon the Information Systems Success (ISS) model and the body of M-learning research, this study investigates factors that affect the successful use of smartphones in an academic context. A structural equation model (SEM) was used to test the proposed hypotheses. The model was tested using data collected from a Historically Black University in a metropolitan area, which is characterized as a commuter school that provides educational opportunities for many non-traditional students who need to work while going to school. The findings show that many students use smartphones for academic purposes in various ways. Also, those who use smartphones see benefits from using the smartphones in their education.

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF EXHAUSTION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ON BUSINESS STUDENTS' PERSISTENCE

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ABSTRACT

The constructs of burnout and exhaustion have been studied extensively in the workforce. Although a number of studies have addressed exhaustion in university students, most have been specific to certain majors or areas of study with virtually none examining exhaustion in business students. As exhaustion carries with it only chronic negative outcomes for affected individuals, including lower persistence, an exploratory study of the construct and its effects on university business students is a primary focus of this paper.

With college attrition rates approaching 50% in the United States, retention is of paramount concern to universities. Attrition results in lost tuition and fee revenues for affected institutions and a host of broader negative repercussions involving misappropriations of government funding, a weakened labor market and the potential exclusion of workers from employment. Social support has been shown to positively impact student well-being and retention, and prior research indicates that social support may help moderate the negative effects of exhaustion on student retention.

Over three hundred business students from a university in the Pacific Northwest participated in the study. Students were in various stages of their academic progress and represented all major business areas of study. Although the timing of the study (just prior to final exams) likely contributed largely to the extreme level of student exhaustion measured, this finding suggests further study as exhaustion is a cumulative condition. Regression models indicate that both exhaustion and social support have a statistically significant effect on business students' commitment to remain in school in the expected direction; however, the results do not indicate that social support moderates the effect of exhaustion on business students' commitment to remain in school.

The study's findings suggest future research in this area in regards to university business students. Further studies may benefit from a longitudinal design and seek to better understand how social support affects exhaustion and student persistence.

THE POWER OF THE CAPSTONE COURSE: IMPROVED PERCEIVED CAPABILITY & SELF-EFFICACY

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ABSTRACT

Capstone courses in business curricula are most often tasked with bringing together disparate functional knowledge and expertise in a culminating experience. This study examines whether or not capstone courses are viewed as successful in doing so. Specifically, this study explores the benefit of improved perceived capability and self-efficacy as a result of completing the business capstone course.

Most business school curricula is based on a reductionist approach, reducing courses to specific functional areas and in doing so separating the functional disciplines from other functional groups within the organization. The challenge with these reductionist methods is that interactions between functional disciplines are lost, and overlooked are the interrelationships between these disparate groups necessary for organizational success. The capstone course is assigned the task of synthesizing the disparate knowledge sectors, making sense of the entire organization, identifying the interrelationships between departments, and providing tools and models to maximize these inter-department relationships so as to achieve the organization's goals and objectives. The question then becomes, "are these courses successful?" More importantly, and the research question addressed herein is, "Do capstone courses lead to improved perceived capabilities and self-efficacy?"

Using a pre-and post-test design, data was collected from students at a large Western State university. Data from 472 undergraduate students taking a business <u>Capstone Course in Strategic Management</u> and 151 undergraduate students taking an <u>Introduction to Management</u> course was gathered. These students were also asked to provide comments and suggestions regarding how their course may have impacted their individual capabilities or self-efficacy. As hypothesized, results suggest that the business capstone course leads to improved perceived business capabilities and improved self-efficacy. Also as posited, students taking the Introduction to Management course showed no significant improvement in perceived capability or self-efficacy.

Student comments suggest they "perceive" enhanced capability and self-efficacy because they have a broader perspective and a better understanding of the whole construct of business, and how the different functional areas interact to produce a single focused and productive organization. Many comments suggest that students appreciate the understanding they gained regarding how the disparate departments interact, and how each department cannot operate in isolation. Further, students expressed their desire to have more courses that incorporate the interrelatedness of business departments.

