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# ACADEMY OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP JOURNAL

Michael Shurden  
Editor  
Lander University

Nancy Niles  
Editor  
Lander University

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*. The editorial content of this journal is under the control of the Allied Academies, Inc., a non profit association of scholars whose purpose is to encourage and support the advancement and exchange of knowledge, understanding and teaching throughout the world. The mission of the *AELJ* is to publish theoretical, empirical, practical or pedagogic manuscripts in education. Its objective is to expand the boundaries of the literature by supporting the exchange of ideas and insights which further the understanding of education.

The articles contained in this volume have been double blind refereed. The acceptance rate for manuscripts in this issue, 25%, conforms to our editorial policies.

We intend to foster a supportive, mentoring effort on the part of the referees which will result in encouraging and supporting writers. We welcome different viewpoints because in differences we find learning; in differences we develop understanding; in differences we gain knowledge and in differences we develop the discipline into a more comprehensive, less esoteric, and dynamic metier.

Information about the organization, its journals, and conferences are published on our web site. In addition, we keep the web site updated with the latest activities of the organization. Please visit our site and know that we welcome hearing from you at any time.

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Editor  
Lander University

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# CONGRUENCE BETWEEN ENTRY-LEVEL ACCOUNTANTS' REQUIRED COMPETENCIES AND ACCOUNTING TEXTBOOKS

Sanjay Gupta, Valdosta State University  
Leisa L. Marshall, Valdosta State University

## ABSTRACT

*While there appears to be consensus that the demand for accounting majors is on the rise, widespread concern exists that the gap between current accounting education and the needs of industry are widening. Evidence in the accounting literature indicates accounting instructors rely heavily on textbooks and end-of-chapter (EOC) materials for homework assignments and coverage of course content. Accordingly, the skill set development of an accounting student may largely depend on the EOC materials contained in the prescribed text.*

*This paper examines the congruence between the EOC materials in select accounting textbooks and the cognitive and behavioral (e.g. communication, technology, etc.) skills identified by professional organizations. Specifically, the authors performed a systematic analysis of the leading text for Accounting Information Systems (AIS), Auditing, Cost, Intermediate, and Tax Accounting to determine the extent to which textbooks facilitate the move from the transmittal of knowledge to the development of the higher-order cognitive skills as well as the behavioral skills. The results of this study indicate that the leading accounting texts tend to focus more on lower-order cognitive skills. The results also indicate that there is a significant difference in the coverage of cognitive skills across the different accounting disciplines.*

## INTRODUCTION

Demand for accounting professionals has increased dramatically in the wake of financial disasters at Enron, MCI WorldCom, Tyco, and Arthur Anderson. A survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers published in the March 1, 2005, issue of the *Wall Street Journal*, found that accounting is the number one major employers are demanding in 2005. Additionally, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has predicted nearly 400,000 new accounting jobs over the 10-year period ending in 2012.

While there appears to be consensus that the demand for accounting majors is on the rise, there is widespread concern that the gap between current accounting education and the needs of industry are widening. Industry leaders are encouraging accounting educators to adopt an accounting curriculum that is more relevant and that focuses on real world situations. Specifically, they are

asking educators to provide a greater emphasis on higher-order cognitive skills, teamwork, use of technology, exposure to global and ethical issues, and communication skills.

Accounting textbooks have a major influence on most accounting courses and the nature and type of learning activities used to prepare entry-level accountants (Davidson & Baldwin, 2005). There is evidence in the accounting literature that indicates accounting instructors rely heavily on textbooks and end-of-chapter (EOC) materials for homework assignments and coverage of course content. Accordingly, the cognitive skill set of an accounting student is largely dependent on the EOC materials contained in the prescribed text.

If instructors rely heavily on EOC materials from the text and the EOC materials mostly address lower-order thinking skills, there is substantial risk that mostly lower-level learning will occur. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the EOC materials in the leading text of five accounting disciplines on a variety of criteria that are important for success in the accounting profession.

This paper examines the congruence between the end-of-chapter (EOC) materials in select accounting textbooks and the cognitive and behavioral skills identified above. Specifically, the authors performed a systematic analysis of the leading text for Accounting Information Systems (AIS), Auditing, Cost, Intermediate, and Tax Accounting to determine the extent to which textbooks facilitate the move from the transmittal of knowledge to the development of the higher-order cognitive skills as well as the behavioral skills (e.g. communication, technology, etc). The next sections of the paper contain a review of the professional and academic literature. The research questions of this study, the methodology and results sections appear next. The paper concludes with the conclusion, limitations and suggestions for future research.

## **PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

Almost two decades ago, the Accounting Education Change Commission (AECC) was created by the American Accounting Association (AAA) to serve as a catalyst to improve the academic preparation of future accountants. More specifically, the AECC's purpose was to move accounting education from the traditional transmittal of technical knowledge to the development of a "deep understanding of concepts and policies, as well as developing skills and attitudes necessary for the successful practice of accounting" (Gainen & Locatelli, 1995). The initial phases of this movement included a composite of knowledge and skills needed by accounting graduates (AECC, 1990).

Following the recommendations of the *Bedford Committee Report* (AAA, 1986) and the *Big 8 White Paper* (Arthur Anderson et al., 1989), the skills identified by the AECC (1990) include, but are not limited to, intellectual, interpersonal, and communication. Intellectual skills comprise the ability to think logically, solve unstructured problems, and the ability to identify ethical issues. Interpersonal skills incorporate the ability to work with others in groups and the ability to interact

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with culturally and diverse people. Communication skills consist of the ability to communicate both formally and informally in both spoken and written form. The ability to apply research skills, report results, and use electronic sources of information also appears as a form of communication.

The American Institute of Certified Public Accountant's (AICPA) *Core Competency Framework* (AICPA, 2003) and the profession's Uniform Certified Public Accountant (CPA) examination requirements (AICPA, 2002) provide additional evidence about the importance of cognitive thinking and a well-developed skills set. The *Core Competency Framework* (2003) includes, but is not limited to, research skills, communication, interaction, technology, problem-solving, and global perspective. The CPA exam requires the application of research and technology skills and the analysis, interpretation and communication of business information. Specific technology skills include the ability to access and use electronic databases, electronic spreadsheets and word processors (AICPA, 2002, p. 2).

Corporate America also spoke to accounting educators about the lack of accounting knowledge and skills (Siegel & Sorensen, 1994). Respondents to a survey co-sponsored by the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) and the Financial Executives Institute (FEI) reveal that entry-level accountants lack solid communication skills. The results of the survey also reveal that accounting educators received a 68 percent for teaching computer literacy and only a 47 percent for teaching team building skills.

The AACSB integrated the competencies identified above, in the form of learning goals and objectives, into the accreditation Assurance of Learning (AOL) standards (*Standards*) more than a decade ago. The AACSB identifies the establishment of the learning goals and objectives as the first step in the assessment process (AACSB, 2003). Although the *Standards* specifically state the applicability of learning goals and objectives to separate degree programs (AACSB, 2003, p. 59), these naturally flow through to the individual major (e.g. accounting, finance, etc.) and course levels where learning occurs.

The *Standards* state that learning goals should extend beyond knowledge recall to include cognitive skills such as those found in Bloom's (1956) classification of cognitive skills (i.e. analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) (AACSB, 2003). In addition to knowledge and cognitive skills, the *Standards* provide a list of skills that should appear among the list of goals and objectives (AACSB, 2003, p. 71-72). These skills include, but are not limited to, communication abilities, ethical understanding and reasoning abilities, analytical skills, use of information technology, global environments, and group dynamics (AACSB, 2003).

## ACADEMIC LITERATURE REVIEW

Limited literature that evaluates whether the textbooks' EOC materials have kept pace with the demands of the accounting education profession exists. Davidson and Baldwin (2005) evaluate two chapters of several Intermediate Accounting texts and Karns et al. (1983) evaluate Economics

principles texts. However, while both articles limit their evaluation to the presentation of EOC materials that tap into Bloom's higher-order thinking skills, neither evaluates the coverage of the softer skills (e.g. communication, technology, etc.) that appears in the EOC materials. Although Sullivan and Benke (1997) do not evaluate the cognitive skills of Bloom's taxonomy, they include a comparison of a few of the softer skills in 33 financial accounting principles texts.

Bloom's taxonomy (1956), the most commonly accepted theory of learning (Davidson & Baldwin, 2005), presents a progression of learning processes. Knowledge and comprehension must occur first, followed by the application and analysis of comprehended knowledge, and finally, synthesizing and evaluating material learned at the lower levels. Knowledge and comprehension are considered "lower-order" cognitive objectives with the remaining four considered "higher-order" cognitive objectives (Gainen & Locatelli, 1995).

Knowledge requires the recall or recognition of information whereas comprehension requires the restating, explaining, describing, and/or translating into one's own words. An example of the achievement at the knowledge level includes the ability to define terms. Comprehension includes the ability to explain, in one's own words, a GAAP method (Gainen & Locatelli 1995).

The application level is achieved by using knowledge to achieve a certain purpose (Gainen & Locatelli, 1995); for example, using first-in, first-out to value ending inventory. Analysis requires "separating of the whole into parts to see relationships and discover the structure of an idea or concept" (Francis et al., 1995, p. 8) such as is required to analyze risk on a portfolio investment (Gainen & Locatelli, 1995). Synthesis requires the combining of ideas from various sources to produce an original product; whereas evaluation requires the development of an opinion based on the facts, information, etc.

Davidson and Baldwin (2005) analyzed two chapters (revenue recognition and accounting for investments) each from a set of 41 Intermediate Accounting textbooks/editions over a period from 1934 to 2001. Several authors' texts represented multiple editions; as such, 21 different sets of authors appear in Davidson and Baldwin's study.

For descriptive purposes only and without any underlying a priori assumptions, Davidson and Baldwin (2005) found significantly higher proportions of EOC materials at the comprehension, application and analysis (18.5, 19.2, and 43.0 percent, respectively) levels of Bloom's taxonomy and only six and three percent, respectively of EOC materials at the evaluation and synthesis levels. Overall, 28.7, 62.2, and 9.1 percent of the EOC materials were at the lower, middle, and top third, respectively, of Bloom's taxonomy (Davidson & Baldwin, 2005).

Davidson and Baldwin (2005) subsequently classified EOC materials into four categories of items: questions, exercises, problems, and cases. Again, without any a priori assumption, they found that the level of learning does not appear equally across the EOC categories. The EOC questions target the lower levels of learning (knowledge and comprehension); whereas, exercises, problems, and cases focus on the middle levels of learning (application and analysis). They found only 26 percent of the cases tapped into the highest levels of learning (evaluation and synthesis).

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Finally, Davidson and Baldwin (2005) evaluated the change over time in the proportion of Bloom's learning levels targeted by the EOC materials. They report that the percentage of knowledge, evaluations and synthesis EOC materials remained relatively constant; whereas a decrease occurred in the percentage of comprehension and application EOC materials with an increase in the percentage of analysis EOC materials.

Karns et al. (1983) applied Bloom's Taxonomy in the evaluation of six principles of economics textbooks and the accompanying author-provided test banks. The results of the study reveal a lack of congruence between textbook educational objectives and the test bank examination questions. Examination questions tested at a much lower level on the cognitive domain identified in Bloom's taxonomy than those provided in the text. The stated text learning objectives were more consistent with the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels of Bloom's taxonomy; whereas the author-provided exam questions were more consistent with knowledge, comprehension, and application learning objectives.

Sullivan and Benke's (1997) study focused more on providing potential adopters of financial accounting principles textbooks with relevant, comparative information about 33 financial accounting principles textbooks published between 1994 and 1997. Among other variables, they present the inclusion and level of inclusion of EOC materials. The authors present, on a text-by-text basis and in table form, the existence or nonexistence of select EOC materials based on the evaluation of two chapters within each text. The authors' presentation includes computer problems, cases, special projects, global economy problems, and ethics problems.

Tabulating the contents of Sullivan and Benke's (1997) Table 2 reveals that slightly more than half (55 percent) of the texts contain extensive computer applications in the EOC materials; however, 42 percent do not contain any computer problems. The authors classify a text as containing 'extensive' computer problems if there exists at least one EOC material in at least two-thirds of the chapters that are "clearly identified as capable of being solved on a computer" (p. 186). They classify individual texts as not having computer problems if the text does not clearly identify the problem as capable of being solved with a computer. Texts falling between these two extremes are classified as "some" (1/3 to 2/3 of chapters) and "few" (less than 1/3 of chapters). Sullivan and Benke (1997) provide similar classification for ethics and global economy problems. Six percent of the texts contain extensive clearly identifiable global economy problems and 52 percent of the texts do not. However, 48 percent of the texts contain extensive coverage of ethics in their EOC materials; whereas 30 percent contain no EOC materials "clearly identified as including or relating exclusively to ethical considerations" (Sullivan & Benke, 1997, p. 187).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The call by the profession on every front, academia via the AAA, public accountants via the AICPA, corporate America via the IMA's *What Corporate American Wants* (Siegel & Sorensen,

1994) over the past one and a half decades provides substantial evidence to support the integration of Bloom's cognitive objectives and the various skills into the accounting classroom. Further solidifying this support appears via the AACSBs most recently adopted accreditation standards which include communication, critical/analytical, communication abilities, ethical understanding and reasoning abilities, use of information technology, global environments, and group dynamics (AACSB, 2003). This evidence supports asking the following research questions:

*RQ1: Do accounting textbooks EOC materials have a sufficient coverage of Bloom's cognitive skills?*

*RQ2: Do accounting textbooks integrate behavioral skills required by the accounting profession into the EOC materials?*

## METHODOLOGY

The EOC materials for the leading text (market leader) in the areas of Accounting Information Systems (AIS), Audit, Cost, Intermediate, and Tax were evaluated. The name of the text and the publisher was identified for the market leader in each of the above-mentioned courses by means of a survey of the publishers. The respective publishers provided copies of each text requested for research purposes (see Table 1).

Discipline	Name of Text	Author(s)	Publisher	#Qs * Total Qs 1,141
AIS	Accounting Information Systems (10 <sup>th</sup> Ed.)	Romney& Steinbart	Prentice Hall	89
Audit	Auditing & Assurance Services (11 <sup>th</sup> Ed.)	Arens, Elder & Beasley	Prentice Hall	205
Cost	Cost Accounting (12 <sup>th</sup> Ed.)	Horngren, Datar & Foster	Prentice Hall	219
Intermediate	Intermediate Accounting (12 <sup>th</sup> Ed.)	Keiso, Weygandt & Wa	Wiley	368
Tax	Individual Income Taxes (2008 Ed.)	Hoffman, Smith & Willis	Thomson	260

\* Number of questions sampled

The sample of questions for evaluation from the EOC materials was selected for each text, on a chapter-by-chapter basis, using the random number generator function in Excel ® and using a sample size of 20 percent from each of the categories, Discussion Questions, Exercises, Problems, Cases, etc. A total of 1,141 questions were evaluated across the five courses on the cognitive and behavioral skills (see Table 1).

Criteria for evaluation of each skill were established to ensure accuracy and consistency in rating each of the eight skills. The skills include oral and written communication, technology, ethics, research, global, teamwork, and cognitive. Oral communication was addressed if the EOC materials included any form of oral communication - e.g. interviews, working in groups. Written communication and technology was considered addressed by the EOC materials if the problem specifically required the use writing skills and technology, respectively. Ethics was checked as being addressed by the EOC materials if it specifically addressed an ethical issue and research was considered addressed by the EOC materials if it specifically required the use of a reference outside the text, i.e. Internet, database, online library. An EOC material was considered global in nature if it provided exposure to global issues. EOC materials that provided for the use of teams and/or groups met the criteria for teamwork. Cognitive skills were measured according to Bloom's taxonomy; however, the six levels of Bloom's taxonomy were consolidated into three levels as follows: Knowledge and Comprehension, Application and Analysis, and Synthesis and Evaluation.

To confirm consistency in ratings across the two coauthors, the coauthors conducted inter-rater reliability tests using texts not utilized in the full sample. A pilot sample of 67 questions from chapter 5 of an Intermediate text indicated an inter-rater reliability of 88 percent (59 of 67 questions were rated the same across the eight skills). An additional pilot sample of 29 questions from chapter 3 of a Cost text indicated an inter-rater reliability of 86 percent (25 of 29 questions were rated the same across the eight skills). An inter-rater reliability test of the actual questions included in the study revealed similar results (overall match of 78 percent) indicating that consistency of ratings was not an issue (see Table 2).

Discipline	Total Questions	# Matched	% Matched
AIS	29	18	62
Audit	44	33	75
Cost	46	35	76
Intermediate	75	64	85
Tax	53	41	77
Total	236	183	78

The extent of coverage in the EOC materials indicates that the textbooks are not doing an adequate job of covering the behavioral skills and competencies (e.g. communication, technology, etc.) identified as critical for success in the accounting profession. Team and global coverage is less than one percent of all questions sampled with ethics (1.3 percent), oral communication (1.4 percent), written communication (2.8 percent), technology (3.3 percent), and research (4.7 percent) only marginally higher (see Table 3).

Discipline	Questions	Oral	Written	Technology
AIS	89		5	9
Audit	205			16
Cost	219		1	
Intermediate	368		10	13
Tax	260	16	16	
Total	1,141	16	32	38
Overall Percent (%)		1.40%	2.80%	3.30%

The extent of coverage of Bloom's Taxonomy indicates that, on aggregate, the textbooks focus primarily on addressing the middle-order cognitive skills of application and analysis (54.5 percent), with marginal coverage of the lower order cognitive skills of knowledge and comprehension (24.5 percent). Overall and relative to the other two categories, the highest order cognitive skills of synthesis and evaluation contain the least coverage (20.9 percent) in the textbooks sampled (see Table 4).

Discipline	Questions	Knowledge/Comprehend	Applications/Analysis	Synthesis/Evaluation
AIS	89	9	39	41
Audit	205	87	80	38
Cost	219	43	69	107
Intermediate	368	88	255	25
Tax	260	53	179	28
Total	1,141	280	622	239
Overall Percent		24.5%	54.5%	20.90%

However, on a more important note, the chi-square statistics indicate a significant difference in the coverage of Bloom's Taxonomy between disciplines ( $\chi^2 = 251.93$ ,  $df = 8$ , 'p' value < 0.00, see table 5).

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	251.9287522	8	6.72E-50
Likelihood Ratio	238.7302672	8	4.21E-47
N of Valid Cases	1141		
0 cells (0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18.64.			

On closer examination, among the five accounting disciplines examined in this study, Audit has a significantly larger proportion of the lower order cognitive skills coverage (42 percent) whereas Cost and AIS have a significantly larger proportion of the highest order cognitive skills coverage (49 & 46 percent, respectively). A justification for the findings could be that Intermediate and Tax are more rules-based and this may justify the larger percentage of application/analysis types of questions in these disciplines (69 percent in each) with very low emphasis on the higher-order cognitive skills of synthesis and evaluation (7 & 11 percent, respectively) (see Table 6). The results for Intermediate compare closely to the Davidson and Baldwin (2005) study who found 19, 62, and nine percent of lower level, middle-level, and higher-level cognitive skills coverage.

Discipline	Number of Questions	Knowledge/Comprehend (%)	Application/Analysis (%)	Synthesis/Evaluation (%)
AIS	89	10	44	46
Audit	205	42	39	19
Cost	219	20	32	49
Intermediate	368	24	69	7
Tax	260	20	69	11

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

While there appears to be consensus that the demand for accounting majors is on the rise, there is widespread concern that the gap between current accounting education and the needs of industry are widening. Industry leaders are encouraging accounting educators to adopt an accounting

curriculum that is more relevant and that focuses on real world situations. Specifically, they are asking educators to provide a greater emphasis on higher-order cognitive skills, teamwork, use of technology, exposure to global and ethical issues, and communication skills.

Accounting textbooks have a major influence on most accounting courses and the nature and type of learning activities used to prepare entry-level accountants (Davidson & Baldwin, 2005). There is evidence in the accounting literature that indicates accounting instructors rely heavily on textbooks and end-of-chapter (EOC) materials for homework assignments and coverage of course content. Accordingly, the cognitive and behavioral skill set of an accounting student is largely dependent on the EOC materials contained in the prescribed text.

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the EOC materials in the leading text in five of the accounting disciplines on a variety of criteria that are important for success in the accounting profession. If instructors rely heavily on EOC materials from the text and the EOC materials mostly address lower-order thinking skills, there is substantial risk that mostly lower-level learning will occur.

Results indicate that the leading accounting texts tend to focus more on lower-order cognitive skills as compared to higher-order cognitive skills. Results also indicate that there is a significant difference in the coverage of cognitive skills across the different accounting disciplines. Also, findings indicate that there is a low coverage of the behavioral skills among the various accounting disciplines.

### **LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

There are some limitations of this study. We only examined the EOC materials in one text for five accounting disciplines. To the extent that the coverage of the EOC materials contained in these texts is not representative of the other texts available, our results have to be interpreted with caution. Second, the questions for rating were split between the two authors. However, the inter-rater reliability results indicate there was an acceptable degree of consistency in ratings. Third, we only examined the textbook and did not look at any of the supplemental material that is typically available with most texts. Finally, we only looked at the EOC materials available in the texts identified and did not examine the questions prescribed by particular professors. For example, it is likely that even though a certain text may only contain a small percentage of questions that address the higher-order cognitive skills, a professor may mitigate this problem by prescribing a large percentage of those types of questions. Examining the types of questions actually contained in the supplemental material and the types of questions prescribed by professors will provide further insights into whether we as educators are addressing the skills required of our students by the corporate world.

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## IMPROVING GROUP DYNAMICS: CREATING A TEAM CHARTER

**John T. Byrd, Bellarmine University**  
**Michael R. Luthy, Bellarmine University**

### ABSTRACT

*The current article explores the rationale and details behind the first project assigned to students in a cohort-based, team-oriented MBA program – the Team Charter. The article presents the approach used to take the student through the development process. A completed Charter is presented to illustrate the outcome of the project. This written agreement highlights one team's abilities to create a work culture to facilitate effective team performance. By having teams develop and codify the rules by which they agree to abide, norms evolve which become the framework for the decision-making process within the group and provide the underpinnings for group cohesion. The primary educational purposes of the Team Charter project are to begin the process of team skills in order for students to be more effective in dealing with their fellow students. A related aspect of the program, rotating the role of project leader, offers the potential of students developing leadership skills as well. The content of the Team Charter as well as the process for developing it consists of a structure which allows students to develop cognitive and practical skills for working in teams. These skills are developed among students with different backgrounds and different personalities, who are interdependent and share common goals within the program. In many instances these skills have positive carryover to work settings beyond the classroom.*

### INTRODUCTION

In our institution's graduate business program, incoming students are organized into class cohorts. Through activities at an orientation weekend, including: the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator personality inventory, completion of a work history, skills inventories, and demographic profiles, students are formed into teams. The overarching goal in creating these teams is to staff each with as many different work functions as possible while also mixing gender, age groups, and other factors. This cross-functional approach is a common feature of teams (Fleming, 2004). The structure of this group organization provides a basis for learning to work in teams. It has been estimated that 50% of Fortune 500 employees are working in teams (Joinson, 1999) and experts predict growth in working in teams both for those in the managerial ranks as well as those in service operations (Thompson, 2000). While the value or functionality of work teams in business is not universally accepted, bringing a team structure to the educational setting does make sense for the

many organizations that do utilize a team structure. However, there are potential drawbacks including the "free-rider" effect. In this context, it strengthens the relevance of the program.

It is important for students to view themselves as a team, not just a group working on various tasks or projects. It is also critical, for program purposes, that the team members recognize their complementary skills, their common purpose, common goals, and mutual accountability. It is these factors that make them a team in contrast to a group (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993). This structure also serves as a vehicle to focus on issues that make the team successful. As educators, we want student teams to experience a common commitment so they feel the power of a collective unit (Katzenbach, 1995). The team orientation also provides a basis for developing greater awareness of the processes involved in managing groups of individuals when in a leadership position. Elements of leadership skills are an important part of the educational program, although situational influences contributing to team effectiveness are also recognized as significant.

Situational influences have been documented as important for team effectiveness and include variables such as: task flexibility, low task interdependence, and the need for formal performance measures. Helping behavior among team members has been viewed as the most important group norm (Dumering and Robinson, 2007). Consequently, the educational program structure provides conditions that create the potential for members of the team to develop group norms that encourage helping behavior. This helping behavior, which encourages cooperation, is more than individuals agreeing to work together. It surfaces on projects where integration of the content is critical to the team's explanation of the substance of the issues involved in their project. One of the intended goals for the projects assigned to teams in the MBA program is to help students to understand how leadership behaviors can influence task integration. Thus, by helping the team experience the relationship of group integration, cooperation is strengthened among team members. It is important for the development of students' leadership skills that they recognize cooperation exists when individual efforts are integrated to achieve common objectives (Simsek, et al., 2005).

### **ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIORS**

Leadership that emphasizes both business skills and the ability to influence others toward organizational goals lies at the core of our institution's graduate business program. The approach developed at our institution attempts to inculcate attitudes that shape leaders to be motivated to exceed the ordinary expectations of the typical manager in today's work environment. These behaviors have been called "organizational citizenship behaviors" and represent a genuine commitment to people in the organization. They are behaviors which generally exceed expectations in the workplace and include expressions of personal interest in the works of others, genuine interest in the training and development of employees, and a concern for the spirit of cooperation as well as the need for cooperation for business reasons alone (Organ, 1990). The required use (and formal evaluation) of a team leader position which rotates among team members as they carry out the

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assigned projects of the program in the first semester (and encouraged thereafter) is an educational application of the concept. This approach encourages students to practice leadership skills in order to influence others with citizenship behaviors. These behaviors have been shown to be influenced more by leadership and factors in the work environment than by personality (Tepper, et al., 2004). By encouraging the application of citizenship behaviors, students develop leadership skills which are separate from personality considerations so often perceived by others as the key to leadership development.

Citizenship behaviors have also been correlated with job satisfaction, another quality the approach promotes for managers to develop. A meta-analysis including 7,100 individuals and 22 separate studies demonstrated a significant and moderately positive correlation between organizational citizenship behavior and job satisfaction (Lepine, et al, 2002). Organizational effectiveness has also been demonstrated in the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and corporate profits (Koys, 2001).

### **PROJECT TEAMS**

The project teams within the graduate business program emphasize the behavioral characteristics of effective work teams. Students also become more aware of the influence of the task situation on team behavior. A greater number of companies today hire individuals who already have a track record of successful experiences working with teams and who possess norms in common with effective teams (Groysberg and Robin, 2006).

Human interactions involving groups of individuals evolve a psychological contract (Rousseau, 1989). This contract represents the unwritten, implicit expectations that each individual has of others in the group, as well as their own expectations of what they can contribute and receive from the group. Group members generally (although often mistakenly) assume that everyone holds the same expectations. As long as expectations are met, no major conflicts arise. When individual expectations are not met however, conflict occurs due to the perceptions of some individuals that their interests are being opposed (Wall and Callister, 1995). Depending on the nature of the conflict, and the values and feelings the individual has concerning the differences, outcomes may range from a normal, minimal tension that remains in the background – having no serious negative effects, to a larger and more significant force that is counterproductive to the team's effectiveness. As with all teams however, conflict is inevitable (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993).

As a learning tool and because our graduate program recognizes the importance of making explicit individual expectations, students incorporate organizational behavior concepts into team projects. This affords students the opportunity to learn and practice leadership while they are working on substantive projects. The process allows everyone to discuss and negotiate expectations openly and recognize the value of sharing those expectations. They are taught at the outset that an organization's success is related to how well conflict is resolved (Wall and Callister, 1995). The

structure for managing conflict that occurs in all groups and teams is the development of a Team Charter. This assignment provides teams with an ongoing mechanism for understanding team effectiveness and leadership within the team.

The objective of the assignment is to foster discussion among team members on the complex issues that often arise in a team work setting and achieve consensus on policies and procedures for how they will handle them and function effectively. More specifically, each team develops a written agreement formalizing how the members intend to organize and manage team activities, sets out member responsibilities, and fosters productive communications and interactions. The norms agreed to in the charter provide a frame of reference for the team to operate effectively and revisit as needed as their understanding and experience grows.

### **THE PROGRAM APPROACH**

Since leadership activities continually expose managers to conflict, learning to resolve conflict is important for leadership success. The trend toward teamwork makes skills in conflict resolution important when making decisions in teams (Karzenbach, 1995). Consequently, the approach of using multiple, team-based projects (as opposed to individual papers or examinations) was developed in our program to assist students with their understanding of and practice with preventing and managing conflict in group situations. The core elements of this approach formalize the components involved in the implicit psychological contract, and use this framework to develop team and leadership skills. The elements of the Team Charter in our program are presented here. An edited (for length) team charter written by students is presented in the appendix (Holwerk, et al., 2007). A close examination will give a detailed view of how students have executed this project and codified their responses.

#### **Personnel**

The objective of this section of the Charter is to enable team members to become acquainted quickly as well as exchange contact and other significant information. Students use this section to gain an understanding of the interests, motivations, constraints, and goals of each member. Through discussions, each team member has the opportunity to establish how they can best contribute to the overall success of the team. Equally as important, each member can communicate what he/she feels will be needed from the others to ensure mutual success in the program. Suggested topics to cover in their discussions include:

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- ◆ *Members' names, phone numbers (work and home), FAX numbers, and addresses*
  - ◆ *Communication preferences (to make certain that the method(s) documented are ones that all team members have access to, i.e., teleconferencing, Blackberry, e-mail, etc.)*
  - ◆ *Personal Biography (on the individual, their family, hobbies)*
  - ◆ *Present and past work experiences*
  - ◆ *Personal resources and skills (e.g. typing, writing, computer/technology, software expertise)*
  - ◆ *Strengths and weaknesses (professional and personal)*
  - ◆ *Why did you choose this graduate program?*
  - ◆ *Current academic semester schedule*
  - ◆ *Expected job projects, travels, and vacations scheduled throughout the length of the term*
  - ◆ *Family and other personal commitments that could impact meeting or team activities*

## **Processes**

The objective of this section of the Charter is to foster direct discussions regarding how to best work through issues which will typically surface as students progress through the program. This Charter will become the process map by which the team will take on tasks, decide on project direction, and resolve conflicts. Suggested areas and questions to explore include:

- ◆ *Purpose of the team (Mission)*
- ◆ *Policies on meetings and frequency*
- ◆ *Division of labor*
- ◆ *Team Roles and tasks (e.g. team leader, secretary, meeting minutes, and schedule for revising the charter)*
- ◆ *Decision-making (method for making decisions, i.e. consensus, majority, secret ballot, etc.)*
- ◆ *Discipline (how this will work if discipline problems arise)*
- ◆ *Communication and co-ordination issues*
- ◆ *Emergencies (how will communication or responsibilities be handled if a team member has a family emergency or other event that affects their participation in team activities)*

## Reflection Commentary

This section of the Charter, not common to those that are developed in work environments, asks teams to reflect and comment on the process used to develop the charter. Specific questions include:

- ◆ *What was the approach used to develop the document?*
- ◆ *How were differences of opinions resolved by the group?*
- ◆ *What are the items in the Charter which are most/least useful?*
- ◆ *Which items in the Charter were the easiest and hardest to agree upon? (and why?)*
- ◆ *What are the concerns of the group in applying the charter to future activities?*

## CONCLUSION

When fully realized, the Team Charter becomes the cognitive map for students to understand the processes that occur in all groups when interacting to achieve organizational goals. It also allows for an examination of the process in a way that integrates theory and practice, resulting in a practicing of leadership and team skills throughout the educational program. For students who are currently part of organizations who utilize teams, or will go on to employment with such organizations, these benefits may carry over to those setting and enhance their professional careers.

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**APPENDIX**  
**(Holwerk et al, 2007)**

Mission Statement: To achieve excellence throughout the completion of the MBA program and to learn from each other in an open environment.

Team Goals: The primary focus of this group is to acquire the analytical, financial, and interpersonal skills that will further develop our current skills. We all pledge to share our skills and knowledge from past and present work and life experiences. Our collective efforts will result in an end product that will include a well-versed foundation of skills that will benefit the overall team performance, thus enabling us to carry those team-building skills back to our own career endeavors.

Values: The actions, discussions, and decisions of the Team and each Team Member will be guided by the following Values:

- *Respect – Each member brings distinct experience, knowledge, and expertise to the team. As such, each member commits to seek to understand other perspectives, to treat others with courtesy, to be fully engaged, to participate actively, to gain value in the richness of the team interaction, and to be an integral part of the learning process.*
- *Honesty – Each member of the Team will conduct themselves with the utmost integrity. All conversations, written work, and presentations will reflect the collective ideas of the Team and will be a unique product of the Team. The Team Members will interact with each other in a forthright and direct manner.*
- *Unity – Each member of the Team will work together to fully utilize the strengths of each person. Each member will support the decisions reached by the Team even though individual differences of opinion may exist. The members of the Team will function as one cohesive group and will support one another.*
- *Commitment – Each member of the Team will be individually accountable to the other members of the Team. The Team Members will meet their obligations and deadlines, be present both physically and mentally, and be prepared to contribute to the success of the Team.*
- *Effort – Each member of the Team will work hard and put forth their best in every assignment undertaken by the Team. The members will be focused and work collaboratively and productively to produce work that reflects the collective knowledge of the Team.*

Roles and Task  
perceived by Group:

Team Members will have both primary duties, duties that are required to be performed at all times, and collateral duties, duties that are assigned on a rotational basis. Each duty has corresponding responsibilities that cannot be delegated.

- *Team Member: This is the primary duty of every member of the Team. Even though a member may be performing collateral duties, that individual is a member first and must adhere to the roles and responsibilities of a Team Member:*

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- *Adhere to conduct commensurate with other sections in this document.*
  - *Maintain focus on team Values.*
  - *Voice concerns promptly at team meetings.*
  - *Complete tasks on or before deadlines.*
  - *Maintain communication with Team Members during any absences.*
  - *Team Members may override a Team Leader's decision by majority vote.*
  - *The Team respects individual privacy and maintains that problems of a personal nature do not need to be discussed in a public forum. Team Members should, however, notify the Team as early as possible that a personal problem exists and that it may impact his/her ability to meet team deadlines and commitments. The Team will make reasonable efforts to redistribute the workload accordingly.*
  - *Team Leader: Above all the Team Leader is focused on the welfare of the project as well as the Team. Should either begin to falter, it is the Team Leader's responsibility to initiate dialogue with the Team to correct any problems. A rotational role, the Team Leader is charged with the following responsibilities:*
    - *Assign tasks in accordance with Section 4.0, the Division of Labor.*
    - *Ensure that tasks are completed on or before deadlines.*
    - *Maintain an awareness of all task progress and constraints.*
    - *Formulate solutions to problems before they occur and propose them at team meetings.*
    - *Provide follow-up on tasks as needed.*
    - *Propose a revision to task assignments when necessary.*
    - *Move to use the Weighted Decision Making Tool if the Team is deadlocked in discussion and the topic must have resolution.*
- Meeting Secretary: The Meeting Secretary is responsible for composing the official record of the meeting. A rotational role, the Meeting Secretary is charged with the following responsibilities:*
- *Create the official meeting agenda, decided upon by the Team; distribute the agenda to all Team Members no later than the morning of the meeting; bring copies of the official meeting agenda to the meeting.*
  - *Review the outcomes, decisions, and open items from the previous meetings.*
  - *Make important notations to agenda items, such as noting Team Members who wish to assume responsibility for specific items.*
  - *Distribute meeting minutes to all Team Members no later than 24 hours after meeting adjournment (or other time agreed upon at the meeting) as well as post the minutes on Google™ Documents.*
- Meeting Chairperson: The Meeting Chairperson is charged with the timely completion of team meetings and adherence to the meeting agenda. A rotational role, the Chairperson's specific responsibilities include:*
- *Facilitate meetings.*
  - *Call meetings to order.*
  - *Allow Team Members to explore topics through dialogue but provide redirection when the discussion begins to stray too far from the agenda.*
  - *Ensure that no specific Team Member(s) monopolize a topic during discussion.*

- *Engage Team Members who are not contributing to a topic during discussion.*
- *Transition discussions in order to move the meeting along in accordance with the agenda.*
- *If a topic cannot be resolved in a timely manner and the Team determines that the topic needs further exploration, the Chairperson will, in the interest of time, move to add the topic to an open agenda item to be revisited at the next meeting. (The Team Leader may choose to use the Decision Making Score Card to resolve the issue instead.)*

Division of Labor: Throughout the MBA program, there will be a significant workload placed on each Team Member. Team Members are expected to not only complete projects on time, but to also generate work that meets team quality expectations. In recognition of this, the Team shall follow standard guidelines for the Division of Labor to ensure quality work is finished on time, efficiently and provides the maximum growth of each member.

*Task Assignment*

- *Every effort will be made to allow Team Members to choose the tasks they would like to perform.*
- *Tasks will be distributed so that each member bears a similar workload. Once assigned a task, Team Members are accountable for the timely completion of the task.*
- *Team Members will be assigned responsibility for quality of work based on their strengths. For example: A Team Member who is skilled with data analysis in Microsoft Excel will not necessarily perform this type task; however, he or she will be responsible for ensuring that the work meets team quality expectations. This Team Member will provide the necessary coaching to ensure that the member performing the work will perform it in accordance with team quality expectations.*
- *If the Team cannot decide upon the task assignment, the Team Leader assigns tasks. If the Team does not agree with the Team Leader's division of labor, the Team may overrule the Team Leader by a majority vote.*
- *Progress Updates – Team Members shall submit periodic progress updates for their tasks to the Team Leader. The reporting periods shall be established at the beginning of each project by the Team Leader.*

*Conflicts – If at any time a Team Member feels that they are not capable of performing the work assigned, for whatever reason, it is incumbent upon that Team Member to inform the Team as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made. Team Members not meeting their commitments shall be subject to Section 7.0 – Discipline.*

Policies on Meeting: The Team values productivity. In order to gain the most from the time spent in team meetings, it is critical that the Team outline and agree on a meeting structure. All team meetings will be conducted in a similar fashion.

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#### *Positions*

- *Team Members will be assigned meeting roles prior to each meeting. Team Member, Team Leader, Meeting Secretary, Meeting Chairperson.*
- *Agenda—As aforementioned, the Agenda is created by the Meeting Secretary prior to each meeting. Each agenda will follow a standard format.*

#### *Order of Events*

- *Meeting Secretary distributes the agenda.*
- *Meeting Chairperson calls the meeting to order.*
- *Meeting Secretary reviews outstanding items from the last meeting.*
- *Meeting Chairperson leads the Team in discussion of the agenda items.*
- *Meeting Secretary reviews new, open items from the meeting.*
- *Team Leader assigns tasks.*
- *Meeting Secretary distributes meeting minutes within 24 hours of the meeting.*

#### *Scheduling*

- *When necessary, team meetings will be held on class nights, 90 minutes prior to class beginning. If additional time is needed, the Team will schedule time on Saturday or Sunday.*
- *The Team will make every effort to schedule meetings when all Team Members can be present. If it is not possible for all Team Members to be physically present, a conference call will be arranged. It is acceptable to the Team that a member can call in to the meeting unless the Team is rehearsing a presentation, in which case physical presence is critical. The Team expects every member to make his best effort at attending when presentations are being rehearsed.*
- *If a Team Member cannot be present (physically or via phone), it is that Team Member's responsibility to: Deliver project updates to the Meeting Secretary 24 hours prior to the meeting and Follow-up with another Team Member to discuss what occurred at the meeting.*

#### *Policies*

- *All meetings will start and end on time. All Team Members have outside commitments, and it is not acceptable for meetings to be substantially extended past the agreed upon time.*
- *Team Members are expected to come to meetings on time and be prepared.*
- *The Team recognizes that outside commitments may cause a Team Member to be late to meetings from time to time. If a Team Member knows he will be late to a scheduled meeting, he is expected to inform the Team in advance. If he does not know in advance, and is running more than ten minutes late, the member is expected to notify the Team via phone, if possible.*

#### *Decision Making*

##### *Decision Making Methodology*

- *All Team Members will be given the opportunity to fully express their opinions and ideas before a decision is made. However, the Team Leader*

*will assign due dates for the decisions, thereby setting the maximum time frame for discussion.*

- *The decisions the Team makes will be rooted in the Team's Values. Business decisions the Team makes will, in general, be made so as to align with our business principles. These principles are: profitability, environmental awareness, shareholder value and respect for our employees. With these principles in mind, the Team will endeavor to make all of its decisions democratically. When this is not possible, the Team will employ a Weighted Decision Making Tool to assist with the decision.*

#### Weighted Decision

**Making Tools:** Weighted decision-making tools will be used for all decisions that cannot be made democratically, either for reasons of time, or for difference of opinion.

- *Narrowing Tool – this tool will be used to narrow the field of choices down to 2-3 (See Appendix B). The criteria used in the tool will be unique to each decision but will be based on the Team's Values and business principles. The average of the Team Members' scores will be used for the final decision.*
- *Decision Tool – this tool will be used to decide between the choices the Team picked using the Narrowing tool. (See Appendix C). It will be used to compare a narrow range of choices and evaluate each among a specific and generally complex list of "S.M.A.R.T." criteria (Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Related, and Time-bound). The criteria used in the tool will be unique to each decision but will be based on the Team's Values and business principles. The Team will establish the priority numbers, and each Team Member will then score each item. The average of the Team Members' scores will be used for the final decision.*

#### *Changes to Decisions*

- *Team decisions are final, and all Team Members will work with the decisions made.*
- *A plurality of the Team can request in a team environment that a decision be revisited if they feel that changes in information or circumstances warrant.*

#### Discipline

##### *Overview*

- *No Team Member(s) shall undertake any disciplinary action unilaterally.*
- *Grievances with other Team Members, team policies, or decisions shall be voiced to the entire Team, and the Team be given the opportunity to respond, before seeking outside assistance with any team issues.*
- *If the majority of the Team agrees that a Team Member is performing at an undesirable level, the Team Member shall be evaluated and placed into one of three categories: Lack of Skill, Values Issues, and UNACCEPTABLE. Procedures for dealing with each issue are outlined below.*
- *Once a Team Member is evaluated, the Team is responsible for formulating a plan with clear achievement goals and dates, written and signed by all Team Members.*

*Lack of Skill*

- *If a fellow Team Member is performing work at a level that is unsatisfactory to the other Team Members, and the Team Member lacks the skills to perform the work at a satisfactory level, it is the responsibility of the Team Leader to redistribute the workload or to provide/coordinate training to overcome such obstacles.*
- *Ongoing performance issues of this type are a reflection of the Team's failure and will not be held against the individual involved provided that reasonable and appropriate effort are expended by the individual to overcome these issues.*

*Values Issues*

- *If, in the judgment a majority of Team Members, an individual is not upholding the Values of the Team, the Team will discuss these issues openly with the individual in a team environment and develop a plan to overcome these issues. The plan will include but is not limited to:*
  - *A clear, time-bound, milestone plan for bringing the individual's work up to a level that is acceptable to the Team.*
  - *Required progress updates and reports.*
  - *Required behavior change, and milestones, or impartial judge to evaluate change.*
  - *Ongoing performance issues of this type are a reflection of the Team's failure; however, if these issues are not resolved by the end of the semester, or one month after the improvement plan is implemented whichever is longer, the Team may find these issues are UNACCEPTABLE, and may proceed according to Section 7.4 of the Team Charter.*

UNACCEPTABLE: The Team may find a Team Member's performance to be UNACCEPTABLE. Minimum criteria for this finding are:

- *Team Member has been found to be UNACCEPTABLE per Section 7.3.2.*
- *The Team Member has missed two consecutive meetings, with no explanation or advance notification.*
- *The Team Member has missed one deadline, with no valid excuse and with no work product or visible effort displayed.*
- *The Team Member continually misses deadlines without advance notice.*
- *The Team may make a report on the situation in writing to the course professor, and/or MBA office. In the event that a report is submitted to the MBA office or professor, the report must be written and signed by all Team Members.*
- *The individual being reported has the right to include a statement expressing their views with this or separately. The Team does not have the right to edit or change this statement, but will have the opportunity to read and sign it prior to submission.*

Communication  
and Coordination:

The Team will utilize a variety of methods of communication including meetings, e-mail, and telephone/conference calls. The preferred method of communication with the team is email. If members do not respond within a reasonable amount of time, depending on the importance of the email, communication via his or her preferred phone line is the next outreach. Finally, if a member still cannot be reached, his or her home phone or work number can be called.

Commentary: The approach used to develop the Team Charter was the allocation of work. After our first meeting, we determined which group member would develop which section of the charter, as well as creating their personal bio. As each member completed their section, they would e-mail it to the group for feedback and the team leader would put the sections together to form the final charter. The final draft would then be sent to the group for comments and approval.

Fortunately, the only difference in opinion faced by our group was determining the layout of the charter. Some believed a resume format would be better, while others preferred a charter containing a mixture of charts, bullets, and paragraphs. After having a group discussion, we obtained an overall consensus to use the mixed layout. As the charter took form, we realized it was the right choice.

The most useful item in the Team Charter will be the communication plan as well as the decision-making processes. These guidelines will ultimately steer our group in the right direction as difficult issues are addressed within our group. We all are in agreement that our least useful item will be the discipline. We have complete confidence that each member will perform his/her duties by the agreed upon deadlines. This group is willing to help each other out when necessary should any personal, family, or work obligations interfere with completion of an assigned task.

While working on the team charter, the easiest item was to acknowledge our individual goals that lead us to the MBA program and ultimately this group. The team goals were made easy to recognize once we were given direction in the MBA 700 Assessment class. The hardest part was to identify our weaknesses and agree to improve upon those skills as we move forward. This class was especially helpful in identifying those flaws. After acknowledging these weaknesses, we as a group can utilize group projects as a platform to learn the required material and more importantly improve upon those individual weaknesses. This will allow us to reach our individual and team goals simultaneously.

The general concern that our group holds is the ability to all meet at an agreed upon time. Our informal meeting time before and after class seem to be acceptable to everyone however any meeting of great length outside of our scheduled classes could present a challenge. Nonetheless, we are a group that is willing to be flexible. Any reasonable accommodations will be made to meet as a group.

Overall the team charter will prove to be a useful resource to keep the team on course. Should our progress stall in any way, the team charter will lead us back in the right direction. Our agreement will ensure that everyone is fully aware of what is expected from them as a group member.

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# STUDENTS' RIGHTS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR POSTSECONDARY STUDENT ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Randall G. Bowden, Kaplan University

## ABSTRACT

*Student rights have become a growing concern for institutions ever since the court case, Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education (1961) rejected the idea of in loco parentis. More recently students and stakeholders have been promoting students' rights for academic freedom. This paper examines student academic freedom in light of a shift from in loco parentis to the "age of majority" doctrine based on the twenty-sixth amendment of the US Constitution. Furthermore, it lays the groundwork for contractual relationships between students and postsecondary institutions. These concepts resulted in the development of the Student Academic Freedom Conceptual Model. It demonstrates the contractual nature of student academic freedom based on institutional, state, and federal standards as an extension because of the "age of majority" doctrine.*

## INTRODUCTION

Historically, colleges and universities have various legal relationships with students. One of the most common relationships is under the doctrine of *in loco parentis* as institutions serve "in the place of parents." However, the phrase has come to have different applications of its meaning. It is safe and sound on campuses (Bratten, 2006; Honigan, 2003; Sweeton & Davis, 2003, 2004); or, it is applied as living-and-learning communities (Altschuler & Kramnick, 1999); or, it is viewed in a legal context, thus giving rise to contract law governing the relationship between an institution and its students (Goodman & Silbey, 2004; Melear, 2003). Whatever one's view, *in loco parentis* has undergone a dramatic transformation through the years, beginning in mid-July 1971. The focus of this paper is to examine *in loco parentis* in light of how the "age of majority" from the twenty-sixth amendment of the U.S. Constitution lays the groundwork for the contractual relationship between students and postsecondary institutions. Then, it demonstrates how "age of majority" relates to student academic freedom. In doing so, the paper explains how student academic freedom can only be a product of a contractual relationship. As a result, a *Student Academic Freedom Conceptual Model* is presented.

These issues are represented in three sections: (1) Background to demonstrate the shift from traditional views of *in loco parentis* to age of majority contractual obligations; (2) Conceptual Model to delineate aspects of student academic freedom, postsecondary obligations, and student conduct

responsibilities; and (3) Conclusion summarizes how the conceptual model of student academic freedom is limited by contractual relationships.

As an important note, the information in this paper relates primarily to public institutions. Students at private institutions may not be afforded the same rights as they would if attending public ones. Kaplin and Lee (2007) make this very clear. “Before a court will require that a postsecondary institution comply with the individual rights requirements in the federal Constitution, it must first determine that the institution’s challenged action is ‘state action’” (p. 33). Thus, unless an institution is state controlled or under state action by some relationship, such as a contract, individuals at private institutions may not be afforded the same constitutional protections as they would at public ones.

## BACKGROUND

Traditionally, postsecondary institutions assume responsibility for the general well being of students well beyond academics. As such, it is a duty of education to impact the whole person (Bratten, 2006; Nuss, 1996; Pascarelli & Terenzini, 2005) where the academy could be regarded as a guardian, responsible for oversight for student’s well being from intellectual maturity to moral development, from “libido to laundry” (Altschuler & Kramnick, 1999, para. 4). However, the association between student and institution as a legal relationship changed in the 1960s as institutions began to expel students for political and social activism (Mealer, 2003; Pollet, 2002). These actions prompted a landmark case that led to the changing nature of the student/institution relationship. The court case, *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* (1961), was influential in the shift. The case was based on six black students at Alabama State College who had been expelled for participating in civil rights activities. The institution claimed it had the right to oversee what was proper behavior of its students on and off campus (i.e., *in loco parentis*). The court rejected the idea of *in loco parentis* by educational institutions as they exercised power over students in a similar fashion as parents having legal responsibilities over their child as minors (Kaplin & Lee, 1997). The ruling profoundly affected the role of colleges and universities toward students. If the doctrine of *in loco parentis* no longer applied to oversight as it had in the past, how does it affect college students?

To answer the question, one must look beyond the historical roots of *in loco parentis* and through the lens of contract law. This paper presents the position that a student’s relationship to his or her postsecondary institution can be considered a result of the twenty-sixth Amendment of the Constitution ratified July 1, 1971 and not based on the traditions of *in loco parentis*. It states: “The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.” This notion is commonly acknowledged as the “age of majority.” It is the stage in life where a person is regarded to have legal standing as an adult. According to this constitutional right people are provided with

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privileges to vote and enter into binding contracts at the age of 18 instead of 21, which previously to 1971 was considered the age of majority.

Prior to 1971 US citizens under the age of 21 would be treated as a minor. This afforded colleges and universities opportunities to invoke parental-type rights on campuses, certainly toward those under the age of 21. Even though the age of majority is more fully delineated by each state, it most commonly applies at the age of 18 where it carries “the same duties, liabilities, responsibilities, rights, and legal capacity as persons heretofore acquired at twenty-one years of age” (Kaplin & Lee, 1997, p. 138, e.g. citing the Michigan statutes).

As US citizens, students have certain rights and responsibilities. Some of these include the protections afforded by the twenty-sixth amendment mentioned above, as well as exercise of religion, freedom of speech and press, and right to assemble from the first amendment, and citizens may not be deprived of life, liberty (one’s good name), or property (cannot be unduly removed from an institution) without due process under the fourteenth amendment. However, many of these rights are determined by a contractual relationship between students and their postsecondary institutions (Mawdsley, 2004). As soon as a student matriculates, he or she enters into a contractual relationship. A student is bound by policies and procedures presented in communications, such as handbooks, catalogues, financial agreements, registration procedures, code of conduct brochures, standardized procedures not found in written form, even syllabi and other materials delineating academic standards and student conduct issues (Mawdsley, 2004; Poskanzer, 2002). Even though students are contractually bound to abide by the terms of these contracts, they, more so at public institutions than private ones, are provided state and constitutional protections, as well. A student benefit of being a member of the age of majority is first amendment protection of freedom of speech. However, just as the age of majority comes with contractual obligations, freedom of speech protections also has particular restrictions and has come under intense scrutiny.

The scrutiny arises, often, because there is confusion about viewing freedom of expression and academic freedom synonymously. The issue is critical enough to warrant public hearings. For example, in Pennsylvania in late 2005, the State House Select Committee heard testimony concerning academic freedom and its application to students. Representatives from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) reminded the committee that freedom of expression and academic freedom were two separate issues (Bradley, 2006). However, it is not free speech, *per se*, that is being examined, but student academic freedom. Often the two are viewed as synonymous, thus adding to the confusion of student rights and obligations. At the core of the debate is the following: The student’s “*Freedom to express one’s opinion and to challenge those of the instructor. Openness and tolerance for a diversity of opinion, without fear of reprisal, is a central aspect of the educational process*” (Bayer, 2004, p. 80). The conceptual model below provides a clarification of rights and responsibilities related to student academic freedom.