Recommendations are provided suggesting curriculum committees explore allocating additional resources to their capstone courses, testing capstone-like modules in other foundational or key courses, and providing exercises in all courses that allow students a broader perspective and a better understanding of how each functional discipline interacts with other departments.

DISTANCE EDUCATION: INVESTIGATING THE LINKAGE BETWEEN FACULTY SATISFACTION WITH INTERNAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH THE COURSE

John J. Newbold, Sam Houston State University

ABSTRACT

The author fielded a survey among faculty teaching online courses across all colleges and courses at a large southwestern university. The survey was concerned with faculty satisfaction with the service and support from the university's centralized Distance Education department.

Recently, a new state law has induced universities to publish the student ratings of all classes being offered at the institution. These measures are related to student satisfaction with the course, with the instructor, and other key outcomes.

In this paper, the faculty assessment of support from the Distance Education department is examined alongside the faculty "results" in the form of students' assessments of their online courses. Key findings, implications and recommendations for further research are explored.

MYTH OR REALITY: CATHOLIC INCLUSIVITY TO STUDENTS FROM OTHER RELIGIONS

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored the multifaceted issue of cultural and religious challenges for an international Muslim group at a Catholic research institution. Measures employed by university community to assert the friendliness of campus to students from other religions and student perceptions of the effectiveness of these measures are surveyed to reveal the inclusion of students from several religious affiliations, especially Muslim students. The study was based on in depth interviews with Muslim students. Data analysis revealed constructs that are pivotal to the case including, consistency in affirming the catholic identity of the university, intentionally avoiding the usage of solely Christian terminology, awareness of the culture of students from several religious affiliations, capitalizing on aspects of other religions that is connected to the Christian faith, and consciously spreading an atmosphere of appreciation for the other.

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The study explores the case of Saudi Muslim students at Parish University (PU), a Mid-Western catholic research university. Cultural, religious and transitional circumstances that surround the presence of Saudi students on a Catholic institution are examined to reveal factors that might be influencing students' perceptions of the fit between them and the institutional culture. Measures of the institutional community to welcome, orient, and retain Muslim students are also examined to serve as a model of inclusive practice for student affairs administrators at catholic institutions. The view of several stakeholders including: faculty, administrators, student affairs professionals, and the Muslim students themselves would help to evaluate the efficiency of these measures and their adequacy given the complexity of the issue. Utilizing several data collection tools, the study endeavors to find answers for the following questions: 1) How do students feel about their studies at a Catholic institution that is highly assertive about its mission and identity like the University of Dayton campus? 2) What are some mechanisms of inclusiveness practiced by professional and faculty members to increase campus friendliness and inclusivity?

CATHOLIC INCLUSIVITY

Although the name, catholic institutions, would sound as targeting a certain category of students, American higher education started as mainly rooted in the Christian faith. Later, those very institutions opened their doors to students from different denominations (Thelin & Gasman, 2010). While creating a heated discussion among scholars and practitioners, such inclusivity had two different stages. The local stage included the inclusion of students from Christian denominations other than Catholic. The global stage of inclusion targeted admitting students from faiths other than Christianity. This stage discussed below because of its relevance.

To Students from Other Religions

However, the case stayed confined in the Christian faith until calls for inclusivity of students from other faiths began to spread early in the 20th century (Garrett, 2006). Hinsdale argued that the Catholic disciplinary tone is a monochromatic form of Anglo-American Catholicism (as cited in Dosen, 2009). Despite these anti-inclusive views, movements have been gradually emerging due to multicultural growth of students at Catholic institutions, as cited in (Dosen, 2009). For instance, the evolvement of Catholic higher education pursuit of heightened global society between the 1960s and 1990s incorporated Islamic studies into their framework (Dosen, 2009). Moreover, as similar student demands increase for a more relevant curriculum, faculty will in turn begin offering courses that address the literature, history, and worldview of those ethnic groups not traditionally represented (Dosen, 2009). Rodden (2012) emphasizes contemporary views on the acceptance of Catholic inclusion declaring what is most crucial is openness to Catholic practice while also exploring the Catholic faith and acknowledging its limitations.