The differences between freedom of speech and student academic freedom can be summarized by the following. Speech is considered free and protected when courts determine the

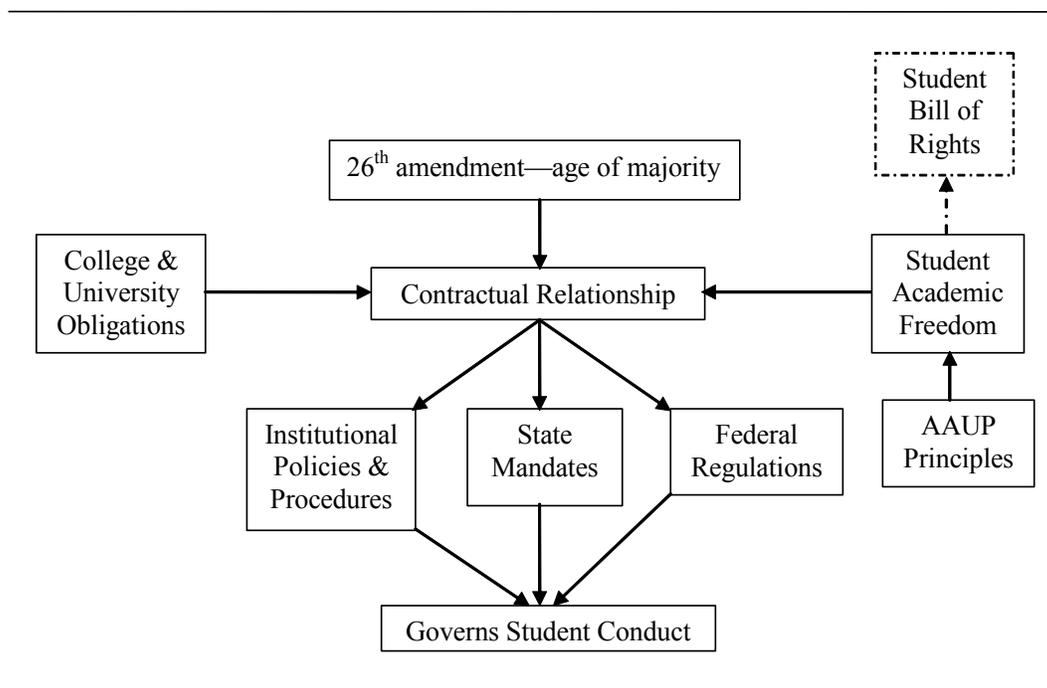
communication is in public interest. Travis' (2000) concluded that "speech that is not public and is judged to interfere with harmonious working relationships is not constitutionally protected" (p. 816) as based on constitutional rights. Student academic freedom, though, is based in a non-legal document from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). It pertains to issues of freedom to learn in a capacity for critical judgment as they engage in activities in search of truth in the classroom and on campus (Kaplin & Lee, 2007). These freedoms generally concern discussion, inquiry, and expression; to organize and join associations; discuss issues and form opinions publicly and in private; hear guest speakers; express views of institutional policy on academics and student issues; expressions in student publications; establish free inquiry; exercise rights as citizens; and exercise other constitutional rights (*AAUP Policy Documents and Reports*, 2006).

Thus, it should be clear that freedom of speech has a constitutional foundation with legal rights and student academic freedom is a *suggested* policy statement from an organization that has no direct legal links to institutions. This suggests, then, that student academic freedom is not an inherent right grounded in the constitution. It only can be a right to the extent that student academic freedom issues are made available, according to a contractual relationship, in policies and procedures presented in communications, such as handbooks, catalogues, financial agreements, registration procedures, code of conduct brochures, standardized procedures not found in written form, even syllabi and other materials delineating academic standards and student conduct issues. On the one hand, students have standard rights and protections from the constitution as citizens. On the other hand, student academic freedom is only a conceptual idea not tied to any legal standard independent of some sort of contractual context. Entering into a contractual relationship is made possible because *in loco parentis* reflects more of a contractual relationship because of the age of majority theory than a parental obligation by institutions. One can be left to wonder how students, who are now of legal age, can express constitutional freedoms and rights, yet be constrained by contractual agreements. If students expect particular freedoms, how are they associated with their contractual obligations? The following model helps represent these associations.

### CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The *Student Academic Freedom Conceptual Model* (Figure 1) demonstrates key elements of student academic freedom in relation to critical aspects of principle, policy, and law. First, it relates the American Associate of University Professors' statements pertaining student academic freedom. Second, information is related to college and university obligations. Third, student conduct is explained in relation to age of majority. Within student conduct, the model deals with the contractual relationships among the AAUP principles, student academic freedom concerns, college and university obligations, and constitutional issues.

**Figure 1: Student Academic Freedom Conceptual Model**



### AAUP STATEMENT OF STUDENT ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The role of the AAUP is to advance academic freedom and shared governance (About the AAUP). Two salient points must be made. First, the AAUP primarily deals with faculty issues as it relates to colleges and universities. Student conduct is considered subsequent to faculty conduct. Nevertheless, the general conception of academic freedom extends from the AAUP. Second, the AAUP has no legal jurisdiction over faculty or institutions for conduct. In essence, academic freedom and its expression is *not* a legal concept (Hendrickson, 1999; Standler, 1999, 2000). Therefore, both faculty and students cannot rely on principles established by the AAUP as legal rights. Nevertheless, the AAUP does provide standards for student academic freedom. In 1967 the AAUP developed a statement jointly with other influential entities. These were interpreted and reaffirmed in 1990, 1991, and 1992 as having withstood the test of time to be viewed as an excellent example for postsecondary institutions to consider when formulating student academic freedom standards. They are summarized below (Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students, AAUP). Often they are referred to as the Student Bill of Rights, but they have no *direct* legal tie to the US Constitution and should not be implied they do (Mullendore & Bryan, 1992).

- ◆ Students should be given freedom to learn upon appropriate conditions in the classroom, on campus, and in the larger community and freedom comes with responsibility.
- ◆ Institutions have a responsibility to develop policies and procedures to safeguard freedom in accordance with standards of each institution.
- ◆ Faculty should encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression.
- ◆ Student performance should be based on academic standards, not opinions or unrelated conduct.
- ◆ Students should be free to take reasoned exception with faculty views as related to course content.
- ◆ Through orderly procedures, students should have protection against capricious or prejudice academic evaluation.
- ◆ Students should have freedom of association on campus and with campus activities.
- ◆ Student and student organizations should be free to express opinions publicly and privately regarding academic inquiry.
- ◆ Student publications and press should be free to explore intellectual inquiries.
- ◆ Student behavior off campus should have the same privileges as other citizens.
- ◆ Student behavior is subject to campus, civic, and federal regulations.

Student academic freedoms are governed by three major conditions: (1) academic inquiry; (2) institutional, civic, and federal limitations; and (3) AAUP statements not legal documents with rights and privileges automatically afforded to students when they matriculate. Academic inquiry means students' discussions should be guided by matters of the "transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being of society" (Joint Statement, AAUP, Preamble section, para. 1). Institutional, civic, and federal limitations relate to student conduct both on campus and off. On campus, students who violate institutional regulations are to be treated with due process and judgments without prejudice or capriciousness. Students who violate civic or federal regulations should be dealt with in a manner consistent with the infraction, whether on or off campus. This does not mean institutions are relieved of responsibilities toward students.

### **COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY OBLIGATIONS**

Though institutions are not considered as functioning *in loco parentis*, they must provide reasonable services and protections. According to their publications and standardized operational procedures, postsecondary institutions are obligated to demonstrate a fiduciary responsibility toward students. Below are some major indicators of obligations, which are governed by legal considerations (Bayer, 2002; Cloud, 2002; Gehring, 2000; Mawdsley, 2002).

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- ◆ Offer and teach courses as advertised.
  - ◆ Teach courses at appropriate levels as stated in catalogs.
  - ◆ Teach course content as prescribed by course catalogs.
  - ◆ Provide services as presented in college and university catalogs, student handbooks, and other literature relating to the college experience.
  - ◆ Abide by state law.
  - ◆ Provide due process for infractions committed by students.
  - ◆ Provide a reasonable expectation to a program of study as outlined in college and university literature (property right).
  - ◆ Provide hearings to clear one's name if impugned (liberty rights).
  - ◆ Provide a reasonably safe campus environment.

Major obligations, then, relate to what institutions must provide. By written, oral, implied, or expressed communication (Hendrickson, 1999) parties enter into a formal agreement upon students' matriculation. The result is that both the institution and its students are obligated to performance according to particularly standard of conduct according to reasonable conditions set forth in catalogs, student handbooks, and other literature relating to the college experience. These provisions indicate two chief reference points: (1) institutions are not legally bound to provide *academic freedom*, in-and-of itself, by AAUP or any other standards; and (2) institutions are obligated by law to provide services and protections according to the standards they establish, as well as from state and federal laws and regulations.

In essence, the statement about student academic freedom and postsecondary obligations function as mutually exclusive, independent entities. They are separate concepts with no overlap in utility *unless* college and university communications stipulate a nexus between student academic freedom and the institution. This is not an admission of rightness or wrongness, but a revelation of terms of a contract. "Courts of law have consistently found that the relationship between students and their postsecondary institutions is a contractual one" (Mawdsley, 2002, p. 5).

### STUDENT CONDUCT

The twenty-sixth amendment of the US Constitution becomes acutely relevant for student conduct on campus. The amendment provides US citizens the right to vote at the age of 18. It established the age of majority and the right for students of age to enter into contracts with institutions under state law (Kaplin & Lee, 1997). Because of this, the issue centers on what documents and processes constitute a contractual relationship. Most have been iterated previously and are reviewed below.

- ◆ Formal matriculation on campus, real or virtual, of a person accepted as a student.
- ◆ Course catalogs.
- ◆ Student handbooks.
- ◆ Code of conduct statements.
- ◆ Operational procedures pertaining to students, such as financial aid, housing, registration, and organizations.
- ◆ Rights provided by state constitutions.
- ◆ Public rights afforded all citizens, such as found in first, fourteenth, and twenty-sixth amendments, as well as other federal acts.

Thus, student conduct is governed by terms of contractual relationships enacted when he or she matriculates. The contract is understood in three key realms. First, institutional policies and procedures describe the relationship. Second, state mandates provide acceptable behavior parameters for its citizens. Third, federal issues apply to all US citizens. Unless colleges and universities are bound by institutional policies and procedures (or state mandates) to provide student academic freedom, students do not have a legal right to it. They do have a right to freedom of speech and other constitutional issues, but even these must follow standardized policies and procedures enacted by institutions (e.g., Hendrickson, 1999; Kaplin & Lee, 1997; Poskanzer, 2002; & Standler, 1999/2000). Furthermore, student academic freedom rights, if provided, may deviate significantly from the AAUP principles. There is no direct legal connection between institutions and the AAUP.

Thus, three of principles govern student conduct, although they can vary from campus to campus: (1) institutional policy, procedures, and practices; (2) civic laws; and (3) federal governance. Under these conditions, student academic freedom is *only* evident and becomes a legal matter if it is tied to institutional policy. Moreover, it becomes a freedom of speech matter only to the extent that a person's right to speak for public good is violated. In other words, student academic freedom and free speech are also mutually exclusive concepts in-and-of themselves.

### SUMMARY

Students can only make legal claims to academic freedom as a contractual arrangement if stipulated by the institution. They can make this claim because of the age of majority from the twenty-sixth amendment gives them standing to enter into contractual agreements as students at the age of 18. Furthermore, student academic freedom claims of constitutional protections are only valid to the extent that a student's speech is viewed for the public good. Students, whose speech against an instructor, administrator, staff member, or the institution is considered personal gain not public good, may find themselves under sanctions for violating student conduct policies, that is, violating terms of a contract of which they are obligated when they matriculated. Student academic

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freedom is not a license to speak and behave as one sees fit, but is governed by institutional, state, and federal regulations.

## CONCLUSION

The development of the *Student Academic Freedom Conceptual Model* is not to imply that students do not have rights. Its development promulgates the concept of appropriate student conduct according to institutional, state, and federal standards. For better or worse, when a person turns 18 years of age and enters college, he or she also enters into contractual relationships that govern conduct. If institutions endorse a student academic freedom policy, then students have contractual rights to its conditions. Those rights are not universally covered by state or federal constitutions, though. If, however, student academic freedom rights are established by a contractual relationship and violated at public institutions, students may have protections under the US Constitution as well as other breach of contract laws. Protections are not automatic, but based on the type of the contractual conditions, as well as student and institutional conduct. Ultimately, students at the age of 18 are generally considered adults with rights to enter into contractual relationships. Entering college is to enter into contractual obligation. Students have, thus, a responsibility to the terms of contracts and may claim freedoms and protections only according to its conditions as governed by institutional, state, and federal policies. Ultimately, student academic freedoms only exist to the extent that postsecondary institutions grant them in accordance under legal standards.

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# ACHIEVING QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (QEP) OBJECTIVES: IMPACT OF ON-LINE AND ON-GROUND COURSE CHARACTERISTICS BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PERSONALITY TRAITS

**M. Meral Anitsal, Tennessee Tech University**

**Ismet Anitsal, Tennessee Tech University**

**Bonita Barger, Tennessee Tech University**

**Ismail Fidan, Tennessee Tech University**

**Michael R. Allen, Tennessee Tech University**

## ABSTRACT

*With the increasing popularity of distance education, a growing body of research is emerging which investigates personality characteristics, the types of students that are successful on-line courses and the differences between on-line students and traditional students. This analytical study supports a university initiative (Quality Enhancement Plan-QEP) to improve the quality of student learning. It is one of the outcomes of a multidisciplinary, collaborative effort of faculty from Management, Marketing, Math, and Engineering who have been teaching courses on-line and on-ground using the Desire-to-Learn (D2L) platform. The Five Factor Model of personality was used to analyze personality differences. The most important correlates of achievement for all QEP objectives for both students of on-ground and on-line courses were discussed.*

## INTRODUCTION

With technology progressing at a rapid rate, and the advent of more and more sophisticated interactivity programs, the field of on-line education has experienced enormous growth in recent years. The literature dealing with on-line education is extensive and varied. The focus of this discussion is the personal characteristics of on-line students; the types of students that are more successful in on-line education; and the differences between on-line students and traditional students.

On-line students demonstrate a greater level of comfort with, and use of, computers (Maki and Maki 2000). The notion of successful on-line students being adept at using computers is intuitive (Maki and Maki 2000; Maki and Maki 2002; Shany and Nachmias 2002). Successful on-line students are technologically capable, but this conclusion is less than revelatory. What other characteristics do successful on-line students possess? Some research has shown that introverted

students are more successful in on-line courses, as are students high in intellect and imagination (Maki and Maki 2003). The research was unclear, however, if these traits were predictive of success for on-line students especially or for all students. Shany and Nachmias (2002) identified students with a “liberal” thinking style (i.e. student goes beyond existing rules and procedures, to maximize change, and to seek out situations that are somewhat ambiguous) as the most successful on-line students. But within that study, the most significant predictor was not a personality characteristic/trait at all, but prior experience with information and communication technology, which was consistent with prior research (Maki and Maki 2000; Maki and Maki 2002). Other research has shown that, for the most part, the only significant personal differences in on-line students are demographic in nature (e.g., age and marital status), except for the counterintuitive finding of higher levels of motivation for on-campus students (Qureshi and Antosz 2002). In 2008, Bayram, Deniz, and Erdogan found that the personality traits of achievement, counseling readiness, and ideal self were significant predictors of academic success for e-MBA students in Turkey. The researchers also positively correlated two of those personality traits (achievement and ideal self) with a positive attitude toward web-based education, which itself was the most positive predictor of success in the courses.

Kim and Schniederjans (2004) offer the most compelling evidence for a definitive personality aspect of on-line education. The researchers administered the Personality Characteristics Inventory (PCI) to 140 undergraduate students in “totally web-based education” courses. They ultimately identified the “ideal totally web-based education student” as someone who is compliantly cooperative, considerate, even-tempered, self-confident, a creative thinker, and committed to work. This student also showed leadership, needed to achieve, and had a positive learning orientation. Conversely, research indicates that students who procrastinate may be very ill equipped for success in on-line education. Elvers, Polzella, and Graetz (2003) found that while there was no difference in procrastination tendencies between on-line and lecture students, the on-line students who did procrastinate were likely to perform more poorly than the lecture student procrastinators.

As the aforementioned studies show, there is little consistency in previous findings. Little replication can be found in this particular field. Despite numerous efforts to identify the traits necessary for success in on-line education, the research to this point is inconclusive. Nearly all of the previous studies used at least slightly different methodology and/or variables, making it nearly impossible to compare their findings. Future emphasis in the field should be placed on replicating the findings of previous researchers, to obtain consistent results.

## **PERSONALITY**

Academic success predictors usually consist of cognitive measures, pertaining to mental ability or intelligence, and non-cognitive measures, especially personality traits (Lounsbury and Ridgell 2004). In the late 1980’s personality psychologists came to a general consensus that five

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distinct factors of the Five Factor Model (FFM) could serve as a tool for organizing personality traits (Parkinson and Taggar 2006). A personality trait is defined as a distinguishing, relatively enduring way in which one individual differs from another. Personality trait theory stresses the notion that consistent personality traits underlie habitual behaviors (Levas, Noel, and Michaels 2003). The five tenets of FFM represent basic tendencies, characteristic adaptations, self-concept, objective biography, and external influences. The belief is that they develop during childhood, remain stable through adulthood, and influence patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Farley and Sumerson 2007). The elements of the FFM are as follows: Extroverts are assertive, active, sociable, and talkative. Introverts, on the other hand, tend to be reserved, even paced, and independent. Individuals who score high on emotional stability (sometimes called neuroticism) tend to experience effects such as fear, sadness, embarrassment, disgust, anger, and guilt. Those who score low in this dimension are usually calm, relaxed, and even tempered. Agreeable individuals are sympathetic to others, cooperative, and expect others to be accommodating in return. Disagreeable individuals are egocentric, competitive, and skeptical of other's intentions. Conscientious people are determined, strong-willed, reliable, punctual, and good at consolidation. A low score on this dimension suggests that the individual is spontaneous, less precise in applying moral principles and less directed when working toward goals. High scores on openness to experience mean that the individual is original, has an active imagination, enjoys variety, is attentive to inner feelings, and demonstrates intellectual curiosity. Those who score low on openness to experience tend to act more conventionally and have a more conservative outlook. These factors are often studied in relation to various outcomes, and research has found several Big Five predictors of academic success: agreeableness and conscientiousness (Fritzsche, McIntrie and Yost 2002); conscientiousness (Busato, Prins, Elshout and Hamaker 2000; Musgrave-Marquart, Bomley and Dalley 1997; Paunonen and Aston 2001); and openness (Paunonen and Aston 2001). The main purpose of this research was to find, if possible, if there is a concrete difference in the personality frameworks of those who choose to take on-line courses versus traditional courses.

The body of work addressing the role of personality in on-line education is currently very small, and, when considered in combination with other studies of the relationships between personality, computer use, and computer literacy, it is difficult at this point to generate clear predictions about what the influences of personality traits on choice of on-line education might be (Mattes, Nanney and Coussons-Read 2003). Several of the research papers consulted to complete this review of the literature had very different results. In most cases the research from one paper to another seemed quite contradictory. One study found that introverts in particular found the asynchronous "anonymous" environment a comfortable space in which to express their personal opinions. The asynchronous on-line space was more conducive to presenting their voice, which often goes unheard in a face-to-face environment. However, introverts can be overwhelmed when there are too many participants in one group. The same study found that extroverts tend to prefer a face-to-face environment (Russell 2002). Another study of 146 students taking on-line and in-class

introductory courses indicated that extroverts, rather than introverts, showed a stronger preference for the ways in which information is presented in on-line courses. The extroverts liked the involvement of the chat rooms, threaded discussion, and e-mail correspondences of the on-line courses. The introverts, by contrast, had little participation in chatting or threaded discussions, though they did participate in e-mail more than any of the other participatory activities (Daughenbaugh, Daughenbaugh, Surry and Islam 2002). A separate study, however, found that academic extroverts think most effectively when interacting with others because they become aware of what they are thinking when they are verbalizing, suggesting that extroverts are better suited to traditional classes. This study also suggested that academic introverts focus their energy on reflection of ideas without the need for interaction with others, alluding to the idea that introverts would be better suited for on-line classes (Lin and Overbaugh 2007). A separate study suggests that more conscientious students may be drawn to on-line classes because of their structure and the way they allow the students to express themselves. The study stated that on-line discussions provide students with the opportunity to analyze a conversation before they post a comment for others to read, thus resulting in a reduced level of anxiety (Mattes, Nanney, and Coussons-Read 2003). Another study supports the premise that more conscientious students might prefer on-line courses because, in the distance-learning environment, learners must be motivated to direct their own learning process, since the teachers and students are physically separated. A high degree of self-discipline, self-organization, and self-planning are essential elements for distance learners (Hsu and Shiue, 2005). An additional study supports the idea that conscientious students might perform better in on-line classes due to the time constraints and need for self-efficacy created by this unique learning environment. In this study Kelly (2003) developed the Time Use Efficiency Scale (TUES) to better study time use efficiency. Kelly reported that higher scores on the scale correlated with less procrastination, a greater sense of purpose in time use, more use of routines and time structure, use of time management behaviors, setting goals and priorities, self-efficacy, less stress, and an internal locus of control. TUES scores strongly, positively correlated with conscientiousness scores (Johnson and Kelly, 2005).

With all of these conflicting results, it makes sense to assume that there might be another cause for why some students opt to take on-line classes rather than traditional classes. The explosion of technology-based education provides a unique opportunity to address the role of personality in adapting to new learning situations. A group of researchers at the University of Colorado wanted to look further into what little research there is about personality and its links to on-line versus on-ground choice of classes. They found that it might not be the link between personality and the method of delivery (on-line versus on-ground classes), but rather a link between personality and the medium in which it is delivered. Their research found that high scores on the personality dimension of introversion are associated with the choice of a computer-programming career, but not with performance (Pocius 1991). Pocius (1991) concluded, "Personality facets not only affect human computer interaction at the task level, but may determine whether individuals will choose to use the

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computer to accomplish a task.” In addition, the introverted personality style correlates positively with computer aptitude and achievement (Pocius 1991). These, and other, study results support the rationale that different types of people are drawn to a computer based environment (MacGregor 2002). Interestingly, studies on the impact of introversion and extroversion in on-line courses have not shown a difference in levels of participation in on-line class discussion between individuals with either personality type (Dewar and Whittington 2000). Literature on the psychological correlates of successful computer assisted instruction (CAI) show that student characteristics such as high overall academic performance and cognitive style are related to high success with CAI (Mattes, Nanney and Coussons-Read 2003).

Several other studies suggest that the link between personality and academic success in on-line courses or traditional courses may not be as relevant as other factors, such as general intelligence and work drive. A study of 186 subjects showed that the correlations between openness to experience and academic success and conscientiousness and academic success were high, but not as high as the correlation of a high SAT score and academic success (Farley and Sumerson 2007). In a study analyzing the influences of work drive, general intelligence, and the Big Five traits on GPA and course success, researchers found that work drive and general intelligence have much stronger correlations with course success than any of the Big Five personality traits (Lounsbury and Ridgell 2004). In a study consisting of 305 undergraduate business students that examined the relationship between GPA and success and the traits of the FFM and success, researchers found that GPA was a better indicator of a student’s potential success. The study focused on conscientiousness (but also examined the other factors) and found that, contrary to the researchers’ hypothesis, conscientiousness was negatively correlated with the students who scored on problem identification. Although there were no other expectations for the other traits, some significant relationships were found. Openness to experience was positively correlated with problem identification (Parkinson and Taggar 2006). Because of the contradictory nature of these studies, and the research now available, there is no evidence of a tangible link between personality and preference for, or success in, on-line versus traditional classes.

Studies of learning outcomes for both face-to-face and distance education classes have repeatedly shown that distance education students are not at a disadvantage when it comes to learning (MacGregor 2002). Information about student’s personality is important, however, to both the instructor and the student for several reasons. First, completing a task that does not fit the nature of an individual can be stressful. Information about personality can help instructors become more sensitive to the differences that students bring to the classroom, and can assist instructors in working with poorly prepared or new students, since the highest drop-out rates occur with these groups. Second, instructors with an understanding of their students’ personalities are better able to adapt their teaching methods appropriately. Third, students who learn about their own personalities become better learners; they achieve higher grades and have more positive attitudes about their

studies, display greater self-confidence, and possess more skill in applying their knowledge in courses (Parkinson and Taggar 2006).

### **QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (QEP) OBJECTIVES**

“The Quality Enhancement Plan is a five-year university initiative to improve the quality of student learning. The plan is designed to improve students' critical thinking/real-world problem solving using active learning strategies. The QEP is part of the University's Strategic Plan and a component of the Accreditation Process (Adapted from the University Website). The implementation of QEP emphasizes improvements on creativity, teamwork, critical thinking, and real life problem solving abilities of students at the end of a course.

Towards this end, faculty (researchers) from STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), management and marketing disciplines meet together to collaborate. They exchange information on course design and delivery approaches in on-line and on-ground environments, as well as evaluating course achievement of QEP objectives. Even though these disciplines can be viewed as drastically different from course requirements to curriculum, each objective of QEP--namely creativity, teamwork, critical thinking, and real life problem solving--have been incorporated carefully into both on-line and on-ground course designs. As a result, this collaborative work enables the faculty (researchers) to investigate how personality traits of students influence the successful achievement of QEP objectives in both on-line and on-ground delivery environments.

#### **Creativity**

In the management courses, creativity is encouraged throughout the semester. Class norms make explicit that “creativity is expected,” and the 360-degree survey asks students to assess the “creativity of the products.” In the marketing courses, creativity is encouraged on multiple fronts, from discussions and teamwork to presentations. Rather than concentrating on only “previously known solutions” in discussing real life marketing problems, students are encouraged to understand multiple viewpoints not only for critical thinking but also for “creative thinking” (Stein 2006).

In the management courses, creativity is encouraged throughout the semester. Class norms make explicit that “creativity is expected,” and the 360-degree survey asks students to assess the “creativity of the products.” In the on-ground courses, students present their research through role-playing and enacting cultural rituals associated with business transactions and management practices. This “hot” communication, accompanied by artifacts, food, and traditions from the culture, enhances the perception of creativity and student engagement. While the asynchronous on-line classes are devoid of “hot” communication, students are challenged to present their research using methods beyond the conventional tools offered by Desire to Learn (chat, e-mail, and discussion threads). For example, teams create game show formats and award prizes to winning members.

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In the STEM courses creativity is encouraged through hands-on term projects. Student groups are formed in the middle of the semester; their task is to work on a solution to an industrial problem. The solutions are simulated and prototyped. In an on-ground course the final product is demonstrated to the entire class through oral presentations. On-ground students use almost all available labs, from the welding lab to the foundry. In an on-line course, the solution is presented via a PowerPoint presentation in Desire to Learn. On-line student teams extensively use the remote rapid prototyping laboratory for their part production in on-line CAD for Technology and Rapid Prototyping courses.

### **Teamwork**

In the management courses, teamwork is essential. Thirty-five to forty-five percent of each student’s final grade is based on a 3600-degree assessment of a team product. Each team presents its work during one week in which it "takes over and teaches" the course. These "weeks of team management" become competitive, with teams attempting to surpass prior team presentations.

In the marketing courses, teamwork provides many opportunities to students to engage in active learning efforts that make up 35 to 50 percent of their final grade. Students in marketing classes participate in two to three teamwork activities a week; these include in-class applications, team presentations, and team projects. Every student has an opportunity to evaluate and rate their teammates’ overall performance during the semester, as well as students on competing teams that presented projects.

In both on-ground and on-line STEM courses, teamwork is an essential component. A comprehensive term project is required for both on-line and on-ground STEM courses. Teams are formed in the middle of the semester, and project topics are identified; team sessions are scheduled in every class. Teams report their findings and accomplishments every two weeks. Team members report their timelines, task to-do lists, document the mechanisms they use for communication, the amount of time they spend in each meeting, and their findings/accomplishments. In an on-ground course, the project time and documented work are presented during the last class of the semester. In an on-line course student teams present their work in a PowerPoint file.

### **Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking in management courses challenges the teams to solve business related problems in real time, current situations. The on-line delivery of cases enhances this QEP objective;

introverted students have more time to think, process the information, and respond via discussion threads. Often in on-ground courses, extroverted students dominate the conversation and solutions. In marketing courses, team members in class applications and individuals in interactive class discussions approach unique cases from the marketing world from different viewpoints that represent multiple stakeholders in the same context. Sometimes team members act as managers of a local company; other times they act as consumers or consumer advocates. To enhance critical thinking, students are encouraged to use different players in the marketing network such as suppliers, distributors, and competitors.