Challenges for Muslim Students

Challenges for Muslim Saudi students varied in types and severity. However, they fell under two main categories. The first is the challenges that face Muslim Saudi students as any other international students on American campuses. The second is the challenges created by being in a religiously affiliated institution while coming from a very orthodox Islamic culture.

As International Students

Similar to other international students at American universities, Saudi international students face several challenges under various categories. Cultural challenges usually include being from a collectivist culture; the difference in behavioral norms between the culture of origin and the host culture (Long, 2005); different patterns of social interactions; and the extremely open gender relationships when compared to the reserved, or rather restricted, relationships in the countries of origin.

Linguistic challenges constitute a separate category as influencing several dimensions of the Saudi international student on campus including: restricted ability to negotiate roles in the learning processes with peers and with instructors; limited chances in seeking help both from advisors or campus support services; and harder cultural integration process (Chong & Razek, 2014). Such a barrier adds to the alienation of Muslim international students on

American campuses. Educational parity is another category of the challenges facing Saudi students especially concerning their needed learning habits (Razek & Coyner, 2013).

At Religious Affiliated Institutions

Let alone being international students with all the challenges discussed above, Saudi students at PU experience a different situation where their most Islamic conservative values are challenged by a strong catholic institutional identity (Razek & Coyner, 2014). The general assumption for a Muslim attending a catholic institution with a high religious identity is to feel that much of the practice does not connect to one's values and beliefs. Some example out of many include: the presence of Christian symbols of all over campus; crosses in the classrooms; payers at the beginning of some classes; starting and ending campus events with a service performed by a rector or a priest; mass bells; and celebrations of Christian holidays (Razek & Coyner, 2013). However, the numbers of Muslim students are still increasing phenomenally on American catholic campuses.

METHODS

Building upon the relationship between the student cultural beliefs and the fit between their entry characteristics and their institution (Razek & Coyner, 2013; Tinto, 1993), this study aimed at examining the integration aspects of the increased presence of Saudi students enrolled in the various academic programs at PU, a Catholic private university. Approved by the Institutional Review Board, the study was developed based upon an initial study that utilized survey data and content analysis. After initial site observations of religious activities and document reviews of admission criteria and recruitment material, in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with 21 participants. The selection of participation was conducted utilizing Patton (2003) snowball technique. Interviews were transcribed and coded under a preliminary list of codes that were analyzed under several emergent themes Interview transcripts and analytical themes were verified by participants for completeness and validation.

FINDINGS

Study findings revealed various constructs influencing the continuous increase of Saudi students at PU. Some of these constructs included innovative strategies to orient, educate, and acculturate incoming Saudi students to campus life and the academic expectations. These included strengthening the social support elements, increasing comfort in the college environment, building social relationships, providing peer support, and raising students' self-confidence. Others aimed at raising the awareness of the campus community of the case of Saudi students. Other findings revealed the inclusiveness of the current educational practice at PU as a model for Catholic institution. Moreover, findings revealed a culture of acceptance and tolerance among the Saudi Muslim students.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Implications of the study included suggestions for campus administrators to ease the integration of these students into college academic and social life, increase their retention rates, optimize their learning outcomes, and empower them with a rich college experience. PU support systems are organized to demonstrate a replicable model that can be adopted to ease the cultural adjustment of these students at other Catholic campuses. PU's support model included three prongs: 1) cultural sensitive practice, 2) teaching focused on individualized learning experiences, and 3) inclusive purposeful campus programming.

The cultural sensitive practice includes looking at the Muslim student experience as an essential part of the acculturation process which increases the chances of success. A basic value that Catholic educators need to recognize is the appreciation these students have for basic Catholic values (Schmidtke, 2011). A general understanding of these students' different backgrounds calls for clearly intentional planning for almost every learning experience especially the extracurricular ones as they help in guiding integrating students into the campus community (Razek & Coyner, 2013). Administration may consider offering religious support through providing a prayer room for these students as they need to feel safe while practicing their faith (James & Estanek, 2012). Such initiative provides an added value to the retention process of these students as they need to utilize a spiritual space of their own. This helps the students feel comfortable and feel at home and with no pressure noticed against their faith.