In STEM courses, students participate in and converse about frequent discussion board postings/topics related to course learning objectives. Students also complete various homework assignments related to material and process selection, design changes, and cost estimations. “What-if” scenarios help students grasp the challenges in the variations of design, process, and final product. In final semester projects, student teams report their practices, approaches, and solutions.

### **Real Life Problem Solving**

Management assignments focus on assessment of “real life business problems” through the use of assessing a company, culture, case, and country. Focus is on application and knowledge of managing global business practices and the environment, knowledge of the influences of national culture on the internal arrangements of a company, and the influence of internal arrangements on the strategy of a company. In addition, emphasis is placed on applying International Human Resource Management issues in making the company strategy work under cross-cultural negotiations and communication. Students receive experience in interviewing and interacting with people from other countries and cultures. After secondary and primary research, teams present their work in an on-line or on-ground week of management or one-hour presentation; their directive is to “bring to life” their findings in an interactive, engaging manner.

In marketing classes (such as marketing research), students act as market researchers and investigate a real-life marketing problem provided by a local company. The students then design research to solve the managerial problem, collect both qualitative and quantitative data, and recommend a course of action for the company. In junior level marketing courses, students actively learn, interpret, and discuss the many facets of current marketing issues.

In the STEM courses, problems faced in the manufacturing, automation and design industries were the core subject student teams. After consulting with the course instructor, the teams select one final problem as the topic for the final course project. Based on the cost, size, quality, and resource constraints, a final product is developed as a prototype or real piece. Product implementation is presented as either simulation or real/mock-up product. If there is no cost constraint, students usually come up with an actual final product. This same procedure is followed in both on-line and on-ground CAD for Technology and Rapid Prototyping courses.

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The information exchange among researchers indicated that they used extensively the tools offered by the Desire to Learn (D2L) program to implement QEP objectives. An investigation of all offered courses by researchers revealed that courses could be classified as fully on-line if there was no opportunity for face-to-face interaction among students and faculty. If students and faculty did communicate face-to-face, but they used D2L for further virtual interaction, the course could be classified as on-ground with on-line elements. If the course was taught without using D2L for any interaction or objective, it was classified as fully on-ground. However, whether and how QEP objectives were implanted in any course, as designed by the faculty, was independent of the delivery system.

## METHODOLOGY

Data for this research was collected in undergraduate management, marketing, and STEM courses offered by a southern university during Summer-2007 to Fall-2008 semesters. This research is an outcome of a multidisciplinary, collaborative effort of instructors teaching on-line, on-ground courses and using the Desire-to-Learn (D2L) program to facilitate teaching efforts. At the end of each semester, instructors invited students to take an anonymous survey about the course for extra credit. Students from 21 courses were approached for this purpose. The survey was completed by 355 undergraduate students. The data can be divided by students of completely on-line courses (n=65), students of completely on-ground courses (n=37), and students of on-ground courses with on-line elements (extensive use of D2L software including on-line exams, team and class discussion boards, on-line access to course slides and grades, etc. n=254).

Measurement items have acceptable scale validity and reliabilities. Principle Component Analysis and Quartimax rotation were used to investigate convergent and divergent validities of the personality scales. Factor loadings for need for cognition, self-sufficiency, and the five factor model of personality (extraversion, neuroticism, open to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness) indicate that measurement items load into proposed measures and therefore provide evidence about the existence of validity. Cronbach's alpha values for each measure ranged between 0.531 and 0.790, indicating sufficient reliability.

## FINDINGS

The first step in the analysis of results was to evaluate the degree of achievement towards QEP objectives. Students from 21 courses were asked their perceived development of real life problem solving, teamwork, creativity, and critical thinking skills at the end of each course and using a 5-point Likert scale. The means values for each objective for the total sample were considerably high, (real life problem solving= 4.12, team work= 4.15, creativity=3.85, and critical thinking= 3.96) indicating successful QEP implementation.

However, comparison of means of the four QEP objectives on three delivery methods revealed some significant differences (Table 1-A, B, C). Teamwork is an important differentiating factor that is statistically significant at 0.05 level not only for comparing fully on-line courses with fully on-ground courses, but also for comparing fully on-ground courses with on-ground courses with on-line elements. Specifically, fully on-line courses have a higher means on teamwork component than fully on-ground courses; likewise do on-ground courses with on-line elements than fully on-ground courses. Another QEP objective, creativity, is also statistically significant at 0.10 level, where fully on-line courses have slightly higher mean value than on-ground courses with on-line elements.

<b>Table 1: Comparison of Means on Qep Objectives For Undergraduate Courses</b>		
<b>TABLE 1-A</b>	(a) Fully On-Line Courses (n=64)	(b) Fully On-Ground Courses (n=37)
Real Life Problem Solving	4.14	4.11
Teamwork	<b>4.08</b>	<b>3.76</b>
Creativity	4.02	3.86
Critical Thinking	3.91	3.95
<b>TABLE 1-B</b>	(b) Fully On-Ground Courses (n=37)	(c) On-Ground Courses with On-Line Elements (n=254)
Real Life Problem Solving	4.11	4.10
Teamwork	<b>3.76</b>	<b>4.21</b>
Creativity	3.86	3.80
Critical Thinking	3.95	3.97
<b>TABLE 1-C</b>	(c) On-Ground Courses with On-Line Elements (n=254)	(a) Fully On-Line Courses (n=64)
Real Life Problem Solving	4.10	4.14
Teamwork	4.21	4.08
Creativity	<i>3.80</i>	<i>4.02</i>
Critical Thinking	3.97	3.91
5 Point Likert Scale; 1= Strongly Disagree; 5= Strongly Agree Bold = Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ ; Italic = Significant at $\alpha = 0.10$		

The second step of analysis was the comparison of personality trait difference among the students. For this purpose, personality characteristics of students of fully on-line courses, students of fully on-ground courses, and students of on-ground courses with on-line elements were compared and contrasted.

In terms of need for cognition, students in fully on-ground courses prefer to think about small, daily projects to long-term ones. They also prefer to do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge their thinking abilities. Students in both fully on-line courses and students in on-ground courses with on-line elements seem to enjoy challenges to their thinking. Moreover, it seems that students in fully on-ground courses feel relief rather than satisfaction after completing a task that required a lot of mental effort. On the contrary, students in fully on-line courses seem to find that learning new ways to think is more exciting than students in fully on-ground courses. Students in both fully on-line courses and students in on-ground courses with on-line elements share a similar level of excitement about thinking (Table 2).

<b>Items</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>(a) Fully On-Line Course Means (n<sub>1</sub>=64)</b>	<b>(b) Fully On- Ground Course Means (n<sub>2</sub>=37)</b>	<b>(c) On-Ground Courses with On- Line Elements Means (n<sub>3</sub>=254)</b>
Thinking is not my idea of fun.	- / - / -	2.25	2.59	2.33
I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities.	<b>ab</b> / - / <b>bc</b>	2.11	2.62	2.14
I prefer to think about small, daily projects to long-term ones.	<b>ab</b> / - / <b>bc</b>	2.94	3.35	2.87
Learning new ways to think doesn't excite me very much.	<i>ab</i> / - / <b>bc</b>	2.16	2.51	2.11
I feel relief rather than satisfaction after completing a task that required a lot of mental effort.	<i>ab</i> / - / -	2.60	3.03	2.72
5 Point Likert Scale; 1= Strongly Disagree; 5= Strongly Agree Bold = Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ ; Italic = Significant at $\alpha = 0.10$				

The self-sufficiency concept reveals interesting findings. Students in on-ground courses with on-line elements say more often that they like to take responsibility for making decisions, and are more capable than other people, than do students in fully on-line courses. Similarly, students in fully on-ground courses, compared to students in fully on-line courses, seem to feel that they can live their lives in any way they want to (Table 3). These self-perceptions of students attending on-ground courses with on-line elements or fully on-ground courses seem to need a reality check. Based on the findings from Table 1, students in fully on-line courses seem to develop their teamwork abilities

better than those in fully on-ground courses. This may be an indicator of a gap between perception and implementation. Students in on-ground courses with on-line elements have a higher mean on teamwork than those in fully on-line courses, though this difference is statistically insignificant. That may mean students in on-ground courses with on-line elements may be able to combine all positive aspects of face-to-face and virtual teamwork interactions to generate a higher level of performance.

**Table 3: Self-Sufficiency**

Items	Significance	(a) Fully On-Line Course Means (n <sub>1</sub> =64)	(b) Fully On- Ground Course Means (n <sub>2</sub> =37)	(c) On-Ground Courses with On-Line Elements Means (n <sub>3</sub> =254)
I rarely depend on anyone else to get things done.	- / - / -	3.54	3.81	3.70
I like to take responsibility for making decisions.	<i>ab/ ac / -</i>	3.98	4.27	4.22
I am more capable than other people.	- / <b>ac</b> / -	3.56	3.73	3.80
I can live my life in any way I want to.	<i>ab/ - / -</i>	3.73	4.11	3.89
I always know what I am doing.	- / - / -	3.28	3.19	3.30

5 Point Likert Scale; 1= Strongly Disagree; 5= Strongly Agree  
 Bold = Significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ ; Italic = Significant at  $\alpha = 0.10$

In terms of FFM, students of fully on-line courses score significantly lower than the students of two other course delivery methods in introversion (Table 4). They also have higher emotional stability scores. Fully on-ground course students have the highest level of neurotic tendencies. Agreeableness was another important element of FFM that showed significant differences among three groups of students. Students of fully on-line courses were found to be the least agreeable group, while students of fully on-ground courses were the most agreeable. Conscientiousness and openness to experience scales did not show meaningful differences among the three groups of students.

Table 4: The Five Factor Model of Personality					
	Items	Significance	(a)	(b)	(c)
			Fully On-Line Course Means (n <sub>1</sub> =64)	Fully On-Ground Course Means (n <sub>2</sub> =37)	On-Ground Courses with On-Line Elements Means (n <sub>3</sub> =254)
Extraversion	I like to have a lot of people around me.	<b>ab / ac / -</b>	3.31	3.70	3.59
	I really enjoy talking to people even complete strangers.	- / - / -	3.47	3.81	3.59
	I would rather be a leader of others.	- / - / -	3.78	3.83	3.94
Neuroticism	I am not a worrier.	<b>ab / ac / bc</b>	3.14	2.11	2.78
	I am seldom sad or depressed.	- / - / -	3.63	3.35	3.45
	At times I have been so ashamed I just wanted to hide.	<b>ab / - / bc</b>	2.27	3.05	2.31
Open to Experience	I often try new and foreign foods.	- / - / -	3.30	3.68	3.52
	I often enjoy playing with theories or abstract ideas.	- / - / <i>bc</i>	3.33	3.11	3.45
	I am intrigued by the patterns I find in art and nature	- / - / -	3.59	3.46	3.54
Agreeableness	I try to be courteous to everyone I met.	<b>ab / ac / -</b>	4.14	4.65	4.51
	I would rather cooperate with others than compete with them.	<b>ab / - / bc</b>	3.67	4.46	3.73
	I don't like to get into arguments with my family, friends and co-workers.	<b>ab / - / bc</b>	3.95	4.43	4.10
Conscientiousness	I am not a very methodical person.	<i>ab / - / bc</i>	2.81	3.14	2.74
	I never seem to be able to get organized.	- / - / -	2.39	2.38	2.28
	I find it hard to keep my belongings clean and neat.	- / - / -	2.33	2.30	2.14
	I waste a lot of time before settling down to work.	- / - / -	2.94	3.32	3.10
5 Point Likert Scale; 1= Strongly Disagree; 5= Strongly Agree Bold = Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ ; Italic = Significant at $\alpha = 0.10$					

The final step of analysis was to look at correlates of personality traits, types of courses, and four objectives of QEP (Tables 5). Among students of fully on-line courses, agreeableness was the

most important correlate of development in real life problem solving, teamwork, and creativity skills. Openness to new experiences was the most important correlate of critical thinking skill development. Need for cognition was very important for this group of students and significantly associated with development of real life problem solving, creativity, and critical thinking skills. Developing higher level of teamwork skill related to higher levels of self-sufficiency and extraversion characteristics of students besides agreeableness.

**Table 5: Pearson Correlations for Qep Objectives by Personality Traits for Three Course Delivery Methods**

Personality Traits	Type of Course	Real Life Problem Solving	Teamwork	Creativity	Critical Thinking
Need for Cognition (reverse coded)	Fully on-Line	0.304	0.271	0.392	0.525
	Fully on-ground	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.455
	On-ground w/ On-Line El.	0.216	n.a.	0.135	0.149
Self-Sufficiency	Fully on-Line	n.a.	0.323	n.a.	0.288
	Fully on-ground	n.a.	0.352	0.348	n.a.
	On-ground w/ On-Line El.	0.203	0.171	0.170	0.123
Extraversion	Fully on-Line	n.a.	0.298	0.252	0.390
	Fully on-ground	n.a.	0.396	0.497	n.a.
	On-ground w/ On-Line El.	0.163	n.a.	0.229	n.a.
Neuroticism	Fully on-Line	n.a.	0.266	n.a.	n.a.
	Fully on-ground	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	On-ground w/ On-Line El.	-0.135	n.a.	-0.182	n.a.
Openness to Experiences	Fully on-Line	0.266	0.280	n.a.	0.570
	Fully on-ground	n.a.	n.a.	0.466	n.a.
	On-ground w/ On-Line El.	0.134	0.185	n.a.	n.a.
Agreeableness	Fully on-Line	0.394	0.457	0.403	0.449
	Fully on-ground	0.343	0.349	n.a.	n.a.
	On-ground w/ On-Line El.	0.309	0.354	0.288	0.231
Conscientiousness	Fully on-Line	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	Fully on-ground	0.375	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
	On-ground w/ On-Line El.	n.a.	0.125	n.a.	n.a.

a) Fully On-line (n=64), (b) Fully On-ground (n=37), (c) On-ground with On-line Elements (n=254)  
5 Point Likert Scale; 1= Strongly Disagree; 5= Strongly Agree; All figures are significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$   
n.a.= no significant correlation

Correlates of personality and achievement of QEP objectives were found to be drastically different for students of fully on-ground courses. The driving strong and significant associations were found between extroversion and teamwork as well as extroversion and creativity among the

students of fully on-ground courses. Conscientiousness highly correlated with real life problem solving. Need for cognition (in the form of preference for small daily projects to long-term ones) highly and negatively correlate with the development of critical thinking abilities for this group. At a secondary level, correlates of team work, real life problem solving and creativity provided interesting insights about this group. Teamwork correlated with self-sufficiency, and agreeableness. Real life problem solving was related to agreeableness. Finally, creativity associated with openness to new experiences.

Finally, the most important correlate of achievement of all four objectives of QEP for students of on-ground courses with on-line elements was agreeableness. The need for cognition was the secondary important association of real-life problem solving and critical thinking skills developments. Self-sufficiency, on the other hand, linked to developments of real-life problem solving, teamwork, and critical thinking skills. Unlike the other two groups, openness to new experiences was related to teamwork and extroversion to creativity for this group.

### **CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

Thanks to design elements of on-line courses, students realized statistically significantly higher levels of improvement in the development of their team work skills. Apparently on-line delivery medium when combined with carefully designed course elements to fully utilize available tools such as discussion boards and chat rooms enhanced student-to-student interactions. Considering the fact that on-line students had introvert tendencies, these courses encouraged them to get out of their comfort zones.

Furthermore, students of fully on-line courses perceived a higher level of improvement on their creativity skills compared to students of on-ground courses with on-line elements. This perception might stem from the personality differences between these two groups of students. Course designs were almost similar in both groups except face to face interactions among fellow students and instructor. The correlations of creativity and personality traits of students of both groups revealed that the driving force behind creativity for on-line students come from agreeableness and need for cognition. On the contrary, the driving forces among students of on-ground courses with on-line elements were extraversion and agreeableness.

This research provided more evidence to personality differences among fully on-line and on-ground courses students. In line with the existing literature (Kim and Schniederjans, 2004), on-ground course students were more extrovert and agreeable than on-line course students. Moreover, they were less emotionally stable and less need for cognition. However, on-ground course students considered themselves more self-sufficient. Although these findings seemed contradictory in nature, they explained higher levels of motivation among on-ground course students in Qureshi and Antosz's research (2002).

It is curious, and warrants further research, that students in fully on-ground courses feel relief upon project completion, while students in fully on-line courses find that learning new ways to think is more exciting than students in fully on-ground courses. In addition, students in both fully on-line courses and students in on-ground courses with on-line elements share a similar level of excitement about thinking.

The findings of this study, on the other hand, deviated from literature in terms of conscientiousness factor of FFM. Conscientiousness did not appear to be a differentiating factor of students' personalities in all three course delivery methods. Furthermore, it did not appear to be a significant correlate of QEP objectives. The only significant correlation was found to be real life problem solving for fully on-ground course students.

Educational goals of QEP in terms of improving students' skills in real life problem solving, team work, creativity and critical thinking cannot fully be achieved without taking students' personalities as well as course delivery mediums into consideration. For example, neurotic tendencies of students in on-ground courses with on line elements would have detrimental effects of the development of real life problem solving and creativity skill developments. While need for cognition and agreeableness were important for creativity skill development for students of fully on-line courses, it was openness to experiences and extraversion for students of fully on-ground courses that drove the creativity development. Understanding these personality traits will help educators fine-tune their course designs and delivery methods based on their students' needs.

While instructional design may be the key process, what is it in the media and delivery system on-line that generates enhanced excitement about thinking? Do the media enhance interactions and generate a higher level of performance and critical thinking? This analytical study represents the in-depth research results of the university QEP core objectives collected from Management, Marketing, Math, and Engineering courses. Continuous improvement actions on QEP objectives--especially in teamwork and corrective actions taken in four different majors--will be reported in the future.

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## **PROFESSORIAL PRESENTATIONS: THE LINK BETWEEN THE LECTURE AND STUDENT SUCCESS IN THE WORKPLACE**

**Randy J. Anderson, California State University, Fresno**  
**Lydia E. Anderson, California State University, Fresno**

### **ABSTRACT**

*When a student makes that first presentation to his/her potential employer during a first interview, the presentation skills of the student is on trial. Very few students are naturals when it comes to presenting, as it is generally a learned skill. A student's greatest influence regarding professional presentations comes from his/her professors. When the classroom instructor possesses positive presentation skills, the student is being covertly mentored. Likewise, poor professor presentations negatively influence a student's definition and perception of what constitutes a professional presentation. This article discusses the need for instructors to reassess their performance in the classroom by continuously updating presentation skills in an effort to provide students the best possible presentation role models. Professors adopting this attitude reinvest themselves in their students' success by providing students the tools to make a positive and professional impression on current and/or future employers. Included in this discussion is a performance self-evaluation instrument by which all classroom instructors can benefit. As it is very difficult to "unring" a bell, it is very hard to unmake a mediocre first impression. Therefore, the presentation skills of a classroom instructor have a tremendous impact on students, one that they subconsciously emulate. By providing professional presentations, academicians better prepare students to communicate and, hence, compete more effectively in the workplace. After all, a college education is much more than just a college degree.*

### **THE INTRODUCTION**

In business, image is everything. Unfortunately, most students do not learn this harsh reality until they enter the workforce. This little tidbit of information for success in business is generally first discovered during a job interview, the opportunity for an individual to essentially sell his or her qualifications, or, in its most frightening of revelations, the first opportunity to provide a formal professional presentation.

In its most basic terms, a presentation (be it written, oral, or visual) is a performance. It is acting out or communicating oneself. Presenting is also viewed as the art of persuasion. In

classrooms across the globe, professors persuade students to value information imparted through lectures. Students, in turn, persuade professors that they have a fair grasp and understanding of the respective concepts through their performance on various assessments. When entering the workforce, students must persuade prospective employers to hire them. After students are hired, they routinely communicate both within and outside their respective organization through formal and informal venues. Prior to adapting to a company's communication business culture, the only primary communication resource a student has to draw upon is that which was used in the classroom.

Presenting is a form of communication. As such, there is no argument that effective presentation skills contribute to employment and once in the workplace, produce a more effective and productive employee. The simple process of creating a presentation stimulates innovation and develops both organizational and communication skills – vital workplace abilities necessary for today's competitive workplace. Unfortunately, too few college students are provided basic presentation tools or positive examples to prepare them to effectively compete in today's workplace. The object and challenge of the classroom professor is to inspire students to succeed. When students succeed, professors succeed. How can professors accomplish this task when they, themselves, utilize stale and mundane classroom material? The goal of this paper is to elicit a commitment from academicians to assess their current presentation style, to identify and update the necessary skills needed for students in the academicians' respective disciplines, and to encourage the integration of these skills into both coursework lectures and curriculum. It is important to note that, although this discussion primarily focuses on formal presentations, we must also consider all other student communication venues including written and informal forms. A self-assessment instrument is included to assist professors in identifying opportunities to sharpen professional presentation skills.

### **THE PROBLEM**

As students enter the workforce, it has become increasingly evident that the majority of students lack basic presentation skills (Anderson/Bolt). Although academia may have prepared students in research reporting, few students are well equipped to display proper business writing skills or speak confidently in front of a crowd. Even though a student may excel academically, his/her failure to properly communicate his/her skill sets may prevent the student from securing a position and/or excelling in the workplace. Unfortunately, it is difficult for students to present a favorable image if they are not given the basic tools and opportunities to enhance these necessary skills. In the majority of instances, academia has (albeit subconsciously) not only ignored, but also prevented students from sharpening these important communication skills. In response to employer concerns, academia has recently put forth a concerted effort to sharpen students' basic writing skills by requiring writing assignments in the majority of colligate coursework. While the writing style and content are improving, students are still insufficiently prepared to make quality presentations acceptable for a board room. Students are told to respond, write, or orally present in a certain

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manner, a manner that oftentimes differs from professor to professor. This inconsistency results in a confusing, convoluted approach to the student's understanding of what is considered professional and acceptable. This confusion, in turn, leads students to conform or imitate the mannerisms exuded by the professor of the moment. No matter the discipline, all professors have an obligation to properly prepare students for success in a business environment. Although the problem of effective presentations may be considered trivial by some, it is not at all trivial when students are vying for employment and/or promotions in an extremely challenging job market such as what we are currently experiencing.

### THE SOLUTION

A great presentation, whether written or verbal, might be hard to describe, but we generally know one when we've experienced one. Quality presentations display similar characteristics. These favorable characteristics include displaying advance preparation, clarity in thought and creativity of all documents and support materials, and demonstrate respect for the audience's time (Anderson/Bolt). These factors greatly contribute to the passion, enthusiasm, and credibility of the presenter which are then transferred to the receiver. By his own admission, the Rev. Billy Graham was not a very good public speaker (Graham). Yet, somehow after he has finished speaking, those who have listened are inspired and feel "connected" to Dr. Graham. This "communication connectivity" can be described as a communication's added value. Communication connectivity occurs when a sender successfully communicates his/her message in such a manner that the receiver is inspired or challenged to follow-up on the message. The receiver's added value involves how the receiver responds and/or applies the information received after the presentation ends.

#### **It starts in the classroom – Do as I say**

Providing students with professional presentation skills must start in the classroom. It is vital for academicians to lead by example. This involves demonstrating an attitude of "do as I say AND do as I do." Those in higher education must constantly review and update their presentation tools. Far too often, professors are caught in the "habit trap" of presenting the same information in the same manner semester after semester. For many, it involves the same visual materials, the same lectures, the same handouts, and the same old worn out story. This routine approach contributes to a professor's loss of classroom enthusiasm and teaching vision – forgetting why his/she initially entered academia (Anderson, R.). Consider the many seasoned academicians who still fail to integrate current technology and events into the classroom. Before every lecture, professors should take a moment and ask themselves, "Would I want to sit through this lecture?" The following self-assessment is designed to serve as a catalyst to identify potential areas for improving classroom

presentations with the ultimate goal of transforming an ordinary classroom into a dynamic, insightful learning laboratory. See the exhibit on the following page.

Regardless of one's teaching experience, the preceding investigatory instrument, if taken honestly, revealed several opportunities for improvement. Hopefully, the self-assessment topics created a renewed commitment to providing professional presentation skills and tools in the classroom that can be passed on to students and mimicked in the workplace. The following are key tools that should be included in every instructor's professional presentation tool kit.

### **The Right Tools for the "real world"**

#### 1. The Look of an Executive

As stated earlier, a student's perception of "professional dress" is first defined in the classroom. Before embarking on any presentation, the presenter should take a good look in the mirror and assess his/her professional appearance. Understanding that various disciplines have varied definitions of acceptable and professional dress, students recognize that the classroom is an instructor's workplace. Taking this into consideration, professors in the respective fields should dress appropriately. It appears every campus as a faculty member that routinely dresses far too casual for the classroom. This type of behavior conveys to students that both the job and the student are not important enough to the instructor to make and maintain a positive impression. There is a perceived correlation between professional dress and workplace attitude (Anderson/Bolt). Because the way one dresses influences one's self-concept and behavior, we can make a logical assumption that professional attire has a positive influence on performance. Therefore, it is important that professors dress appropriately and professionally when in the classroom.

#### 2. Written Communication

As many managers of newly hired students can attest, the greater majority of students are not properly prepared to write a clear, concise business communications. Formal business communications range from a simple e-mail message, to a formal business report complete with an executive summary. Although today's students are far too familiar with electronic communications such as e-mail, texting, and blogs, they have developed poor communication habits including the acceptance of text slang, poor grammar, and the etiquette of utilizing said tools. These poor habits are now warping into the workplace. Colleges must get back to the basics by teaching and modeling professional written business communications. (Baker) The first step toward accomplishing this goal is for professors to utilize proper formatting, spelling, and grammar in his/her written communications with his/her students. The second step is for professors to teach and increase awareness of acceptable business communication including proper formatting for business

correspondence, proper use of e-mail and text, in addition to written communication etiquette. The final step in preparing students involves not accepting flawed written communications.

CLASSROOM PRESENTATION SELF-ASSESSMENT				
Please check the appropriate response:				
	<u>Always</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Room for Improvement</u>	
<i>In the classroom, I ...</i>				
1.	dress appropriately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	utilize appropriate business terminology.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	utilize educated language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	reflect a positive attitude.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	project a positive attitude toward my colleagues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	project a positive attitude toward administration.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Regarding classroom written and collateral materials...</i>				
1.	Course syllabus is reviewed and updated each semester.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Handouts are reviewed and updated each semester.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Classroom handouts are graphically appealing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	When applicable, classroom handouts are presented in a professional business writing format.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Students' written responses are expected in a professional business writing format (e.g., executive summary, memos).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Students are provided a brief explanation on business correspondence formatting (e.g., executive summary, memos).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Students are provided opportunity to utilize standard business writing formats.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>My classroom lectures...</i>				
1.	are interactive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	provide ample opportunity for participation and dialog.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	encourage students to challenge lecture and ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	utilize voice tones and levels to emphasize various points.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	integrate current events and current case studies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	allow students to utilize critical thinking skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	display a passion for subject.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	display currency and advance preparation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Regarding the use of visual aids, I ...</i>				
1.	integrate various multimedia (internet, audio, slides, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	use various visual aids apart from those provided by the book publisher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	utilize interactive discussion tools such as flip charts, smart boards, and/or chalkboards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	provide students the opportunity to present in front of the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	utilize computers and technologies inside the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	utilize computers and technologies outside the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	encourage students to utilize current technologies to customize reports, lectures and presentations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 3. Oral Presentations

Few can argue the benefits of oral student presentations. While time consuming, they are of great value in increasing a student's self-confidence and creativity. Oral presentations also provide students the opportunity to prepare for the workplace by presenting in a professional setting with a captive audience. Oral presentations can be utilized as a venue for students to teach and learn from each other. A valuable learning tool for teaching and learning from classmate presentations is to conduct a brief and respectful student critique for each presentation that identifies the strengths and weaknesses of what the class just experienced. This exercise collectively increases student communication skills and conveys expectations for all classroom presentations (including those of the professor). Remembering that students often mimic the behavior of their leaders, the instructor can also get a glimpse into the student's perception of the instructor's presentation style. From this exercise, professors also can identify creative presentation styles, methods, and tools that are most appealing to students. The student critique activity also provides an excellent opportunity for professors to solicit student feedback regarding the presentation skills of the professor. Finally, it is important that instructors participate in activities and events within their respective industry to observe, evaluate, and learn from the presentations of professionals within their respective disciplines. There is always something to be learned by observing others.