Teaching should be focused on creating an individualized learning experience for each student (Razek, 2014). Professors and instructors should gear their instruction towards meeting the students where they are. Although challenging, such efforts provide the needed help for the students along the road towards their success. Moreover, highlighting the moral underpinning behind all religions and beliefs opens the minds of students to the common ground among the different (Sammak, 2009).

Programming is the third component of the PU model to help the students achieve their educational goals. At the forefront of positive programs are the non-alcohol related events coinciding with party time on campus. Though not directly targeting Muslim students, these provide safe environment for the students to participate and engage in positive social gatherings as well. Campus programming may also sponsor and publicize special events surrounding Muslim holidays (Razek & Coyner, 2013).

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THE EMERGING STUDENT LEADERSHIP CAPACITY: CLOSING THE GAP ON CAMPUS

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ABSTRACT

The world is constantly in need of people who can take up leadership roles and effectively improve these processes. This is a need across every nation, organization, business, various institutions, and the community at large. Putting aside the debate of whether leaders are born or made, organizations spend great amount of resources to train and provide developmental experiences to enhance their employees' leadership capabilities. On the other hand, considering that students are leaders in training, higher educational institutions develop leadership education and development programs to prepare their students for present and future leadership roles. Colleges and universities have a vital role to enhance students' leadership capacity. This can only be achieved through collaborative efforts by everyone on campus, through curriculum and co-curriculum activities. While educational institutions have made considerable effort to develop students' leadership capabilities, organizations report leadership skills deficit among new hires. Best practices that educational institutions could utilize to meet the workforce leadership requirements and those of a changing workplace were discussed and recommendations outlined for all stakeholders.

***Keywords**: Leadership capacity, educational institutions, development, emergent leadership, students*

USING COMPARATIVE TESTS FOR SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY: IF WE DON'T TELL STUDENTS WHAT THEY SHOULD KNOW AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR HOW DO WE TEST TO SEE WHAT THEY SHOULD HAVE LEARNED AT THE END OF THE YEAR?

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ABSTRACT

Students of education have been taught for a very long time that the goals of instruction must be aligned to the items that assess the goals. Carnegie Melon's Eberly Center succinctly explains the relationship between assessment and instruction: "Assessments should reveal how well students have learned what we want them to learn while instruction ensures that they learn it." (Carnegie Mellon, 2015).

Simply put, the test is supposed to measure what the students have learned and the instruction is supposed to ensure they are provided appropriate activities and information to demonstrate the expected knowledge. Although these expectations are now widely accepted, it can be argued they are also widely ignored, at least as it pertains to using standards based assessments in high-stakes accountability models. This paper investigates the expectations associated with the implementation of the PARCC exam in Louisiana and documents how the process has often failed to meet the fundamental expectations associated with the development of a standards-based assessment, particularly one that is associated with high-stakes accountability.

INTRODUCTION

Beginning in the spring of 2015, Louisiana will implement its first effort at using the Partnership of Assessment for Readiness for Colleges and Careers (PARCC). The path to this implementation has been rocky, contentious and polarizing. In 2010, Louisiana pushed through a host of school reforms, among them being a governor supported initiative to place the state in Common Core and to use the PARCC exam as the means to measure student performance in Louisiana's accountability model. However, the support originally expressed from the governor ebbed and eventually evaporated, resulting in efforts during 2014 to remove the state from Common Core and from the PARCC exams. The state superintendent of education in Louisiana almost immediately disputed the governor's the authority to remove Louisiana from Common Core and announced that PARCC exams would proceed as scheduled in the spring of 2015 (Emma & Simon, 2014). Although the details of this charged atmosphere make for interesting reading, they are not the primary focus of this paper. But, they do provide a backdrop to how Louisiana is on the brink of using a comparative test for high-stakes purposes, an outcome at odds with research, practice, and common sense.

PURPOSE

This paper investigates the conceptual framework used by PARCC proponents and analyzes the framework's validity with a primary focus on the following question: Should a test used to compare students across states also serve as a high-stakes test for state accountability purposes?