### 4. Critical Thinking

Successful presenters know the value of displaying both critical thinking skills and the ability to think on one's feet. These skills are most aptly displayed through the use and application of current events to classroom concepts. Turning a current event into a "what would you have done" scenario teaches students to behave like a manager and utilize critical thinking skills. Consequently, the "school of hard knocks" in the form of thoughtful comments and respectful criticism from classmates and professors further prepares the student for the workplace by enhancing the ability to quickly think on one's feet and defend one's opinion. Of course, challenging students in such a manner requires that the professor, himself, display these critical skills and consistently utilize current events as a teaching tool. This also means that the professor is open to challenge and respectful criticism from students.

## **JOB SEARCH SKILLS**

Although it is not the instructor's primary job to teach basic job search skills, it should be a tangential motive for every professor. Sadly, too many students can't make the connection between what is experienced in the classroom to necessary job search skills and workplace success. Displaying and requiring professional writing contributes to the development of an effective resume

and cover letter, and after employment, successful communication. Classroom dialog, critical thinking, and oral presentations contribute to professional networking and interviews. And finally, professional attire, respectful behavior, and displaying business etiquette set a standard for teaching students what is appropriate and acceptable in today's competitive workplace.

### **A SHOT OF ENTHUSIASM**

Life is not stagnant, nor should the classroom be. In today's depressed economy and double digit unemployment, it is difficult to not be caught up in negativity and pessimism. Professors must be the optimistic catalyst for creative and innovative thinking and infuse these factors into every aspect of classroom pedagogy. Students are a reflection of their environment. No matter the discipline, make the classroom a lab of renewal. Encourage students to think creatively. Students must be allowed to think independently and not necessarily conform to traditional methods. Independent thinking develops self-confidence and self-reliance. Consequently, these skills contribute to making students more marketable and competitive in the workplace. Independence and non-traditional thinking can result in creating a vision and viable solutions which are so desperately needed for our great nation.

### **THE GOOD HUMOR MAN/WOMAN**

Too often, presentations are a recitation of boring facts and power points slides that zonk the audience into oblivion. Professors need to challenge themselves into spicing up the delivery of material, ideally by linking humor to a current event and/or key concept. You need not be a stand up comedian like Steve Martin or Larry the Cable Guy to engage an audience, but a little humor, especially if it is self-deprecating, is a wonderful tool in opening up the lines of communication with students. Humor used in good taste not only allows the presenter to connect with the audience, it can put both the audience and presenter at ease. This can make for an effective presentation and contribute to a student's receptivity of material.

### **THE CONCLUSION**

The challenge in this discussion is to inspire university professors to continually evaluate and improve classroom presentations. Students mimic the actions of their professors. Professors who provide professional and effective classroom presentations are successfully contributing to their student's preparation and performance in the workplace. Effective classroom communication, both written and oral, should utilize a variety of presentation tools, skills, and protocols. Moreover, professors can improve their own presentations by allowing students to present and critique through both formal and informal venues.

The curative approach presented in this paper is not new, nor is it innovative. However, it does identify the inconsistent implementation of basic communication skills inside the classroom. Having an increased awareness of the necessity for students to acquire these much needed skills, the time is now for the professor to evaluate his/her current teaching pedagogy to not only reflect a continued commitment to quality, but a commitment to providing students the tools necessary for employment. Seasoned instructors know the value of these skills and the potential harsh realities facing ill-prepared students in the workplace. By infusing these lessons back into the classroom, academicians can better prepare students to communicate, and hence, compete more effectively. In today's challenged economy, it is important to note now, more than ever, that a college education is much more than just a college degree.

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## **MBA: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

J. Duncan Herrington, Radford University

### **ABSTRACT**

*In the U.S., the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) degree has become the hallmark of distinction for people seeking advanced positions in organizations. However, few realize that business as a formal field of study has been in existence only a little over one hundred years, the first 50 of which generated very little interest. This manuscript provides a brief history of the MBA as it has evolved over the last one hundred years and describes the characteristics of the MBA as it currently exists. Also provided is a discussion of several trends which are likely to shape the MBA of the future.*

### **A SLOW START**

While not the first to offer business courses, Harvard University is credited with establishing the first business program in the U.S. exclusively for college graduates (Harvard Guide, 2004). What began in 1908 at Harvard University as a 5-year experiment with 59 students has matured into one of the most popular graduate degree programs in the U.S. However, interest in graduate degrees in business grew slowly during the first half of the twentieth century. Only 110 MBA degrees were conferred in 1910 and no more than 4,335 were awarded in 1949 (Daniel, 1998). While M.S. and M.A. degrees were offered during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most were replaced with the MBA degree by 1950 (Daniel, 1998).

Between 1950 and 1975 the MBA underwent tremendous growth in the U.S. During this time the number of MBA degrees conferred increased to over 40,000 per year and the number of MBA programs grew by approximately 500 (Daniel, 1998). By 2006, approximately 146,000 Master's degrees in business were awarded in the U.S. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). That number represents 25 percent of all Master's degrees conferred in the U.S. during 2006; in popularity, the MBA had become second only to Master's degrees in education.

### **A CURRICULUM TAKES FORM**

The initial curriculum offered at Harvard University consisted of three required courses – Principles of Accounting, Commercial Contracts, and Economic Resources of the U.S. – and a set of electives including Banking and Finance and Railway Accounting among others (Daniel, 1998). In the early days, MBA curricula varied widely from one institution to the next. In his analysis of MBA program curricula (circa 1910) Daniel (1998) identified a total of thirty distinct categories of

courses offered. The most common subject areas were accounting, banking, consular science, corporation finance, foreign trade, geography or “resources,” insurance, investment, law, transportation, journalism, and public finance or taxation. Less common of the time were courses on the subjects of government, labor, marketing, organization, business policy, and production/manufacturing. Despite early diversity, MBA curricula settled into a more consistent set of course work by the 1950s (Daniel, 1998).

Formal efforts to develop curriculum standards for business education can be traced as far back as 1925 when the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) outlined a set of subjects expected to be covered in business programs: accounting, statistics, business law, finance and marketing (Flesher, 2007). AACSB expanded the list to include economics and production or industrial management in 1949 and introduced several additional subjects over the next 30 years (i.e., international, behavioral management, ethics, management information systems, computer science). For many years, the subjects listed above served to guide the curricula of both undergraduate and graduate business programs. In 1991, AACSB developed a separate set of curriculum standards for MBA programs.

Traditionally, most MBA curricula have required course work equivalent to a two-year program: the first year consisting of a set of core courses and the second of advanced course work. Core courses have typically included subjects found in an undergraduate business program. Advanced course work (sometimes referred to as “beyond the core”) have generally consisted of broader topics and, where allowed, elective courses.

Standards with respect to the duration and minimum credit hours of MBA programs have evolved over time. As early as 1963, AACSB standards posited no specific minimum time or credit hour requirements for core course work yet expected MBA programs to require a minimum of two semesters of graduate course work beyond the core. In 1969, AACSB set the minimum requirement for core course work at one year and further defined the requirement for advanced course work to be the equivalent of 24 semester credit hours. The expectation that the core should involve one year’s worth of course work was relaxed to 20 hours in 1975 for core course work taken at the graduate level.

In 1977, AACSB further defined the one-year requirement for core course work taken at the undergraduate level to mean 30 hours. By 1991, AACSB standards with respect to MBA curricula specified a minimum of 18 semester credit hours of core course work if taken at the graduate level and a minimum of 30 semester credit hours beyond the core with at least 18 hours in subjects outside any area of specialization. The standards adopted by AACSB in 2003 are less specific in terms of time and credit hour requirements, stating only that undergraduate and graduate degree programs “must provide sufficient time, content coverage, student effort, and student-faculty interaction to assure that the learning goals are accomplished” (AACSB, 2003, p. 16 & 17).

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## TO SPECIALIZE OR NOT TO SPECIALIZE: THAT IS THE QUESTION

A debate over whether the MBA degree should focus strictly on general skills or allow students to specialize has raged for many years (Daniel, 1998). One side of the debate argues that MBA curricula should focus exclusively on general skills which help students develop intellectual and reasoning abilities (e.g., Rahder & Porter, 1983). The other camp posits that even at higher levels of management MBA graduates must be able to manage specific functional areas, thus requiring specialized knowledge (e.g., Hunt & Speck, 1986). In 1969, AACSB developed standards regarding the proportion of course work to be taken outside the area of specialization.

Steele and Ward (1974) conducted a survey of MBA graduates receiving their degrees as far back as 1947 and found that many pursued concentrations in accounting, finance, marketing, production or general management. MBA students and at least some corporate recruiters seem to favor at least moderate levels of specialization (Hunt & Speck, 1986). However, recent research indicates that employers may now favor a more general MBA (Gupta, Saunders & Smith, 2007).

## THE PUNDITS WEIGH IN

Over the years, the MBA has come under fire from many different perspectives. Initially, the field of commerce was seen by many in academia as inferior compared to classic fields of study and too vocational in nature (Daniel, 1998). Two reports published in 1959, one by Pierson (funded through the Ford Foundation) and the other by Gordon and Howell (funded by the Carnegie Corporation), were critical of the quality of students admitted to business programs and business curricula in general among other things. More recently, critics of the MBA have noted that programs were not addressing important topics such as global trade, ethics, quality, leadership or the effects organizations have on society as a whole (Cheit, 1985).

In general, MBA graduates have been criticized as being too focused on the short-term financial aspects of business, not focused enough on the human side of business, and lacking in the communication, interpersonal and team-building skills needed in business organizations (e.g., Eberhardt, McGee & Moser, 1997; Windsor & Tuggle, 1982). Some of the more common complaints of the MBA offered by recruiters and corporate executives have been that MBA programs were too theoretical and disconnected with day-to-day business operations and that many students graduate with an MBA degree having no practical work experience and/or exposure to industry (e.g., Kane, 1993; Waddock, 1991).

## ARE WE THERE YET?

In summary, the MBA began the 20<sup>th</sup> century with perhaps more critics than students. Curriculum standards were slow to take form but gradually have reached a point where most MBA

programs today are probably more similar than not and specialization remains to be a topic of debate. The quality of MBA graduates and their salaries continue to rise as more and more top executives (including the current President of the United States, George W. Bush) hold an MBA degree. Perhaps not yet perfect, the MBA has come a long way in its first hundred years in existence.

The purpose of this manuscript is to report on the current structure and curricula of MBA degree programs in the U.S. This study is unique in that, unlike previous research, the data were gathered from a census rather than a sample of MBA programs: a total of 923 in all. Despite diligent search, no single source providing a complete listing of all MBA programs could be found. Instead, a variety of sources were used including the AACSB membership roster, Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges and several Internet-based college directories (e.g., collegiateguide.com). The data used in this analysis were collected from program websites and/or graduate catalogs and bulletins between June and December, 2006 based on fall 2006 program structure and curricula. The following section provides an overview of the current characteristics of MBA degree programs offered in the U.S. and is presented in the form of frequently asked questions (FAQ).

## **FAQS ABOUT THE MBA DEGREE**

### **Where is your MBA program located?**

As of fall 2006 there were 833 different MBA-granting institutions (colleges, universities) in the U.S. offering 923 distinctively different full- and/or part-time traditional MBA programs. Given that Executive MBA programs tend to follow a non-traditional format and curriculum and cater to non-traditional markets (Syed, 2006) it was decided to exclude such programs from this analysis.

The MBA degree was offered in all 50 states and the District of Columbia with California having the largest number of MBA-granting institutions (74) and Montana offering the fewest (1). On a per capita basis (the number of MBA-granting institutions per state population), Montana had the lowest number of MBA degree-granting institutions per capita (1 per 935,670 residents) and the District of Columbia the highest (1 for every 68,815 residents). Table 1 provides a count of MBA degree-granting institutions by state.

### **Do you offer an Executive MBA and is your program available online?**

Of U.S. institutions that offered the traditional MBA degree, 172 also offered a separate Executive MBA program and 165 offered a complete MBA degree via some form of distance learning. The later number does not include approximately 17 institutions which participated in one of three known state-wide Internet-based MBA consortiums (i.e., Texas, Georgia and Wisconsin).

**Table 1: MBA Degree-Granting Institutions by Location in the U.S.**

State	Number of Institutions	State	Number of Institutions	State	Number of Institutions
AK	4	KY	12	NY	52
AL	17	LA	12	OH	33
AR	8	MA	25	OK	14
AZ	10	MD	14	OR	11
CA	74	ME	4	PA	44
CO	13	MI	23	RI	5
CT	12	MN	15	SC	10
DC	8	MO	23	SD	4
DE	5	MS	10	TN	21
FL	36	MT	1	TX	51
GA	24	NC	25	UT	8
HI	4	ND	3	VA	26
IA	10	NE	7	VT	4
ID	3	NH	8	WA	14
IL	37	NJ	17	WI	13
IN	24	NM	6	WV	7
KS	15	NV	4	WY	3
Total					833

### **Is your MBA program accredited and what are your admission requirements?**

Approximately 51 percent of the 833 MBA-granting institutions were accredited by AACSB with the remaining institutions either accredited by another national or regional association or not at all. Of the 923 MBA programs available in the U.S., 75 percent required the Graduate Management Admission test (GMAT) for admission. The remaining MBA programs either did not require the GMAT or considered it to be optional under certain conditions. All but two of the programs offered by institutions holding AACSB accreditation required the GMAT for admission and approximately 46 percent of programs at institutions not accredited by AACSB required students to take the GMAT. Approximately 13 percent of MBA programs required or recommended that applicants possess a minimal level of work experience ranging in duration from one to 5 years.

With respect to admission requirements for international students, 62 percent of MBA programs required international applicants to score a minimum of 550 on the Test of English as a

Foreign Language (TOEFL) to be eligible for admission. However, approximately 14 percent of MBA programs accepted TOEFL scores as low as 450 and 24 percent required applicant TOEFL scores as high as 620.

### **How long does it take to complete your MBA program?**

While the data collected for this study are perhaps the most complete to date, it should be noted that course information was not available for thirteen programs. In addition, the published curriculum for 45 modular programs, a format first introduced in the 1970s, was so highly integrated (disaggregated) as to prohibit a count or listing of subjects/courses. Because some institutions use a quarter-hour system, data for those programs were converted to an approximate semester-hour equivalent. In the event complete information was not available for a program, case-wise deletion was used.

Of the 886 MBA programs for which total program hours was available, approximately 27 percent ranged from 43 to 48 semester credit hours in length and about 26 percent ranged from 49 to 54 semester hours. The most frequently observed value for total program length was 48 semester hours and the average for all programs was approximately 53 hours with a standard deviation of 8.4 and a median of 52. The low end of the range was 30 semester hours and the highest for the programs included in this analysis was 76. Table 2 provides a count of MBA degree programs by total required credit hours.

Credit hours	Count	%
30 to 36	33	3.7
37 to 42	71	8.1
43 to 48	235	26.7
49 to 54	225	25.5
55 to 60	176	20.0
61 to 66	104	11.8
67 to 72	30	3.4
73 or more	12	1.4
Total	886	

Note. Credit hours are expressed in terms of semester credit hours.

### What courses will I be required to take?

Historically, MBA course work has been divided into two groups: core and beyond the core (advanced). Core courses are typically taken at the undergraduate level prior to admittance (a.k.a. prerequisite courses) or at the onset of the program as graduate level courses. Approximately 74 percent of all MBA programs in the U.S. specified a set of core courses or prerequisites ranging from two semester credit hours to a high of 32. Some MBA programs offered graduate level courses which combine two or more core subjects into a single course. Common combinations included: management and marketing; financial and managerial accounting; and micro- and macro-economics. A limited number of programs offered core courses on a non-credit basis and therefore did not contribute to total required credit hours reported above. Because the distinction between core and beyond-the-core is difficult to make for many programs, the following analysis is based on all required course work regardless of whether it was designated as a prerequisite, core or advanced course and without regard to whether the course was to be taken at the undergraduate or graduate level.

The minimum number of semester hours of required (as opposed to elective) MBA coursework was 15 and the maximum was 75 with an average of 42 credit hours and a standard deviation of 9.2. Almost half of all MBA programs had 37 to 48 semester hours of required course work and 28 percent required 25 to 36 hours (see Table 3). By and large, the type of courses required among current MBA programs is rather consistent. The five types of courses most frequently required in U.S. MBA programs are: accounting, marketing, finance, economics, and management (see Table 4). In terms of depth, approximately 66 percent of programs required two or more accounting courses, 42 percent required two or more courses in economics, 40 percent required two courses in finance and 33 percent required two courses in marketing.

**Table 3: Credit Hours of Required Courses Among U.S. MBA Programs**

Credit hours	Count	%
0 to 12	0	0.0
13 to 24	30	3.5
25 to 36	241	27.9
37 to 48	426	49.3
49 to 60	171	19.8
61 or more	16	1.9

Note. Credit hours are expressed in terms of semester credit hours.

**Table 4: Required MBA Course Work by Subject**

Subject	Number of Courses Required							
	1	%	2	%	3+	%	Total	%
Accounting	276	32.1	469	54.5	96	11.1	841	97.7
Marketing	551	64.0	280	32.5			831	96.5
Finance	485	56.3	341	39.6			826	95.9
Economics	417	48.4	294	34.1	70	8.1	781	90.7
Management	528	61.3	196	22.8			724	84.1
Strategy	716	83.2	8	0.9			724	84.1
CIS/MIS	499	58.0	104	12.1			603	70.0
Statistics	465	54.0	78	9.1	8	0.9	551	64.0
Operations Management	504	58.5	19	2.2			523	60.7
Math	388	45.1	119	13.8	4	0.5	511	59.3
Business Law	430	49.9	10	1.2			440	51.1
International	299	34.7	4	0.5			303	35.2
Leadership	274	31.8					274	31.8
Communication	233	27.1	6	0.7			239	27.8
Ethics	199	23.1					199	23.1
HRM	122	14.2	2	0.2			124	14.4
Research	102	11.8					102	11.8
Technology	69	8.0					69	8.0
Entrepreneurship	58	6.7					58	6.7
Business Environment	49	5.7					49	5.7
Society	39	4.5					39	4.5
Professional Development	37	4.3					37	4.3
Career Development	33	3.8					33	3.8
Innovation/Creativity	33	3.8					33	3.8
Change	32	3.7					32	3.7
Competition	32	3.7					32	3.7
Supply Chain	29	3.4					29	3.4
Project Management	26	3.0					26	3.0
Teamwork	26	3.0					26	3.0
Negotiation	21	2.4					21	2.4
Business Plans	19	2.2					19	2.2

Subject	Number of Courses Required							
	1	%	2	%	3+	%	Total	%
Consulting	18	2.1					18	2.1
E-business	17	2.0					17	2.0
Culture	15	1.7					15	1.7
Conflict	11	1.3					11	1.3
Government	10	1.2					10	1.2
Quality	10	1.2					10	1.2

Note. Only courses appearing among one percent or more of programs are listed.  
Note. Percentages represent proportion of programs requiring the number of courses in each subject. For example, 32 percent of all MBA programs require one course in accounting.

Some of the most frequently occurring titles among required courses in accounting included Financial Accounting, Managerial Accounting, Cost Accounting or some variation of these. Common titles for required economics courses were Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, and Managerial Economics. Course titles in finance were predominantly Corporate Finance, Financial Management or Managerial Finance. Most titles for required marketing courses were either Principles or Essentials of Marketing at the core level and Marketing Management or Strategy at the advanced level. The titles given to required management courses were rather diverse. However, Organizational Behavior occurred most frequently and was sometimes used in conjunction with Human Resources, Leadership or Communication. The topics of ethics and leadership often appeared in the titles of other required courses as well.

A review of the titles of the remaining required MBA courses listed in Table 4 provides insight into what subjects MBA programs considered to be important and which ones were not. For example, law/legal environment, a topic which served for many years as a basic curriculum component of MBA programs, was required in slightly more than half of all programs. The topics of leadership, communication, ethics and human resources occurred most frequently as components of broader courses with less than a third of programs requiring separate courses in any of the four areas. It is also interesting to note that over one-third of programs did not have a math requirement and slightly under one-third of the programs did not require a course in statistics. In fact, 11 percent of MBA programs required neither math nor statistics course work.

### **Does your MBA program offer specialization?**

With respect to elective course work, 16 percent of programs consisted exclusively of required courses (Table 5). The remaining 84 percent allowed anywhere from 2 to 42 semester hours

of elective credits. Of the 745 programs with elective credits, the average number of credit hours taken as electives was 13 with a standard deviation of 7. The most common number of elective semester hours found among MBA programs was 9 followed by 12.

Credit hours	Count	%
0	140	15.9
1 to 3	30	4.0
4 to 6	100	13.5
7 to 9	196	26.4
10 to 12	190	25.6
13 to 15	57	7.7
16 to 18	59	8.0
19 to 21	29	3.9
22 or more	84	11.3

Note. Credit hours are expressed in terms of semester credit hours.

Over half of all MBA programs (57 percent) allowed students to pursue a specialization/concentration. The most frequently offered specializations were: Finance, Marketing, CIS/MIS, International Business, General Management and Accounting (see Table 6). Several programs offered specializations which focus on specific industries such as healthcare and real estate. The number of different concentrations available to students in MBA degree programs in the U.S. ranged from 1 to 21. The number of hours required for a concentration ranged from a low of 3 credit hours to a high of 25. The majority of programs (approximately 80 percent) offering concentrations required 9 or 12 hours for a concentration (see Table 7). Some programs (65) offered concentrations which required completion of additional credit hours above and beyond the minimum required for the degree.

Title	Count
Finance	457
Marketing	390
CIS/MIS	312
International Business	308

**Table 6: Most Frequently Offered Concentrations Among U.S. MBA Programs**

Title	Count
Management	306
Accounting	288
HRM	167
Entrepreneurship	147
Operations	80
Leadership	68
Economics	58
E-business/E-commerce	56
Supply Chain	51
Project Management	29
Tax	20
Quality	11
Law	12

**Table 7: Credit Hour Requirements for Concentrations among U.S. MBA Programs**

Credit hours	Count	%
3	2	0.4
4 to 6	30	6.4
7 to 9	190	40.3
10 to 12	185	39.2
13 to 15	37	7.8
16 to 18	19	4.0
20 or more	9	1.9

Note. Credit hours are expressed in terms of semester credit hours.

Another way of describing the extent to which an MBA program is general or specific is by the percentage of the program devoted to required coursework. Table 8 provides a breakdown of MBA programs by level of emphasis placed on required (general) as opposed to elective

(specialized) course work. Approximately 80 percent of MBA programs devoted over two-thirds of coursework to general required subjects.

Percentage devoted to required course work	Count	%
33 to 38	4	0.5
40 to 49	22	2.5
50 to 59	54	6.1
60 to 69	105	11.9
70 to 79	204	23.1
80 to 89	305	34.5
90 to 99	50	5.7
100	140	15.8

Note. Credit hours are expressed in terms of semester credit hours.

### **WHAT IS IN STORE FOR THE NEXT 100 YEARS?**

The MBA came into existence in 1908 with one program and 59 students but had grown to over 923 programs graduating approximately 146,000 students by 2006. At the time of this study, the MBA was available in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and was provided in traditional classroom settings, virtual classrooms or some combination of the two. Early on, MBA programs differed widely in terms of content. Today, there seems to be much greater consistency in curricula among MBA programs available in the U.S. compared to one hundred years ago. The required subjects of accounting, marketing, finance, economics, management and strategy were almost universal. However, the duration (required credit hours) of MBA programs varies widely. Specialization by way of concentrations were offered by just over half of all MBA programs yet required course work constituted the bulk of the curriculum for most programs.

It can be seen that much has changed in its first hundred years of existence, but what does the future hold for the MBA? Several articles have been published in recent years discussing things to come for the MBA. Some have predicted continued glowing success while others have predicted a swift and sudden demise. The crystal ball may be a bit murky, but here are a few observations regarding current events that may affect the MBA in the near term.

First, it would appear that the traditional MBA has reached or is close to reaching market saturation. This may perhaps explain the increasing number of institutions offering Executive MBA programs – a nontraditional format catering to nontraditional markets – as well as the large number of MBA degree programs being delivered at extended sites (e.g., corporate locations) and/or via

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distance learning formats. In their recent article, Acito, McDougal and Smith (2008) identified several trends likely to affect the growth and development of the MBA including: a greater proportion of students completing the MBA degree on a part-time basis; increasing competition from MBA programs located in foreign countries; a decrease in the number of international students seeking MBA degrees in the U.S.; and growing acceptance of online delivery.

With respect to undergraduate post-secondary education, business is by far the most popular subject of study in the U.S. with approximately 318,000 having received undergraduate business degrees during the 2005-2006 academic year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). As such, holding an MBA degree may become an increasingly important way for graduates to differentiate themselves in a crowded employment market.

Increasingly, post-secondary institutions are being held accountable for demonstrating that their undergraduate and graduate programs are delivering intended results. Regional and national accrediting agencies such as Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) are now requiring business programs to not only develop standards for learning but also measure and report student success. Perhaps one of the biggest changes to the standards currently used by the AACSB regarding maintenance of member accreditation is the requirement to maintain an ongoing program of assurance of learning. Consequently, it is likely that MBA curricula will continue to evolve as programs seek to improve student learning. If the past is any indication of the future, the next 100 years should be an interesting era for the MBA degree.

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# THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE CONTROVERSIAL: THE PRACTICALITIES AND PITFALLS OF THE GRADING OF CLASS PARTICIPATION

Jeffrey A. Mello, Barry University

## ABSTRACT

*Three things in life are certain; death, taxes and the fact that management educators all have an opinion, usually a strong one, regarding the grading of class participation. There appears to be three different “camps” on the issue. The first consists of those who firmly believe in the merits of graded class participation and not only practice it, but swear by such practice. The second consists of those who absolutely abhor and not only see no value to it but argue passionately against it. The third consists of those who see it as a necessary evil and reluctantly engage in it due to departmental or college standards or mandates. However, even those who fall into the first category as staunch advocates of grading class participation will admit that the process involves challenges and even results in some ongoing uneasiness for them. This paper explores the issue of grading class participation relative to its alleged pros and cons and areas of uneasiness and presents some alternative strategies for and variations of graded class participation and identifies design issues and caveats that need to be considered when implementing graded participation.*

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of student involvement and participation in the learning process is rooted in the Socratic Method of inquiry, traceable back to the times of Plato and Socrates. It is utilized to facilitate the development of critical thinking skills, particularly related to conceptually complex or controversial issues. Indeed the Socratic Method has provided the foundation for classroom instruction in law and other disciplines as well as been widely applied in various modes of organizational training (Maxwell, 2007). Researchers have been attempting to determine the impact of class discussion and participation on learning and performance since as early as 1925. These early studies found no significant relationship between levels of participation and test scores but a significant relationship between levels of participation and the ability to recall material several months after its presentation (Bane, 1925). Numerous subsequent studies over the years have attempted to assess the impact of class participation on learning as well as determine factors that affect levels of participation, as will be discussed herein.

Many of the more recent studies of class participation have focused on participation as a critical component of shifting learner-centered teaching paradigms. As instructional methodologies

have evolved from the traditional lecture, which encompasses passive learning, to more active learning pedagogies in which students participate, more attention has been paid to the role of class participation on learning. Indeed, it has been argued that grading class participation is consistent with and reinforces the popular paradigm of teaching that focuses on active learning and student development (Manzer and Rassuli, 2005; Dallimore, Hertenstein and Platt, 2006).

Such ideas are premised on the assumption that academic performance can not and should not exclusively be measured simply by assessments of the quality of written work turned in. The reason for this is that not everything learned in class will appear on exams or form the basis for assignments (Marnola, 2005) and more so, class participation is “live” and, as a result, can’t be faked or plagiarized. Indeed class participation requires that students be actively, rather than passively, involved and engaged in the learning process (Halgas and Stoner, 2007). Within the management disciplines class participation has become somewhat of a norm. Assessment of class participation is almost ubiquitous in management courses, especially the capstone strategy course. One survey found that 94.3% of respondents evaluated class participation in undergraduate management classes (O’Neill, Snyder and Townsend, 1986). Another reported that 93 percent of core curriculum courses included class participation as a component of course grades, even though the assessments were used in some cases as a “fudge factor,” where a student’s final borderline course grade was ultimately decided based on their participation (Bean and Peterson, 1998). Clearly the popularity of grading class participation merits a close look at the factors which affect it as well as the controversies and issue surrounding its use.

### CRITICISMS

Despite this proliferation of graded class participation in management education, many criticisms of the process have been levied. Among the most prominent of these criticisms is the fact that the grading of class participation is highly subjective and the interpretation of student behavior can be difficult (Bean and Peterson, 1998). In addition to this subjectivity, it has been argued that grading class participation also requires a very diligent and systematic tracking and recording system which can be cumbersome and time-consuming to design and implement (Lord and Melvin, 1994). Some have gone to so far to characterize this inherent subjectivity as means of behavioral control and manipulation and an abuse of power by faculty (Gilson, 1994).

As passionate as these assertions may be, it is important to recognize that while the grading of participation can be highly subjective, the nature of performance feedback that students will encounter in the real world is similarly highly subjective. More so, “performance” relative to class participation is probably one of the truest measures of actual performance that instructors have relative to other means of grading students due to its focus on behavior. Combine this with the fact that the grading of most written work submitted by students is similarly highly subjective. The only difference between graded class participation and graded written work is that with graded class

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participation there is generally no evidence available after the fact for disputes of grades (Bean and Peterson, 1998), unless the participation took place in an online environment and has been archived. These factors greatly weaken the argument against the grading of class participation due to its subjectivity.

A second criticism of graded class participation is that it can be intimidating to certain students whose personalities usually render them into more passive modes of interaction (Bean and Peterson, 1998; Manzer and Rassuli, 2005). Indeed, it has been argued that grading participation does not reward learning, per se, but rather rewards those who possess the ability and willingness to verbalize their learning (Gilson, 1994). It has been further noted that while graded participation is a “useful pedagogy,” it suffers from the problems that 1) some students still fail to prepare adequately for class and 2) some students prepare but are unable to communicate this readiness to the instructor (Litz, 2003). More so, participation-intensive classes can often turn into high-pressure environments where students compete/fight to get appropriate “air time” (Litz, 2003). In larger classes it may simply be next to impossible for students to get sufficient “air time” as well due to the sheer numbers of students who may be waiting to be called on by the instructor.

While these criticisms do have some validity, they need to be considered within the context of the realities of the workplace. Those employees who are most prone to be noticed by management and “get ahead” are those who are active and contributing participants in the work of their units and able to lead/influence others. Class participation is an exceptional means of preparing students for the realities they will encounter in their workplaces. Indeed, one of the key jobs of management educators is to create a classroom environment conducive to sharing, risk taking, debate and developing interpersonal communication and persuasion skills.

A third criticism of graded participation is the assertion that many cultures, particularly those of Eastern/Asian societies, don't promote active involvement in learning but, rather passive compliance. Confucian principles see teachers as “givers of knowledge” with that knowledge considered a gift to students and acknowledged as such. More so, the strict respect and reverence which many cultures advocate for teachers implies that a teacher is not to be challenged and that questions should not be asked for fear of insulting the teacher as well as embarrassing the student and class. The educational systems of such societies do not encourage or even condone participation, hence students are not provided with the skills necessary to articulate their learning or effectively participate in class (Manzer and Rassuli, 2005). Adding to this challenge is the fact that, for some students, participation is stifled further by being brought up in a country or society where citizens are fearful of government surveillance and retribution for their words or actions (Simpson, 2002).

This criticism of graded class participation is probably the most salient as it forces an instructor to question value systems as well as the responsibility of the instructor toward understanding and accommodating cultural differences. Many, of course, can adopt the “when in Rome” mindset and argue that students from other cultures have chosen to study in America due to

perceptions of both the value and perceived superiority over the kind of instruction they would receive in their homelands. Because American culture is more active than passive, it can be argued that these students seek the benefits of studying in such a culture. More so, these students retain the opportunity to salvage their course grades via other components of final grades, such as exams and papers. As ethnocentric as such an argument may be, there is validity to and strong support for it (Sootiens, 2004). Regardless, an instructor still needs to consider the ethical dimensions of forced, graded participation on students who are not prepared for such an environment.

On a more moderate level, it can be argued that students from other cultures, whether they actively participate in class or not, still benefit from hearing the experiences and opinions of their classmates. Indeed, active learning strategies are based on the premise that students can contribute greatly to the learning of their peers through a sharing of their own experiences and points of view. More so, as will be explained later, the grading of class participation can take many different forms and need not consist solely of individual spoken expression in front of classmates.

A fourth criticism of graded participation is that it can provide very little “value added” to a class, particularly if students are focused on the quantity rather than the quality of their participation. Indeed, participation can often involve the counterproductive norm of simply talking rather than demonstrated thinking (Gioia, 1991). It can also impact class dynamics if not managed properly, as students who talk excessively in class become thought of as “rate busters,” who raise the instructor’s expectations for the remainder of the class (Karp and Yoels, 1976). This is particularly true if participation is graded on a relative basis but also holds true if participation is graded on an absolute basis.

The lack of “value added” criticism of class participation can be quite true but, more than any of the other criticisms, is one of over which instructors have total control. In posing questions to the class, instructors can ask thought, synthesis, and application questions rather than those which focus strictly on recall or restatement. More so, an instructor can easily define what is expected and to be rewarded relative to class participation by providing specific behavioral examples in a course syllabus. Indeed, one of the chief concerns that students express relative to the grading of class participation is that they are unaware of what constitutes acceptable participation for the instructor. Some students simply assume that attendance is participation while others may assume that any verbal input to the class constitutes participation. Instructors not only have an obligation to define and provide specific behavioral examples of what constitutes meritorious participation in their minds, but doing so weakens the criticism of participation providing limited or no value added.

## **BENEFITS**

To counter many of the criticisms of graded class participation, numerous benefits have been cited that derive from grading class participation. The first benefit reported is that graded class participation generally results in better prepared students. Because one can truly only participate

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if one prepares for class, the grading of class participation sends a strong message about the importance of and need for preparing for each class session. Grading participation results in improved class discussion through enhanced preparation (Reinsch and Wambsganss, 1994; Dallimore, Hertenstein and Platt, 2004). Graduate business students have reported that the quality of participation and effectiveness of discussion were enhanced by making participation required/graded (Dallimore, Hertenstein and Platt, 2004).

The second benefit is that graded class participation encourages students to share their personal experiences, facilitating real-world learning and application of material. While this may hold true more for graduate than undergraduate students, all undergraduate students consider verbal participation in class to be essential as an aid to their own learning process (Fritschner, 2000). Students with any kind of work experience can provide application of course concepts or discussion points that are grounded in the reality of the workplace. This not only facilitates deeper learning on the part of classmates but allows instructors to learn from their students as well and gain a better connection to the real world, creating a true learning environment.

A third benefit of graded participation is that it prepares students for “participation” on the job. This is true relative to the development of a variety of skills and preparation for various participative management practices, including, but not limited to, verbal presentations, career advancement, teamwork and interpersonal communication skills, peer evaluations and multi-rater (360 degree) feedback. The particular value of encouraging student participation in the classroom is that the risk factors associated with possible penalties for errors are much lower in the classroom than they are in most organizational settings. Participation allows students to develop more confidence, practice researching their points and being prepared to rebut challenges with facts and data, and point out flaws in the logic of counter arguments. Indeed, students generally do not take examinations (except for licensure) on the job; they are evaluated based on their behavior, contribution and outcomes.

Many studies have argued the merits of graded participation relative to workplace preparation. One study found that active class participation strengthens public speaking skills, in addition to facilitating class cohesion and helping instructors identify material which students may be having difficulty comprehending (Zaremba and Dunn, 2004). Another found the direct benefits of graded participation to include the development of critical thinking, active learning and listening skills (Bean and Peterson, 1998). Even one of the more vocal critics of graded class participation has admitted that it reflects the real world of management practice where verbal presentation and articulation of arguments are important skills (Gilson, 1994).

In tandem with the benefit of preparation for the realities of the workplace but deserving of special mention is the fact that graded class participation facilitates the development of critical communication skills, which hiring managers frequently cite as one of the most sought-after skill sets for the hiring of entry and mid-level jobs. Grading class participation has been found to help satisfy the demand of employers for graduates with better communication as well as interpersonal

skills (Smith, 1994). This is, in part, due to the fact that participation requires students to listen to others as well as voice their own opinions and positions (Manzer and Rassuli, 2005). Indeed, AACSB-International has cited “communication abilities” at the top of its list of knowledge and skills areas to be evaluated for assurance of learning (AACSB, 2007).

A fifth benefit of graded class participation is its focus on behavioral outcomes, which are less readily available for measure and feedback than other traditional methods of assessing performance in the classroom. Indeed, outcomes of class participation include an increasing motivation to learn and focus on the student’s individual responsibility for learning (Le Brun and Johnstone, 1994). More so, instructors can explain, model and reinforce sought-after participation-related behaviors and provide more measured and regular feedback on this dimension of performance than can be provided by examinations or written papers.

A sixth benefit of graded participation is that it teaches students to “think on their feet,” which is often necessary in an employment setting when dealing with supervisors, co-workers and customers. Students are able to assume a greater role in and responsibility for their learning as graded class participation encourages active learning in the classroom (Smith, 1994). This is particularly true in situations where an instructor utilizes “cold calling” as a means of engaging students to participate (Dallimore, Hertenstein and Platt, 2004).

Another benefit of graded participation is the simple fact that class participation can't be faked. In order to participate students need to attend class and verbally demonstrate their learning. There is a voluminous literature on the prevalence of academic dishonesty, which including cheating on exams, plagiarism and simply purchasing or obtaining the work of others to be submitted as one’s own (Evans, Trevino and Weaver, 2006; McCabe, Trevino and Butterfield, 2001; Jendrek, 1989). Indeed, management education relies heavily on out-of-class work that is to be submitted for a grade and numerous studies have documented the questionable ethics of many business students, both at the undergraduate and graduate level. Participation affords no opportunities for academic dishonesty.

A final but generally unacknowledged benefit of graded participation is its value as a diversity initiative. By encouraging the participation of students from diverse backgrounds, the depth of learning can be enhanced by considering different viewpoints and experiences on an issue or subject. As an example, certainly any discussion of ethical beliefs, which are often grounded in religious, societal and/or ethnic values, can be enhanced by the contribution of diverse points of view. However, as mentioned previously, some cultures stress very passive compliance in the classroom so mere physical presence in classroom is insufficient to allow students to fully take advantage of this learning opportunity. Indeed a lack of participation in diverse classroom settings reinforces majority status of gender, race, class, etc. However, if facilitated and managed appropriately, class participation can greatly enhance learning by providing a deeper understanding of diversity.

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## WHAT WE KNOW

In light of the above benefits and criticisms, in order to more fully understand how to best utilize graded class participation for maximum effectiveness it is useful to take a look at what we know about class participation. Numerous empirical studies have examined participation relative to a variety of variables and provide a very rich evidence-based literature to consider.

First, perceptions of what constitutes participation differ among students. “Talkers” define participation as voluntarily speaking out whereas quieter students define participation much more broadly, to include attendance, active listening, sitting in their seats, completing assignments and being prepared for class (Fritschner, 2000). Students also believe that non-traditional students have better opportunities to participate because they have more to offer in terms of the experience they bring to the classroom (Fritschner, 2000). These facts certainly have implications for instructors relative to the need to define participation for class as well as offer examples of the types of participation that are to be valued. In addition, even in small classes, only a few students tend to participate and in classes of all sizes, students became irritated with peers who were especially talkative (Karp and Yoels, 1976). In general, three to five students account for 50-75% of all student comments in any given class, regardless of size (Howard, Short and Clark, 1996). This has obvious implications for the need to prevent domination by individual students and ensure that a variety of students are allowed to participate.

Second, there are factors that clearly correlate with the level of participation in classrooms. As role distance between students and instructors decreases, participation increases. Participation also increases with the number of years in college (Auster and MacRone, 1994). Increased participation becomes apparent as the semester progresses and the impact of a student’s age on verbal participation is far more pronounced than that of gender. Confirming the beliefs that non-traditional students have enhanced opportunities for participation, a greater percentage of nontraditional students than traditional students participates in class discussions (Howard, Short and Clark, 1996; Fritschner, 2000). Relative to the type of participation, student-initiated discussion is the most frequent means of participation in upper-level courses while for lower-level classes, instructor-initiated questions form the basis for the majority of participation (Fritschner, 2000).

Third, there are numerous reasons why students may fail to participate in class. Among them are 1) the fear of being ridiculed by other students; 2) larger classes sizes, which inhibit participation; 3) an aversive instructor; 4) the inability of the instructor to facilitate participation effectively; 5) a traditional classroom layout with all students facing the front of the room (and the instructor) ; 6) a lack of student interest in the subject; 7) insufficient sleep the previous night on the part of students; 8) introversion of individual students; and other factors such as room temperature, time of day, and class length (Berdine, 1986). Another study found additional factors that affected non-participation include shyness, classroom dynamics (domineering students) and culture and barriers (Vandrick, 2000).

A number of studies have looked at gender and its role in class participation and yielded varied conclusions. One general study found no statistical gender-based differences in student participation (Hyde and Deal, 2003). Another found that males did not predominate in class discussion, either in rate or participation or weight of contribution (Dillon, 2001) while still another found that females tend to participate more as course levels increase (Fritschner, 2000). Differences in male-female participation can be accounted for by no more complex a factor than male-female presence in the classroom (Dillon, 2001). More instructor-initiated questions, instructor-directed interactions and instructor feedback are given to males than females (She, 2001).

Several studies have found that the medium of communication moderates the relationship between gender and participation. Electronic communication favors women in that the medium gives everyone the same opportunity to “speak” and join the conversation without anyone necessarily dominating the conversation (Finley, 1992; Strauss 1996). Electronic communication, unlike a classroom setting, provides the opportunity for multiple students to participate simultaneously. Also, social cues and physical presence that may allow men to dominate classroom participation are removed in an electronic setting (Rice, 1984; Sproull and Kiesler, 1991; Tannen, 1995).

Female participation in class discussion is enhanced in an internet-based course as collaboration is better facilitated by this medium (Arbaugh, 2000). This is due to the fact that men communicate via the internet in a more competitive mode, designed to elevate their own status or lowering that of others, whereas women see cyberspace as a means to develop increased collaboration and support networks to enhance the learning experience of the entire group (Brunner, 1991; Canada and Bruscha, 1991; Gefen and Straub, 1997; Herring, 1996). This is rooted in gender-based communications theory that finds that men tend to communicate based on social hierarchy and competition whereas women tend to be more network-oriented and collaborative (Kilbourne and Weeks, 1997; Tannen, 1995).

As previously noted, graded class participation has been criticized for showing partiality to Western cultural mores over Eastern traditions of harmony and respect. One significant study examined this dynamic in depth, noting that one of the most visible differences Asian students bring to class is their significantly lower level of class participation (Tani, 2004). Such behavior is rooted in Confucian values which stress the value of harmony over conflict, and of collective versus individual expression. As a result, many students prefer to confer in private with the instructor rather than in front of the class. This is attributable to students’ need to maintain “face,” or the personal dignity of themselves and others. Asking questions during a lecture can be considered disrespectful or threaten the student’s standing in the larger class. Responding to inquiries of understanding from the instructor in the affirmative, regardless of level of understanding, also helps to maintain “face.” Because correctness is a highly desired component of Asian culture and communication, students will do whatever they can to prevent themselves from appearing foolish in class, whether related to the subject matter or grammar or pronunciation. However, this behavior

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appears to be confined to the classroom as, in contrast, most Asian students are very talkative outside of the class and during instructor office hours (Tani, 2004). These results show one dimension of the cultural influences on classroom behavior, notably participation, which must be considered by an instructor who wishes to maximize the pedagogical value of having full participation among students in the classroom.

### AREAS OF UNEASINESS

As noted earlier, even the staunchest advocates of grading participation can struggle with both its content and process. This is largely due to the fact that those who chose to grade participation need to confront four issues; 1) defining participation; 2) managing participation; 3) addressing the subjectivity of participation; and 4) rethinking the role of the instructor in a participation-oriented class.

One frequent criticism of students at the end of a semester is that they have no idea how their participation grade was determined and/or they disagree with the grade they received. Typically this is the result of an assessment by students that their participation merited a higher grade than that assigned by the instructor. Indeed, it has been noted that the lack of clarity on what participation really is and differing interpretations of what constitutes participation can confound grading dilemmas faced by instructors (Cole and Gunz, 1998).

Faculty who choose to grade participation face two issues in this regard; 1) setting appropriate expectations for students by defining good from poor participation and 2) developing a means of measuring the quality of participation that is as free from bias as possible (Lord and Melvin, 1994). It is critical that instructors clearly explain, both in the course syllabus and during the initial class meeting, the criteria that will be used to arrive at a participation grade for each student. Providing a clear explanation of instructor expectations relative to participation can remove erroneous student assumptions that simply showing up for class constitutes participation or that any kind of “talk” is to be considered participation (Helms and Haynes, 1990). Toward this end, it is important to not reward everything that is said but rather acknowledge those points that further a discussion or lead to heightened understanding of a concept (Gioia, 1991). However, there is no prescription as to what should constitute acceptable participation as such decisions should be left to the instructor relative to specific objectives, goals and learning outcomes that have been set for the course.

Once the instructor has defined participation for a class, the next issue that must be addressed is how to effectively manage participation within the classroom. Instructors have tremendous latitude relative to how they manage and control, as well as define participation, and in doing so need to consider the various sources of interaction in the classroom, which include 1) instructor initiated dialog, 2) student initiated dialog, 3) direct questions from the instructor, and 4) offhand comments (Howard, Short and Clark, 1996).

While some instructors may have a set means or strategy for managing participation, others are less comfortable dealing with classroom dynamics. In areas such as accounting, for example, faculty have often not been trained to specifically evaluate oral communications and presentation skills and are also faced with a curriculum that has a “correct” answer, which is not subject to interpretation (Lord and Melvin, 1994). This is true of most quantitatively-based disciplines. Management disciplines, on the other hand, particularly those that deal with human behavior, legal issues, ethics and strategy, lend themselves to more discussion and analysis of issues that often do not have a “right” answer.

In managing participation, instructors also need to remain cognizant of the fact that faculty reactions to student efforts to participate have reinforcing consequences. Hence, more desired forms of participation should ideally elicit more favorable reactions for instructors than reactions to less desired forms of participation. Instructor reactions can certainly extinguish the less desirable forms of participation but failure to recognize and have a positive reaction to desirable forms of participation can result in similar consequences. Faculty members are often unaware of the effects of their nonverbal communication, such as facial expressions, body language and tone of voice, and the effect that they had on class participation, particularly in discouraging class participation. Students also form perceptions of an instructor’s interest in student participation based on the instructor’s speed of speech and pacing / pausing during their speech (Fritschner, 2000).

The subjectivity inherent in the grading of class participation is an issue with which even the most staunch advocates of graded participation struggle. Instructors often express displeasure or uneasiness over subjective grading procedures, which require considerable care in balancing student perceptions and expectations over their grades (Manzer and Rassuli, 2005). As noted above, one issue associated with grading participation is the individual instructor’s definition of exactly what constitutes “participation” (Helms and Haynes, 1990); however, this is just the beginning of the dilemma. Even once participation has been defined, it still remains a subjective, usually non-quantitative, assessment of performance. Indeed, it is virtually impossible to generate truly objective assessments of class participation (Lyons, 1989).

This however, need not be problematic. As will be explained below, there are a variety of methods available to instructors to limit the potential subjectivity biases inherent in the grading of participation. Above and beyond this, instructors can also clearly state in their syllabi and directly address with a class the fact that the grading of participation is highly subjective and, for that reason, the instructor’s bases for grading participation is being clearly presented to the class. This can greatly aid in reducing some of the anxiety inherent in the process for both students and instructors, particularly if done in tandem with providing students feedback during the semester as to how they’re doing relative to participation rather than simply assign a grade at the end of the semester. The critical component of addressing the subjectivity issue is open and honest communication with students regarding participation that encourages a dialog between them and the instructor at the start of the semester.

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An instructor who opts to grade participation, and particularly one who is doing so for the first time, needs to consider the nature of the role of an instructor in a participation-oriented classroom. The role of instructor in such an environment needs to change from being subject matter expert who communicates knowledge to students to that of coach or facilitator of student-centered learning (Gopinath, 1999). Managing participation requires a special skill of the instructor; a skill for ensuring that participation is managed equitably (Gioia, 1991). In addition the instructor may need to assume diverse and multifaceted roles, which include facilitator, coach, cheerleader, iconoclast, questioner, integrator, supporter, referee, Socratic muser, occasional anarchist and feigned dunce (Gioia, 1991). These different roles can be displayed via a variety of instructor behaviors which include 1) providing recapitulations and summaries; 2) making observations which integrate concepts and discussions; 3) citing relevant personal examples; 4) asking key questions that lead to revealing discussions; 5) engaging in devil's advocacy; and 6) affording opportunities to disagree with the instructor (Gioia, 1991).

Instructors need to not only facilitate discussion but move the class toward a heightened understanding of the topic or subject of discussion. This requires the creation and maintenance of a non-intimidating classroom environment or culture (Gioia, 1991). To make participation effective, instructors need to facilitate participation, ask appropriate questions, create a supportive classroom environment and affirm contributions via constructive feedback and reinforcement (Dallimore, Hertenstein and Platt, 2004). In order to do this effectively, instructors must deal responsibly with students who have passive personality traits and/or low self-efficacy who, as a result, may not be inclined to participate (Smith, 1994).

A variety of strategies can be used by instructors to draw such students out of passive modes. Instructors are perceived to be more open to participation when they move closer to students and walk around the room. Instructors can also encourage participation by calling on students by name, nodding in positive response and relaying their own personal experiences, as self-disclosure by instructors removes any real or perceived psychological barriers of differential status between students and instructors (Fritschner, 2000). Of course, positive reinforcement of student comments encourages participation as well.

### **VARIATIONS OF TRADITIONAL PARTICIPATION**

Instructors who see value in grading class participation but still remain uncomfortable with the practice of doing so typically restrict themselves by adopting a very narrow definition of "participation" and the their assessment of the behaviors that accompany it. However, there are a number of variations of the traditional Socratic method or of voluntary participation where students speak in class and then receive a value-laded assessment from instructors.

As noted above, one of the most critical issues in considering participation is how the instructor defines it. One suggestion is that instructors consider participation as either knowledge

construction or the willful intent to aid others with their understanding of material and to conceptualize it as class “contribution” rather than participation (Gioia, 1991). The manner in which an instructor defines participation can open up some variations of how participation can be assessed.

One variation of traditional class participation involves allowing students themselves to define participation. Here the instructor plays more of a facilitative role, allowing participation to be defined collectively by the class or based on individual negotiations with the instructor as to how each student will participate (or contribute) to class. As an example, an individual student who is very introverted or unsure of their language abilities might have participation assessed within the context of their work in and contribution to a small group or even on a one-on-one basis with the instructor. Student participation in the development of the criteria for assessment should result in greater acceptance of process as well as the assessment made by faculty. In addition the development of the criteria is a learning experience as it allows students to negotiate or determine for themselves what constitutes acceptable versus unacceptable levels of participation (Lyons, 1989).

Students can also have input in the process of their participation when they are allowed to self-regulate the behavior expected of them in class. One advocate of such a system proposes giving students green, yellow and red colored name cards that they can display by choice, indicating their readiness to participate in each class session. Display of the different colored cards results in an appropriate number of “points” (red – do not call on; yellow – acceptable for anything but in-depth interrogation; green – ready for unrestricted in-depth interrogation) and students can not change colors once class begins. This approach attempts to respect the dignity of all students, rather than have them sit in silent frustration or be called upon when they would prefer to remain silent (Litz, 2003).

A second variation of traditional class participation involves removing at least part of the assessment of participation from the instructor via one or a combination of two different scenarios. In the first scenario, students are allowed to self-evaluate their own participation. Students can be given index cards or asked to submit a brief e-mail summary of their participation at the end of each class. Qualitative comments, such as whether other students commented on what they said, can be provided as well as quantitative summaries. When students write a self-assessment of their own participation, they are encouraged to think reflectively about their role in discussion and provide the instructor with useful additional feedback about the students’ perceptions of the classroom environment (Bean and Peterson, 1998). Students do look favorably upon self-assessment of their participation as one study found that this technique received overwhelmingly favorable responses (Zaremba and Dunn, 2004).

In the second scenario, participation is assessed by peers, either within the larger classroom or within groups. If done for the entire class, students can nominate the students who’ve most contributed to their learning. In smaller group settings students can assess their teammates’ participation in either absolute or relative terms. There is significant support for the value of such

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assessments. Peer-based assessments have both reliability and validity (Hollander, 1957; Love, 1981) and are also highly effective for small groups and in cooperative learning environments (Ferris and Hess, 1985; Persons, 1988). Peer assessments can also reinforce the need for students to direct comments to their colleagues and to challenge each other and generate discussion, rather than simply respond to the instructor's questions. Knowing how and when to disagree with others is a valuable skill that can be carried into the workplace (Manzer and Rassuli, 2005).