DISCUSSION

An elementary but integral concept associated with creating valid assessments is that one must decide what should be known and how that knowledge should be demonstrated before deciding on instructional strategies. Said another way, you cannot decide what to teach until you decide what should be known. This principle is as basic as Education 101, and it has informed untold numbers of teachers in their understanding of how to create an assessment.

There are significant implications if the need to align assessments with instruction is taken seriously. First, at the minimum, it should mean there is certitude on the first day of class that what is being taught is consistent with what will eventually be tested. Second, some notion of pacing and sequence should be clearly understood by parents, teachers, and students. Finally, the tasks that will be assessed should have formative activities that provide adequate opportunity to develop skills necessary for any eventual high-stakes assessment.

To successfully meet the minimum requirements expectations just laid out requires a curriculum. According to Ebert, Ebert, and Bentley (2014) a curriculum " refers to the means and materials with which students will interact for the purpose of achieving identified educational outcomes."

This is a useful definition as it pertains to high-stakes accountability and provides a reasonable starting point to ask: Does Louisiana provide the means and materials with which students will interact for the purpose of achieving educational outcomes? The short answer is no.

In point of fact, a continual point of emphasis regarding Common Core is that the expectations are standards based and not aligned with any particular curriculum. In a letter to a gubernatorial candidate, Superintendent White provided the following explanation: "We will also continue to insist, as you urge, that state tests be aligned to high expectations for our students' skills and not to any particular curriculum," (Warren, 2014).

Obviously, Superintendent White is not inferring that Louisiana does not provide the means and materials students will use to achieve educational outcomes, but, his answer is nonetheless troubling. Closer scrutiny of Louisiana's effort to implement PARCC exams reveals that there has been nothing disseminated to parents, teachers, or students by the state of Louisiana providing guidance to what students should know at the end of the year, how many units that knowledge will be sub-divided into, what the major learning outcomes for these units are, or what tasks will be provided to prepare for high-stakes assessments from the state of Louisiana at the beginning of the school year (these items will be referred to as "the big picture" for brevity's sake).

This brings us to another important question: Should any test not associated with a well-articulated and readily available curriculum be used for high-stakes purposes? Said another way, If you do not identify what a student should know at the beginning of the year should you test them for what they have learned at the end of the year and use that data for high-stakes purposes? If you accept the definition of curriculum provided above, and you subscribe to the time-honored protocol for creating assessments that all teachers learn in Education 101, the answer is no,

Superintendent White has often noted that, without PARCC exams, Louisiana will be unable to compare how its students performed with other states (e.g., Sentell, 2014) and there may be truth to that conclusion. But that begs the question if a comparative exam can be so designed as to also be a high-stakes exam? How exactly would a test that is not derived from a specific curriculum (PARCC) also satisfy the expectations of a performance-based assessment that follows the definition of curriculum used in this paper as well as the well-established tenets of Education 101? The endgames for a comparative test and a high-stakes test appear irreconcilable unless every participating state agreed to the same curriculum, availability of resources and so forth. That has not happened, and as referenced earlier, Louisiana allows every school system to use whatever curriculum it chooses, meaning that there is no consensus as to what “the big picture” should look like. Couple that outcome with the fact that test items are being generated independently of what is being taught (assessment producers have no way of knowing what is actually being emphasized or not being emphasized in Louisiana classrooms) and it is understandable why experienced teachers called preparing for PARCC like grabbing a marble from a bag---you know you’ll get a marble but you have no idea if it is the right one. In other words, we have taught something but there is no way to know if it lines up with what is being assessed.

CONCLUSION

A sound argument can be made that the use of PARCC as a high-stakes exam violates well-established principles for aligning curriculum to summative assessment expectations. Any time a student, teacher, or school is subject to evaluation via an accountability model it should be incumbent upon the state to provide clear documentation about what a student is expected to know, how many units the information will be subdivided into, and most importantly, how the information will ultimately be assessed. This is a classic protocol for a performance-based assessment, and surely high-stakes tests should be performance-based.

PARCC and indeed any type of comparative assessment is fundamentally unable to create the type of environment that should accompany a high-stakes test. Consequently, they should not be utilized as such.

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