Implementation of a system of peer evaluation of class participation in tandem with assessments being made by the instructor allows the instructor the opportunity to receive corroboration on his/her grading relative to whether it is free from bias and provides the opportunity to revise any inaccurate assessments. Students find more satisfaction with this grading system due to the fact that their perceptions of its fairness are higher than that of instructor-only graded participation (Lord and Melvin, 1994). To counteract potential leniency effects that can result from absolute peer ratings, instructors can require that ranking or forced distribution be used, if the class is of sufficiently manageable size. In either case, peer evaluation can be used as a backup or means of verification of the instructor's (subjective) assessments to provide a significant degree of consistency between the participation grades assigned by the instructor and the relative peer assessments (Lord and Melvin, 1994).

These potential benefits help to explain why self and peer-assessment are the two most common alternatives to instructor-only assessments of performance (Manzer and Rassuli, 2005). Certainly, sharing of the assessment process with students can eliminate some of the uneasiness instructors might have about the subjectivity of their own assessments as well as provide increased legitimacy in the eyes of students. The subjectivity associated with assessing class participation can be minimized by involving students in both specifying the criteria by which participation is assessed as well as allowing students to assess both themselves and their peers (Dancer and Kamvounias, 2005). However, there remains some instructor uneasiness about sharing responsibility for grading with students due to bias and concerns about reliability as better students tend to underrate themselves and poorer students tend to overrate themselves (Manzer and Rassuli, 2005). Nonetheless, self and peer-assessment are consistent with the organizational trend toward multi-rater or 360 degree feedback systems and not only provide useful preparation for the world of work (Manzer and Rassuli, 2005) but also provide the opportunity for students to discuss from a first-person perspective their own feelings about such kinds of evaluative feedback. Indeed, such reflections could be prepared as journal entries in courses where instructors require students to maintain reflective journals.

Two of the more recent trends in assessing participation involve the use of online chats and a focus on the development of specific skills. Online chats, of course, can be utilized in both fully online and hybrid courses and provide a more "level" playing field for all students, particularly those who might be especially reserved in a classroom setting and/or insecure of their language skills. A focus on skills can turn the measures of participation toward the development and improvement of

skills in areas such as oral communications, platform skills, listening and answering questions skills and analytical skills, among others. Of course, such a focus requires an assessment at the start of the course as well as at the end. Techniques for such are beyond the scope of this discussion but have been well documented in the management education literature (McEvoy, 1998; Porter and McKibbin, 1988). True assessments of class participation should focus on the development of students' oral communication skills as well as their ability to interact and cooperate with peers (Dancer and Kamvounias, 2005). Focusing on either online chat behavior or skills addresses the fact that an instructor can not monitor all dimensions of class participation while conducting class in an effective manner. In an online environment, chats can be archived and reviewed while in a classroom setting it is possible to record class sessions and subsequently review them to assign participation grades (Clarke, 1985). In either scenario, however, common standards for participation can be set, which include 1) preparation, 2) contribution to discussion, 3) group skills, 4) communication skills and 5) attendance (Dancer and Kamvounias, 2005).

One final variation of traditional class participation is for the instructor to distribute questions beforehand and allow students to prepare written responses which they bring to class. Such a strategy provides a more level playing ground and gives all students an opportunity to participate (Bean and Peterson, 1998). Of course, the trade-off here is that students will not be required to "think on their feet," unless the instructor uses follow-up, probing questions, parallel to a semi-structured interview format. On the other hand, there is much support for random questions and cold-calling, which allegedly result in better student preparation (McDougall and Cordeiro, 1993), given the ambiguity and uncertainty surrounding how the instructor will conduct class sessions. Regardless of the strategy used, an instructor can choose to utilize pre-assigned questions exclusively, unannounced questions exclusively or some balance of the two. In tandem with whatever strategy that is chosen, the instructor can also use "think breaks" or "time outs" (Gioia, 1991). Here the entire class will have the option to think about responses before volunteering or being called upon.

### **DESIGN ISSUES AND VARIABLES**

Regardless of whether an instructor wishes to grade participation in a more traditional sense or utilize some of the variations discussed above, a number of design issues and variables that impact the efficacy of grading class participation need to be considered. While there is no one "perfect" way to incorporate the use of graded class participation, these issues and variables allow instructors to consider the best way for them to do so within the context of how they deliver their instruction and the learning objectives they have set.

Instructors first need to determine whether participation will be graded on an absolute or relative basis. Absolute grading allows the instructor to consider each student as an individual yet still take into account differences among students. Relative grading assumes a level playing field

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in which the highest performing students receive the highest grade based on their ranking relative to classmates. A variation of relative grading is placing students in groups for each letter grade or point total and then ensuring that students within each group have equal participation and that there is a sufficient distinction in the instructor's mind on the participation levels between groups/classifications.

Instructors also need to determine whether participation will be voluntary or involuntary (i.e., cold calling). In making this determination, instructors face the dilemma of what to do with students who are less inclined to volunteer (Dallimore, Hertenstein and Platt, 2006). Calling on a student prior to asking a given question can put others in a more passive mode so it may be advantageous for instructors who cold call to pose the question to the entire class prior to selection of a respondent. Despite widespread concerns about cold calling, students are not inherently uncomfortable with it and the process will increase voluntary participation frequency (Dallimore, Hertenstein and Platt, 2006). For instructors who don't believe in or feel less comfortable with cold calling, a middle ground can be reached by using the color-coded name cards, discussed above.

Instructors also need to determine the frequency with which they will provide feedback to students regarding their performance in participation. Issuing class participation grades at the end of the semester doesn't allow students room to improve if they discover, after the fact, that the instructor's subjective assessment of their performance did not meet performance expectations. By providing formative feedback mid-way through the semester and normative feedback at the end, students are able to take remedial action to improve their performance (Dancer and Kamvounias, 2005). Some instructors advocate weekly written feedback for students; however such a strategy is obviously not practical in large classes (Clarke, 1985). In addition, observations can be recorded without being communicated to students. Some instructors rely on memory to evaluate participation at the end of the semester while others record impressions following each class meeting (Zaremba and Dunn, 2004). The former strategy can easily be clouded by the recency effect whereas the latter can result in the halo effect relative to early judgments on the part of instructors. The overriding concern that must be addressed is that few instructors share participation assessment feedback with students prior to calculating final grades (Zaremba and Dunn, 2004). At that point, it's too late for students to improve themselves and such a strategy doesn't facilitate learning and growth. Students need to know not only the criteria by which participation is being assessed but also should have the opportunity to improve as the semester progresses, much like they do relative to specific subject matter knowledge and expertise.

Instructors also need to consider participation within the context of the classroom environment, class size, level of instruction and preferred teaching style. The physical layout of a class can facilitate or inhibit participation. Participation can be facilitated by classrooms with moveable furniture (Gioia, 1991) or with a U-shaped layout (Bean and Peterson, 1998). Both of these arrangements allow all students to see each other and interact more directly with each other through the use and observation of nonverbal participation cues. Larger classes can inhibit

participation but this can be addressed by utilizing smaller groups and/or separate discussion sections. The level of instruction and student backgrounds can aid participation as students who are older and have more work experience generally have a greater opportunity to participate via the sharing of personal accounts and stories. Executive classes, for example, frequently have a high graded participation component, given how much learning takes place from individual student contributions and classroom exchange. Finally, the instructor's preferred pedagogical style and course objectives can help determine the appropriate level of participation and the extent to which it should be graded. Lecture-oriented classes and those that stress the acquisition of factual knowledge are less appropriate for participation than those that utilize experiential learning or cases analyses.

Finally, the culture of the academic program in which students are enrolled as well as the specific classroom culture can affect participation. Some programs and courses involve a good deal of competition between students, particularly in highly selective MBA programs. Instructors need to consider how participation grades should be assigned to students who appear to be prepared yet fail to "gain entry" into the discussion (Litz, 2003). This can be evident when certain class members dominate a discussion and other students raise their hands but then lower them after someone else makes a comment. Highly competitive programs frequently involve a good deal of participation that has no value added. Negative types of class participation that have been identified include 1) disruptive talking, 2) inaudible responses, 3) sleeping in class, 4) tardiness and poor attendance, 5) failure to prepare for class, 6) cheating on tests and quizzes, 7) unwillingness to speak in the language of instruction (Wadden and McGovern, 1991). Students generally should receive no credit for asking questions that should be evident from the assignments or other forms of participation that demonstrates that the students was not fully prepared for class (Reinsch and Wambsganss, 1994).

To aid in the development of an appropriate class culture that facilitates and enhances value-added participation, instructors need to communicate those kinds of participation that are sought and valued and reinforce them when they occur. Similarly, instructors need to be actively involved in managing the classroom "climate." Competitive and/or aggressive behavior can happen only if instructor allows it. The setting of class interaction norms, expectations for student preparation and encouraged student-to-student interactions all influence the level of class involvement/participation (Fassinger, 1995).

## CONCLUSION

The grading of class participation is certainly an area in which management educators have strong feelings, some of which may have been heightened or possibly altered by the above discussion. Grading class participation usually involves a significant amount of work for an instructor relative to both learning names and actively managing classroom processes. It can only

be effective if an instructor defines and explains what constitutes effective participation. It is also important that instructors remain cognizant of the fact that participation is value-based and that they need to be aware of their inherent subjective biases. There is nothing wrong with admitting to students that participation assessments are highly subjective and this subjectivity can be related to the fact that essay exams and papers as well as real world assessments of performance are similarly generally highly subjective. The correlation between grades, performance and learning is never perfect regardless of the means of assessment (Lewicki, 1991). The reality of the world of work is that employees are rarely evaluated on totally objective criteria and class participation assessments parallel this process. Giving students some “voice” and say in how their participation will be assessed can greatly assist in gaining their belief in and commitment to not only the process of graded class participation but its outcomes as well.

Perhaps the most critical caveat concerning the grading of participation is that it should not be cursory but rather linked to specific learning objectives/outcomes in order to be effective. Success toward achieving those objectives can be reached as students *will* adjust their study habits when they see participation being graded regularly and consistently (Bean and Peterson, 1998). However, it is critical for an instructor to have a defensible measure of participation (Helms and Haynes, 1990). Once these systems are in place instructors can develop a system for grading class participation with which both they and their students will feel comfortable that can also aid in critical learning objectives or skill development.

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# TEACHING MANAGEMENT BY TELLING STORIES

**James Harbin, Texas A&M University-Texarkana**  
**Patricia Humphrey, Texas A&M University-Texarkana**

## ABSTRACT

*Storytelling is a powerful and effective teaching tool, yet management professors often overlook its use. A good story can illustrate management principles such as decision-making, leadership, group dynamics, power and politics in a way that captures students' attention and enhances memory. Examples of management stories, how to locate sources of good management stories, and tips on storytelling are offered. The authors suggest storytelling is not only an effective teaching tool, but is an essential leadership skill that should be taught in our business schools.*

## INTRODUCTION

*"He (Jesus) did not say anything to them without using a parable." Mark: 4:34*

Storytelling is one of the world's most powerful tools for achieving results (Guber, 2007). It is particularly appropriate for all students of business as Pheffer and Sutton (2006a) stated "when used correctly, stories and cases are powerful tools for building management knowledge" (p. 67). Yet, far too few business professors use this learning tool to its fullest potential. Part of the problem may be due to the profession being dominated by left-brain thinkers. A larger part of the reluctance may have to do with the image that the moniker of storytelling conjures up. For many, it's a mental picture of kindergarten teachers with their children gathered around them on the floor and then reading the words and showing pictures from a book. But, you know what? It works! It works for people of all ages, not just small children. One doesn't have to be trained in drama, go overboard with theatrics, show pictures, or dress in character. One simply needs to relay a story to the other person. Stories suck us in as children and as adults. Story telling plays an important role in the learning process.

In today's university technology-laced teaching environment, professors are sometimes guilty of overlooking the most obvious and effective teaching tool of all. Even in my relatively short span as a management professor (30+ years), I have seen classrooms go from chalk and blackboard, to one filled with so many electronic gadgets, instructors are confused which ones go to which ones. Professors act like Nintendo players moving around with all the electronics. In today's technology-laced teaching environment, the merits of blogging, vlogging, moodleing, podcasting, wikiing, and tweeting (whatever those are) are touted as the instructors' tools of tomorrow.

It is safe to assume that all professors have wondered on occasion “just how much are my students taking in?” Maybe even more importantly, is the question of “how much are they retaining?” I have to admit that for many years at the start of my career, I thought my teaching role consisted primarily of transferring facts, explaining concepts, or developing technical skills. Throughout my career, in all my courses, I did try to incorporate appropriate examples. Then several years ago, my students began writing comments on class evaluations like the following:

- ◆ “he can relate the course really well with different real-life stories”
- ◆ “good story teller”
- ◆ “excellent lecturers, the best I’ve had, very interesting and it was like story time!”
- ◆ “he has many stories and examples that pertain to the curriculum”
- ◆ “like the way he applies the chapters to real life stories”
- ◆ “stories and examples reinforced the material”

Now, I will be the first to admit that not all my student reviews are that complimentary, but it did open my eyes to the impact that my stories were having on students and their learning. I will also admit that some classes are more attuned to storytelling than others. I teach organizational behavior, business strategy, and business ethics, all of which are, or can be, filled with stories. But whatever the class, there are opportunities to use stories as a teaching tool.

It is one thing to acknowledge from a common sense approach that storytelling is a powerful communication tool, but it is a lot more convincing when there is research evidence to back it up (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006b). Osborn and Ehniger (1962) found that in storytelling the listener is not a passive receiver of information but is triggered into a state of active thinking. The listener must consider the meaning of the story and try to make sense of it.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) found that storytelling results in the listener being more engaged; their attention and interest are fostered. Borgida and Nisbett (1977), Zembe (1990), Wilkens (1983), and Conger (1991) all found that information is more quickly and accurately remembered when it is first presented in the form of an example or story, particularly one that is intrinsically appealing.

Martin and Power’s (1982) study compared the effectiveness of four different methods to persuade a group of M.B.A. students of an unlikely hypothesis, namely, that a company really practiced a policy of avoiding layoffs. In one method, there was just a story. In the second, the researchers provided statistical data. In the third, they used statistical data and a story. In the fourth, they offered the policy statement made by a senior company executive. The most effective method of all turned out to be the first alternative, presenting the story alone.

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## THE VALUE OF STORIES IN MANAGEMENT

Stories paint pictures in students' minds. Doug Lipman (1999) refers to this as "the transfer of imagery". An advantage that radio had over television was that the stories heard over radio forced one to create mental images to coincide with what they were hearing orally. Think back to the teachers that you remember the most. The ones that had the most impact on your learning. Odds were that they were great storytellers. One of my most remembered teachers was a sixth-grade history teacher. His stories of traveling around the world would immediately capture students' interest with the mere intro of "let me tell you a story". They later named a new high school after him, imagine a sixth-grade history teacher!

Not only do stories create pictures in one's mind, these stories stick in the mind. How many remember the "three pigs' story?" Now, how many remember anything from that nonparametric statistics class? What do you overhear students talking about outside of class concerning what went on in the classroom? Odds are, it's not the numbers or the bullets from some PowerPoint presentation, but the retelling or the rehashing of the stories that the instructor shared in class.

Even in classes or lessons that deal in abstraction, formulas, statistics, etc., stories can be an effective tool there also. Stories have the power to communicate the abstract. Neurologists say that our brains are programmed much more for stories than for abstract ideas. Tales with a little drama are remembered far longer than any slide crammed with analytics. Gary Klein (1998) believes that "we value stories because they are like reports of research projects, only easier to understand and use."

Storytelling is more powerful than any pure logical argument. As Ms. Simmons (2000) writes, influencing people through scientific analysis is a "push" strategy. It requires the speaker to convince the listener through cold, hard facts. That sets up an antagonistic conversation. Storytelling is a "pull" strategy, coaxing listeners – disarming them, even – into imagining outcomes toward which facts would not lead.

Telling stories makes the job of any professor easier. One does not have to remember abstractions, bullets on a PowerPoint, or some list on a crib sheet; one just has to have a short compilation of pictures or images in their mind to make a great lecture work. Conditioning students to expect stories in your class tends to keep their interest level up and that's particularly important in those extended hours classes. Professors need to make what is important interesting.

If you don't have a story to tell, one that evokes mental pictures, people on the receiving end tend to forget the message. President Calvin Coolidge, admittedly, a man known to be one of few words and who also refused to use the telephone while in the White House, when asked by his wife who stayed home that Sunday, "What did the preacher talk about in church today?", simply replied "Sin". I would venture a guess that the Preacher dealt in abstractions that Sunday and failed to tell a story.

### SOME EXAMPLES OF MANAGEMENT STORIES

Stories told by management professors should make a point. There should be a lesson to be learned. If the story conjures up a mental image, there is a very good chance that the student will remember the lesson. Because the mental picture is in the professor's mind also, it makes it immensely easier for the professor to remember the lesson they are trying to convey.

Sometimes just one picture is all it takes. Just picture a CEO in front of a large group of his/her employees smashing an egg on his/her forehead. The picture is vivid and the lesson is obvious. Another picture image is that of the gravestone in a cemetery – zero in on the dash between the born and death dates. The lesson here is that what is important lies in the in-between. There are many places where this could be used as an analogy.

Ross Perot's snake story is easy to remember and easy to tell. "At GM, if you see a snake, the first thing you do is go hire a consultant on snakes. Then you get a committee on snakes, and then you discuss it for a couple of years. You figure the snake hasn't bit anybody yet, so you just let him crawl around on the factory floor. We need to build an environment where the first guy who sees the snake kills it" (Moore, 1988: 48). There are literally hundreds of excellent leadership stories - just picture Herb Kelleher of Southwest Air pitching bags of luggage in the airport on Thanksgiving Day and you've got another apt example (Freiberg 1998: 283).

There are an infinite number of good sports stories that easily transpose into management lessons. Bear Bryant (1974) and his "faith of the mustard seed" speech (borrowed from the bible) to his football team on Friday midnight before Saturday's game can illustrate the mysteries of motivation. Lou Holtz's (1998) story of setting goals early in his career during a depressing time in his life after reading *The Magic of Thinking Big* can illustrate the validity of the power of goal setting. I used to keep folders containing material collected over time on each management topic discussed in my classes. Today, I keep folders containing stories concerning management topics.

### WHERE DOES ONE FIND MANAGEMENT STORIES?

The sources of stories that can be used in management classes are almost as infinite as the number of possible stories. A short list of possible sources would include movies, television, sports, magazines, novels, biographies, history, military, seminars, peers, and people in general. Everybody has a story, make that plural: stories. Just listen in on any conversation taking place between individuals. They are telling stories. It is OK to borrow, just be sure to give appropriate credit for your source. Most of the ones I use are second or third hand stories.

Professor Leigh Hafrey (2005) uses films like *The Apostle* and *Crouching Tiger* to create an entire seminar. Oftentimes, it is the attendees' task to find the management lessons contained in the film and generate their own stories from them. I have liberally used films, or just specific scenes, to reinforce management principles. Films like: *Lonesome Dove*, *O Brother Where Art Thou*,

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*Hoosiers*, *Gung Ho*, and *Network* are just a few I have used. Television shows are replete with appropriate examples. Some of the ones I have used over the years are: *Homicide*, *Hill Street Blues*, *Boston Legal*, and yes, although difficult to admit, *My Name is Earl*.

Presidents and politicians, both past and present, provide numerous examples for leadership, power, politics, committees, and decision-making stories. A three hour credit semester class could be devoted exclusively to the recent (2008) Frontline two-part series entitled *Bush's War*. It is an extensive, fairly unbiased look at the events and people surrounding the Iraq conflict. There are multiple stories (with their ensuing lessons to be learned) concerning decision-making, leadership, followership, group dynamics, power and politics, delegation, and the list goes on.

One must be remindful of any potential age differences that might exist between professors and most of their students. Some stories are classic, meaning they are timeless. Others become dated and/or of little relevance to the students. Even some of the classic John Kennedy ("I want to hear what you think, and not what you think I want to hear") stories are somewhat dated for today's generation of students. Your task as a collector of stories is to be constantly on the outlook for newer, more interesting ones.

The number of business-related books on the shelves of retailers today is astonishing. It is next to impossible for a management professor to stay current in his or her readings. The literary success of people like Tom Peters and Ken Blanchard are testaments to the popularity of good stories and storytellers. I don't know how many times over the past years I have used stories from books like: *In Search of Excellence*, *Good To Great*, *Defining Moments*, and *A Whack On the Side of the Head*. Some of my current favorites include: *Where Have All the Leaders Gone?*, *The 33 Strategies of War*, *The Tipping Point*, and *The Carrot Principle*.

I have many times more stories than I can use in my management classes, but my objective is to continually be on the lookout for even better ones. I would suggest that as you are exposed to the continually increasing number of stories out there, to always be thinking: "could I use that story in one of my lectures?"

### **PERSONAL TIPS ON STORYTELLING**

This section is by no means a comprehensive lesson plan on how to tell stories, but merely presents a few personal observations on how to become a better storyteller. The literature concerning storytelling is endless. Type storytelling on the internet and see how many hits you get. There are some very good books one can read to improve their storytelling skills. Two of my favorites are *The Leader's Guide To Storytelling*, and *Improving your Storytelling*. One could even improve their skills academically by getting a Master's in Storytelling from East Tennessee State University.

From my experience, what does it take for stories to work in class? They have to be easily understood, and told from a personal perspective. They need to be plausible. Recent is better, but

old can work too. Students need to be able to get the point. Sometimes a little extra help here is needed to assure that the lesson is learned. The maturity level of your students, combined with their work experience would make a difference in how explicit you have to be in getting the lesson to be learned across.

Good stories need to be some combination of the following: salient, succinct, funny, emotional, moving, clever, true, short, current, or personal. The storyteller should feel comfortable telling the story, and reasonably sure that the audience will be likewise. Keep in mind that you are trying to convey the mental image you have in your mind to your students.

The best stories need to stand the test of trial and error and time. Not every story is going to work. Not every joke Jay Leno tells is funny. Like in baseball, sometimes you hit a home run, sometimes it's a triple, double, or single; and sometimes you strike out.

Now, some might be hesitant to tell stories out of the mistaken belief that they are not capable of becoming a competent storyteller. I share a personality trait with Denning (a leading advocate of storytelling in business), that of being a taciturn person. I just don't talk a lot outside of class. My wife frequently says things to me like: "you never talk, I know you do in class, why don't you talk to me?" And, I have to be honest with you here, it's not just her I don't talk much too, it's just that I am not a big talker. However, a classroom provides a different environment. Professors are expected to talk and your stories will get better the more you tell them. It is only through practice, like everything else, that you get better. Your delivery, timing, emphasis, volume, and overall storytelling skills will improve over time. Good faculty should be continuously honing their speaking skills.

One of the great things about telling stories in classes is that you don't need props. In fact, props may detract from the learning experience. There is no need for elaborate setups, time consuming PowerPoint presentations, or dealing with technical failures. How many times have you had a technical malfunction in your classroom? The bane of many a presentation has to be the unadulterated overuse of PowerPoint. Rich Karlgaard (2007), publisher of Forbes magazine, advises avoiding PowerPoint and telling stories instead.

So, just stand up and tell your stories. Be yourself. Be comfortable in your own style of presentation, you don't have to be a cookie cut of the same mold that every Toastmaster's class would have you be. A word of caution, don't overly depend on stories to accomplish your job as a professor in class. Don't string together multiple stories – one after the other. Also, don't be guilty of telling too many personal stories, especially those that have no relevance to the subject matter at hand.

### **MGT450/550: STORYTELLING FOR BUSINESS STUDENTS?**

Most would agree that effective communication is the key to success in the world of business. While story crafting and telling are skills worth learning by all, it may be critical for

leaders of others. Think of some of the great leaders throughout history. Most were invariably great communicators: Presidents Lincoln and Reagan; Churchill, King, McArthur, and Hannibal to name a few. Jesus used stories and parables to make his messages more powerful and lasting. Leaders have to have the ability to persuade and stories have the capacity to do just that.

Maybe business programs should include a class on the art of storytelling – after all they are producing the leaders of the future. Being able to tell the right story, at the right time, in an effective manner, would seem to be an essential leadership skill. Nike is but one of many companies that utilize several senior executives who spend much of their time serving as corporate storytellers. They do this in an attempt to gain both employee and customer buy-in (Ransdell, 2000). It is sometimes hard to convince novice students, seasoned executives, and some management PhD's of the importance of those “soft” skills that are so desperately needed by leaders.

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

Some might say that this advocacy for storytelling in management classes is either too simple, too obvious, or too mundane, or all three. But I agree with Pfeffer and Sutton (2006a) that one of the lessons both they and I have learned over the years is that being effective managers (or professors) often entails being the master of the mundane or simple.

Hopefully there will be a rebirth of storytelling in business classes as a primary teaching tool. This ancient tradition of narrative is not just another management or teaching fad. It pervades every culture and will continue to serve as the chief communication tool. Everyone loves a story. It was Elie Wiesel (1966) that commented, “God made man because he loves stories!” The noted management professor, Dr. Warren Bennis commented, “Man cannot live

without stories any more than he can live without bread!” Management professors shouldn't overlook the impact that stories can have in conveying their messages. Now, “Once upon a time - - - - -”.

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# A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR AUDITING AND PLANNING FOR REFORM OF AN UNDERGRADUATE MARKETING CURRICULUM: A PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE BOYER COMMISSION REPORT

Connie R. Bateman, University of North Dakota

## ABSTRACT

*This paper applies the directives and guidelines found in the Boyer Commission Report (1998) entitled, "Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities" to create a curriculum assessment tool. As an auditing framework, this tool will assist the undergraduate curriculum planner to determine (in)adequacies in current marketing programs. As a planning framework, this tool will assist in formulating the short-term and long-term strategic planning for an evolving marketing curriculum.*

*The author first reviews the history and content of the Boyer Commission Report (1998), a result of a three-year investigation by the National Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University. Seven of Boyer's ten directives, along with associated guiding statements, form the basis for the development of an auditing and planning framework. Instructions for using the audit and planning tool are given and concluding remarks are made.*

## INTRODUCTION

In the late 1980s a reformation movement had taken a strong foothold in the minds of undergraduate curriculum planners. In 1987, Chickering and Gamson codified the *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education* which identified the principles by which the reformation movement should proceed; promoting a movement of "good practices" - defined as those that enhanced student-faculty interaction, experiences, student collaboration, and active learning techniques. The concerns expressed by curriculum planners that followed were not related to a commitment to the ideology itself or the principles put forth by Chickering and Gamson (1987), but rather were centered on what forms the changes should take. Not surprisingly, the 1990's were typified by curriculum planners who wanted more research before forging ahead with change, and/or felt it necessary to assess the effectiveness of the existing curriculum, so the importance and role of outcome-based or skill-based curriculum assessment was catapulted to the forefront of discussions (Miller et al., 1991). Research by Miller et al., (1991) identified the most commonly used and

highly valued information sources accessed by curriculum planners; (1) graduate placements and rates thereof, (2) alumni, (3) recent graduates; and used less commonly (but still highly valued) were (1) employers, and (2) seniors. The National Education Goals Panel (1992) recommended outcome-based measurements on critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication, and responsible citizenship. The Association of American Colleges established the Network for Academic Renewal, which held a series of workshops, gathered information, and acted as a clearinghouse for ways to improve undergraduate education (Mooney, 1993). The Wingspread Report (1994) recommended skill-based measurements on complex thinking, the ability to analyze information and to solve problems, and interpersonal communications. The Business-Higher Education Forum (1995) released a statement to the effect that corporate leaders want college graduates to possess “leadership and communication skills; quantification skills, interpersonal relations, and the ability to work in teams; the understanding needed to work with a diverse workforce at home and abroad; and the capacity to adapt to rapid change” (p. 3). Thus, the industry of higher education appeared to agree that program level assessment, when properly done, would serve as the basis for curricula re-design. It is important to note that research is critical because faculty, employers, alumni, and students have different criterion, experience, and expectations for what they consider “effective” (Floyd & Gordon, 1998).

As the 1990s came to an end, the evidence was clear that powerful forces were transforming marketing education (Lamont & Friedman, 1997). Despite accreditation (AACSB) pressures, only forty-two percent of U.S. business schools had responded and put comprehensive outcome-based assessment programs into place (Kimmell, et al., 1998). Justifications given for non-compliance to AACSB’s wishes were rooted in pressures felt by curriculum planner workloads, weak budgets (resources had not been allocated), and/or lack of ownership for the initiative (e.g., no ‘assessments champion’ at the departmental level. By the mid 2000s, research on curriculum assessment was picking up steam, and departments were making moves to empirically assess the effectiveness of their current curricula in meeting formalized objectives (Nicholson et al., 2005).

### **BOYER COMMISSION REPORT DIRECTIVES, GUIDELINES AND MARKETPLACE REACTIONS**

The results of a large scale empirical study (sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning) came out in the late 1990s that served to transform thinking about undergraduate program reform. Educators across the nation turned their attention to what came to be known as the “gold standard” for curriculum re-design. Specifically, in 1998, the *Boyer Commission Report* entitled “Reinventing Undergraduate Education: a Blueprint for America’s Research Universities” was published (The Boyer Commission, 1998). The published report was the result of a three-year research study and investigation by the National Commission

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on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University. The Commission trumpeted a crisis in undergraduate education. Specific findings of the Boyer (1998) investigation were eye-opening:

- ◆ *Many students graduate having accumulated whatever number of courses is required, but lack a coherent body of knowledge; i.e., any inkling as to how one sort of information might relate to others;*
- ◆ *Students often graduate without knowing how to think logically, write clearly, or speak coherently;*
- ◆ *In retrospect, the universities have given students too little that will be of real value beyond a credential that will help them get their first jobs;*
- ◆ *Employers are putting less weight on diplomas (a result of the above);*
- ◆ *Research universities react by offering new courses, majors, and curricula.*

The commission called for a new integrated model for undergraduate programs at research universities where the teaching function was not undervalued and inter-disciplinary knowledge was truly gleaned by the student body in value-added ways. In their report, the Boyer Commission outlined an “Academic Bill of Rights” for research universities, which emphasized the creation of opportunities in the curriculum for students to learn through inquiry and discovery rather than as passive receivers, and for students to work with faculty researchers/mentors who guide the learning process and integrate theory and practice through multi-disciplinary perspectives (Frost & Teodorescu, 2003; Weissman & Boning, 2003). The stated goal was to produce a graduate “equipped with a spirit of inquiry and a zest for problem solving; one possessed of the skill in communication that is the hallmark of clear thinking” (The Boyer Commission, 1998; p. 13). Embedded in this goal was the development of problem-solving and critical thinking, team skills, and communication skills. As a result, the Commission Report strongly recommended that Research Universities restructure and improve their undergraduate programs and laid out seven directives that are applicable to undergraduate marketing degree program criteria: (1) remove barriers to interdisciplinary education, (2) make research-based learning the standard, (3) link communication skills and coursework, (4) use information technology creatively, (5) culminate with a capstone experience, (6) cultivate a sense of community, and (7) change faculty reward systems (three additional directives were mentioned by the commission that are out of the scope of this paper, but should receive mention – educate graduate students as apprentice teachers, construct and inquiry-based freshman year, and build on the freshman foundation). On balance, the directives given in the Boyer Commission Report and the research and insights which followed, appear to be consistent with what students care about. In *Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds* by Light (2001), seniors at Harvard University attributed their most beneficial experiences as ones that were consciously fostered by faculty decision; specifically collegial learning environments, leadership

roles in planning and running class projects, making linkages to other disciplines and personal experiences, and challenging existing paradigms (Weissman & Boning, 2003).

In the sections that follow, each of the seven directives and associated guiding principles as defined by the Boyer Commission are discussed, examples are shared of how each directive has been operationalized in the university setting, and/or concerns or restrictions are identified relating to each area. Curriculum planners are encouraged to refer to the audit and planning tool in Table 1 and assess the status of each curriculum tactic shown as it applies to their current marketing program.

### **Remove Barriers to Interdisciplinary Education**

*“Research universities must remove barriers to and create mechanisms for much more interdisciplinary undergraduate education” (The Boyer Commission, 1998; p.23).*

As early as 1974, the undergraduate business program at Indiana University was revised to facilitate integration of core courses with emphasis on interdisciplinary decision making skills (Logue & Merville, 1974). But it wasn't until the 1990s that a call rang out for marketing educators to reflect on the degree that their current curricula was interdisciplinary in nature and to take measures to facilitate students' retention of and integrative capacities of knowledge; and to ensure that motivations for these actions were in response to student needs rather than faculty skill areas or interests (Baker et al, 2003). A review of the literature by Baker et al, (2003) revealed that marketing program curriculum reformers/planners had responded, first by asking several questions about the current curriculum (these questions should be asked by curriculum planners today): (1) are there 'holes' in our curriculum?, (2) on what basis are we determining these 'holes' exist?, (3) what do we desire student knowledge to be?, (4) are students integrating materials and concepts to the degree desired?, (5) are we teaching the critical foundational elements of marketing?, (6) is there a common theme or capstone or experience that integrates materials and accomplishes curricula goals?, (7) what are our fundamental values driving curriculum reform?, (8) what are the critical component areas for student knowledge and student application?, and (9) will employers value what and how our students have learned?.

Once these questions have been deliberated by curriculum planners, specific ideas for curriculum change should be put forth and implemented; recognizing that efforts to remove barriers to interdisciplinary education will likely be ongoing, requiring cycles of planning, implementation, assessment, and so on. Following are examples of how some university programs have attempted to achieve their interdisciplinary educational goals:

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- ◆ *Integrate a common theme of ‘customer value for a sustainable competitive advantage’ throughout the curriculum, thus organizing the delivery of marketing knowledge around a core concept (Baker et al., 2003);*
  - ◆ *Develop and provide a visual of the integrated curriculum model (mentioned above), and provide this to students in the syllabi to give them a sense of purpose, integrate the courses in their mind into a cohesive program, and show the learning outcomes of the model (Baker et al., 2003);*
  - ◆ *Require junior-year students to take corporate finance, marketing, and operations management in the same semester; having faculty integrate the areas through common projects and case studies (Hubbard, 1999);*
  - ◆ *Team teach courses (Bartlett, 2002);*
  - ◆ *Creation of interdisciplinary majors; perhaps even using a tool such as Enterprise Resource Planning to help integrated learning (Kropf, 2002);*
  - ◆ *Creation of marketing modules (Stringfellow et al., 2006);*
  - ◆ *Creation of a data mining course to integrate relationship marketing, information technology, and marketing analytics through experiential learning tools that develop practical skill sets; helping students to position themselves with value-adding in the marketplace (Stanton, 2006).*

The auditing and planning framework found in Table 1 lists the curriculum reform tactics listed above. Curriculum planners are encouraged to add additional tactics that they are currently implementing (or that they plan to implement) that will serve to remove barriers to interdisciplinary education in their programs.

### **Make Research-Based Learning the Standard**

*“Undergraduate education in research universities requires renewed emphasis on a point strongly made by John Dewey almost a century ago: learning is based on discovery guided by mentoring rather than on the transmission of information. Inherent in inquiry-based learning is the element of reciprocity: faculty can learn from students as students are learning from faculty” (The Boyer Commission, 1998; p. 15).*

The early 2000s ushered in the concept that curriculums could combine some of the goals of assessment with those of research-based learning; where students, alumni, employers and/or faculty participate in research. At a national level, the Marketing Education Research Center Report issued in June 2005 revealed the following trends in university curricula (1) the adding of tracks as a response to national employer surveys, and (2) consideration of ‘marketing pathways’ or ‘career-

track recommendations' as identified by regional employers; specifically 'Product & Pricing', 'Distribution & Logistics', 'Marketing Communications & Promotions/Branding', 'Professional Sales (Management, Structure, and Relationship)', 'E-Marketing', 'International', 'Retailing/Buying/merchandising', 'Marketing Management', 'Entrepreneurship', and 'Marketing Information/Marketing Research'. Prestwich and Ho-Kim (2007) surveyed active international companies in Minnesota who disclosed that after general skill areas were met, key hiring criterion were for specific knowledge, skills, and practical abilities in the areas of direct salesw (exporting/distributorships), importing (sourcing/purchasing), global sales (contracts/negotiations), global transportation (logistics), and strategic planning. Nicholson et al., (2005) found that administrators and faculty are driven to fit their graduates with industry needs; using a variety of research tools at their disposal. Research shows that in terms of gathering employer feedback; 17% of marketing programs collect data from employers and recruiters; 11% use employer surveys; 5.1% use Internship/Co-Op Reviews; and 2.9% use Advisory Panels/boards (the latter of which may also help with data collection). In terms of soliciting feedback from alumni; 19.7% of marketing programs use surveys, 12.4% use Placement Rates, and .25% use Focus Groups (Nicholson et al., 2005).

Curriculum reformers/planners responded, first by asking several questions about the current curriculum (these questions should be asked by curriculum planners today): (1) should we implement a mandatory research requirement?, (2) how can professors serve as mentors rather than lecturers?, (3) how can we facilitate student learning by inquiry rather than absorbtion/rote?, (4) should students be involved in the creation of new knowledge?, (5) how can we measure whether curriculum objectives are being met (e.g., if student's integration skills are improving)?, (6) should the assessment of student skill be made by faculty only, or a combination of faculty, senior students, and peers?, (7) should we survey graduating students?, (8) should we survey alumni, and if so, how many years out?, and (9) what are the learning outcomes to be measured?.

Once these questions have been deliberated by curriculum planners, specific ideas for curriculum change should be put forth and implemented; recognizing that efforts to making research-based learning the standard will likely be ongoing, requiring cycles of planning, implementation, assessment, and so on. Following are examples of how some university programs have attempted to achieve their research-based learning goals:

- ◆ *Adding a mandatory student research project the results of which would add to the intellectual life of the university. Professors mentor the students throughout the primary research project (Bartlett 2002);*
- ◆ *Community service projects may be the basis of the student research project (Baker et al., 2003);*

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- ◆ *Measure oral communication skills by having a panel of four judges (two faculty and two graduate students) review a ten minute videotaped presentation of each senior to identify specific areas of strengths and weaknesses (Baker et al., 2003);*
  - ◆ *Students entering the program design a presentation on what marketing is about (baseline). At the end of the capstone course, at least three faculty members evaluate their project for strengths and weaknesses relating to integration and application of program components (post-test) (Baker et al., 2003);*
  - ◆ *Undertake email or mail surveys with seniors and alumni (one to five years out). Examples may include questions about (1) the perceptions of marketing courses with respect to knowledge and skill-based learning outcomes, and the perceived importance of each learning outcome to career success; (2) whether the common curriculum theme is being integrated throughout the curriculum across marketing courses, (3) whether students perceive an importance is placed upon quality writing, and (4) whether students perceive an importance is placed on teamwork (Baker et al., 2003);*
  - ◆ *Use graduate students to compile the assessment research results (Baker et al., 2003).*

The auditing and planning tool found in Table 1 shows the curriculum reform tactics listed above. Curriculum planners are encouraged to add additional items that they believe will serve to make research-based learning the standard.

### **Link Communication Skills and Coursework**

*“Undergraduate education must enable students to acquire strong communication skills, and thereby create graduates who are proficient in both written and oral communications” (The Boyer Commission, 1998; p. 24).*

By the end of the 1990s, the Boyer Commission (1998) reported there was a strong connection between “skill in communication *that* is the hallmark of clear thinking..” (p. 13). The sentiment of this statement had been echoed throughout the decade by the National Education Goals Panel (1992), the Wingspread Report (1994), the Business-Higher Education Forum (1995) (as reported by Major, 2002). Empirical research conducted by Nicholson et al., (2005) assessed the perceived gaps in marketing curricula across public and private institutions; finding that the largest gaps between actual and desired effectiveness occurred in the areas of written and oral communications. Curriculum reformers/planners responded, first by asking several questions about the current curriculum (these questions should be asked by curriculum planners today): (1) do all of our students reflect mastery of, and ability to communicate, content?, (2) do we clearly express

the expectations for written and verbal communication skills to our students?, (3) do the writing courses taken prior to entering the marketing program emphasize proper analytical business writing, expressing evidence of explanation, analysis, persuasion, while being succinct/clear, and writing to the appropriate audience, (4) do courses in our curriculum routinely ask for written and oral assignments?, (5) are the nature of the written and oral assignments adequately preparing students for employers?.

Once these questions have been deliberated by curriculum planners, specific ideas for curriculum change should be put forth and implemented; recognizing that efforts to link communication skills with coursework will likely be ongoing, requiring cycles of planning, implementation, assessment, and so on. Following are examples of how some university programs have attempted to achieve their communication skill enhancement goals:

- ◆ *Design course assignments to include both written and verbal communication components;*
- ◆ *Ensure that students are engaging in written communication assignments regularly;*
- ◆ *Ensure that students are engaging in verbal communication assignments regularly;*
- ◆ *Include written and verbal communications expectations and goals on the course syllabus;*
- ◆ *Grade students on both written and verbal communication components;*
- ◆ *Work with other departments (e.g., English) to design writing projects that teach proper business writing;*
- ◆ *Work with other departments (e.g., Communications/Speech) to design verbal presentation projects that teach proper business presentation skills.*

The auditing and planning tool found in Table 1 shows the curriculum reform tactics listed above. Curriculum planners are encouraged to add additional items that they believe will link communication skills and coursework.

### **Use Information Technology Creatively**

*“Because research universities create technological innovations, their students should have the best opportunity to learn state-of-the-art practices – and learn to ask questions that stretch the uses of the technology” (The Boyer Commission, 1998; p. 25).*

By the mid-2000s, marketing curricula planners were seeking ways to incorporate technology in its various forms into the student experience. The first goal of planners was to introduce students to the role and forms of technology used in marketing research and marketing

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strategy; the second goal to foster environments and projects that force students to strategically interpret database outputs, proactively conduct secondary marketing research using credible online sources, and formulate effective web-based/internet-based marketing tactics for businesses (Nicholson et al., 2005). Curriculum reformers/planners responded, first by asking several questions about the current curriculum (these questions should be asked by curriculum planners today): (1) are we challenging our students to use technology to gather facts, analyze them, and create new insights from the facts?, (2) are students being taught how to critically evaluate the quality of an online source?, (3) are our faculty being rewarded for seeking out new and more effective ways of using technology in the classroom?, (4) when the full curricula flow is considered, do the assignments students complete follow a progression that will expand their skills and abilities to utilize technology?, (5) do our faculty have opportunities to network with other professionals to share ideas on how to meet learning-goals through technology use in the classroom?.

Once these questions have been deliberated by curriculum planners, specific ideas for curriculum change should be put forth and implemented; recognizing that efforts to use information technology creatively will likely be ongoing, requiring cycles of planning, implementation, assessment, and so on. Following are examples of how some university programs have attempted to achieve their technology enhancement goals:

- ◆ *Frame meaning questions in assignments to force students to use critical thinking and analytical skills on information gathered through technology;*
- ◆ *Clearly define parameters for credible online sources;*
- ◆ *Allow faculty to include new technology integration into the classroom as a valid contribution for teaching assessment/employee evaluation purposes;*
- ◆ *Required courses in the curriculum should include technology-based projects;*
- ◆ *Utilize a semester long case study of a technology-based company (Spain et al., 2005);*
- ◆ *Use multiple pedagogical methods (case study, lectures, assignments, Oxford-style debate, and technology);*
- ◆ *Partner with a technology-based company to help develop courses that will add employer-defined value to students (e.g., University of Arizona partnered with IBM Corp to develop a course to teach students how to build online communities through a Web 2.0 interface (Pangburn, 2006)).*

The auditing and planning tool found in Table 1 shows the curriculum reform tactics listed above. Curriculum planners are encouraged to add additional items that they believe will serve to use technology creatively in their curriculum.

### **Culminate with a Capstone Experience**

*“The final semester(s) should focus on a major project and utilize to the fullest the research and communication skills learned in the previous semesters” (The Boyer Commission, 1998; p. 27).*

As the 21<sup>st</sup> century dawned, curriculum reformers were espousing the concept of an undergraduate program that incrementally built on written and verbal communications skills, research skills, inquiry-based learning, team building and collaborative skills and culminated in a capstone experience for students (Brunel & Hibbard, 2006). Furthermore, the goal stated was to adequately prepare graduating seniors for graduate work should they choose to further their educations. An example can be found at Boston University’s School of Management curriculum where required courses (marketing, operations, information system, and finance) are integrated into a one-semester sequence where teams work on a comprehensive business plan for a new product idea (Brunel & Hibbard, 2006). By 2006, a number of AACSB accredited marketing programs were using a capstone course or experience as a post-test in the curriculum assessment process; specifically, 19% were using a capstone course and 14% were using either a marketing plan, marketing portfolio of projects and/or special written or oral assignments. Curriculum reformers/planners responded, first by asking several questions about the current curriculum (these questions should be asked by curriculum planners today): (1) does our marketing curriculum incrementally build written, verbal, technological skills and culminate their integration in a capstone experience?, (2) does our curriculum use our capstone experience as an assessment tool?, (3) does the capstone experience bring together efforts from the faculty member, senior students, and graduate students (assistants) synergistically?, (4) does the content in our capstone adequately prepare seniors for graduate study?, (5) does the content in our capstone adequately prepare seniors for the professional environment?, (6) does our capstone experience integrate key aspects of business and marketing?.

Once these questions have been deliberated upon by the curriculum planners, specific ideas for curriculum change should be put forth and implemented. Recognizing that efforts to culminate the marketing curriculum with a capstone experience will likely be ongoing, requiring cycles of planning, implementation, assessment, and so on. Following are examples of how some university programs have attempted to achieve their capstone experience goals:

- ◆ *Structure the capstone course/experience in such a way to assess all student learning goals approved by the department;*

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- ◆ *Expectations for the foundational concepts necessary for the graduate marketing course are shared with marketing faculty teaching the senior capstone course/experience;*
  - ◆ *Expectations for foundational concepts necessary for the capstone course/experience are shared with faculty who teach pre-requisite courses for the capstone course/experience.*

The auditing and planning tool found in Table 1 shows the curriculum reform tactics listed above. Curriculum planners are encouraged to add additional items that they believe will serve to culminate their program with a capstone experience.

### **Cultivate a Sense of Community**

*“Research universities should foster a community of learners. Large universities must find ways to create a sense of place and to help students develop small communities within the larger whole” (The Boyer Commission, 1998; p. 34).*

Learning communities in a university setting are usually comprised of students with a common interest or purpose; they may be part of an educational or curricular requirement (The Boyer Commission, 1998). In a large research university members may be from a wide variety of backgrounds, cultures, ages, experiences, living conditions (off or on campus), and beliefs which can lead to an enriching if not memorable set of experiences. Student learning communities may take one of several forms, including cohort groups, paired or team-taught courses, on-site or off-site or cyberspace locations, or campus programming events (The Boyer Commission, 1998; Janusik & Wolvin, 2007). Research shows that small learning communities have been found to enhance communication and satisfaction among members, help faculty balance responsibilities of research and course management, however a noted disadvantage of online chat rooms is a less than ideal degree of interdisciplinary discussions (Janusik & Wolvin, 2007). Curriculum reformers/planners responded, first by asking several questions about the current curriculum (these questions should be asked by curriculum planners today): (1) do student study groups/communities tend to be forming as a result of coursework responsibilities (e.g., team projects)?, (2) are we providing physical/cyberspace location(s) in support of ad-hoc study groups?, (3) should we accommodate the needs of the small communities if they go beyond physical location, perhaps to include the ability to practice team presentations using computer/projector/screen equipment, or accessing certain databases?, (4) are their student organizations related to our discipline that we can support (e.g., American Marketing Association or Students in Free Enterprise local chapters), and (5) are we keeping abreast of campus sponsored events that relate to our discipline and promoting them to our majors?.

Once these questions have been deliberated by curriculum planners, specific ideas for curriculum change should be put forth and implemented; recognizing that efforts to cultivate a sense of community will likely be ongoing, requiring cycles of planning, implementation, assessment, and so on. Following are examples of how some university programs have attempted to cultivate a sense of community among their majors:

- ◆ *Host broad-interest events that are related to the marketing discipline;*
- ◆ *Involve local chapter organizations in the planning of sponsored events;*
- ◆ *Identify student study/meeting areas for use by marketing majors;*
- ◆ *Involve student groups in projects that involve experiential learning through service projects for the department, university, or community;*
- ◆ *Use team-based projects in class;*
- ◆ *Have teams present and interact with other teams during class discussions;*
- ◆ *Set up course-specific chat rooms for students to access.*

The auditing and planning tool found in Table 1 shows the curriculum reform tactics listed above. Curriculum planners are encouraged to add additional items that they believe will serve to cultivate a sense of community.

### **Change Faculty Reward Systems**

*Research universities must commit themselves to the highest standards in teaching as well as research and create faculty reward structures that validate commitment (The Boyer Commission, 1998; p. 31).*

The crux of the issue when one is considering faculty reward systems amidst curriculum reform is striking a reasonable balance between teaching, research, and service responsibilities and rewarding faculty accordingly in both the tenure and promotion processes (The Boyer Commission, 1998). The responsibility to strike a reasonable balance does not end with a departmental leader, but pervades upward through the university levels. A case in point is the recent appointment of Drew Gilpin Faust as president of Harvard University was encapsulated by concerns of her ability to shepherd the ongoing undergraduate curriculum reform efforts while guiding expansion of the university's scientific enterprise (Wilson, 2007). Curriculum reformers/planners responded, first by asking several questions about the current curriculum (these questions should be asked by curriculum planners today): (1) does our faculty philosophically value a balanced commitment to high quality teaching, research, and service work?, (2) does our department, college, and university practically value a balanced commitment to high quality teaching, research, and service work and is this evidenced in promotion and tenure processes?, (3) is there a consistency between department,

college, and university standards?, (4) does our department foster a culture that desires to integrate research and teaching activities whenever appropriate to do so?, (5) are the rewards for excellence in teaching, developing interdisciplinary programs, or mentoring student research projects a one-time event, or a permanent addition to salary levels?, and (6) is there an (in)appropriate amount of faculty resources dedicated to university committee work?.

Once these questions have been deliberated by curriculum planners, specific ideas for curriculum change should be put forth and implemented; recognizing that efforts to cultivate a sense of community will likely be ongoing, requiring cycles of planning, implementation, assessment, and so on. Following are examples of how some university programs have structured faculty reward systems (The Boyer Commission, 1998; Wilson, 2007):

- ◆ *Appoint department chairs and curriculum reform leaders who have a demonstrated commitment to undergraduate teaching as well as research activities;*
- ◆ *Redesigning the criterion for promotion and tenure to clearly identify levels of expected faculty performance in the areas of teaching, research, and service;*
- ◆ *Comparing departmental standards for teaching, research, and service to those of the college and university; seeking avenues to create consistency and support between criteria;*
- ◆ *Talk about shared values and pride in quality teaching, research, and service (breed a culture of balance and support);*
- ◆ *Attend professional/academic conferences to learn of new ideas and ways to structure faculty reward systems;*
- ◆ *Seek out external research grants that promote teaching and research activities;*
- ◆ *Give financial rewards for excellence in a notable area that is valued by the department (e.g., team-teaching, developing a new interdisciplinary course, teaching an overload);*
- ◆ *Assess whether there is an inordinate toll on the faculty as a result of university-related committee work (e.g., a faculty member may be volunteering too much at the university level and be performing at less than optimal levels in other areas valued by the department as more core to the department mission).*

The auditing and planning tool found in Table 1 shows the curriculum reform tactics listed above. Curriculum planners are encouraged to add additional items that they believe will serve to enhance faculty reward systems. It is the position of this paper that the Boyer directives identify the strategic direction for change in undergraduate programs of study and may act as a guiding structure from which to assess and reform an existing curriculum.

A thorough review of marketing curricula and surrounding issues reveals a range of stakeholder drivers and situational considerations that are inter-related and actively evolve in nature

over time. The way in which universities/departments respond to the pressures caused by these drivers can vary from a pilot study or more incremental approach, to a holistic conversion of the whole program. As an example, the University of Pennsylvania ran a ‘curricular experiment’ or pilot study of the reformed interdisciplinary curriculum; establishing a control group (those in the traditional curriculum plan) and a test group (Bartlett, 2002). Focus groups, individual interviews, and surveys are conducted with each group along the way; majors, courses, and grades are also tracked. Outcome measures include a comparison of the two programs on (in part) experience/bonding with professors and quality of writing/communication skills (Bartlett, 2002). Paul R. Goldin, an associate professor at Penn State co-taught a pilot course and admits that “a lot of things didn’t work as well as we had hoped. Many of the end-of-semester evaluations from students were negative. We underestimated how much of a challenge it is to bring three people together to teach a course” (Bartlett, 2002; A12). Goldin and others from Penn State caution against team teaching as different teaching styles can mix like oil and water, but there is some evidence that contradictory paradigms can cause ‘fire’ in the classroom and energize students (Bartlett, 2002). In 2001, the first Penn State pilot study cohort was heading into their junior year and their research requirement; curriculum planners discussed what the nature and depth of the research project should be, whether there would be enough professors who were willing and able to serve as research mentors, who should grade and approve the research projects, the handling of students who turn in a substandard project, whether a student’s graduation could be delayed due to a failed project, and finally if the pilot proved successful how could Penn State adopt the new curriculum research requirement for all 6,355 students knowing there would not be enough faculty resources to allow it? (Bartlett, 2002). “Coming up with something that every student can do raises practical problems that may not have a solution,” says Larry D. Gladney, an associate professor of physics (Bartlett, 2002, p. A12). Struggling to gain buy-in from students, Penn State made several modifications of its original pilot study, including the addition of a weekly discussion section for pilot study students (run by a graduate teaching assistant) and supported by an extensive web site.

In contrast to Penn State’s pilot study, Syracuse University undertook a holistic conversion of its entire undergraduate curriculum (from freshman through senior year) with the 1999 freshman class as the first to experience it (Hubbard, 1999). Four major themes were integrated through the new curriculum; entrepreneurial management, globalization, technology management, and leadership. (Hubbard, 1999). Entrepreneurs who are also adjunct faculty with little teaching experience are paired with faculty mentors, establishing a mutual benefit for faculty whose practical knowledge base is enhanced. The program has been received extremely well by parents, who say these are the kinds of things students should be learning and doing”. All new students, regardless of major, will be required to take a course in entrepreneurship. In addition, faculty is currently developing an elective entrepreneurial “capstone” experience for senior students (Hubbard, 1999). In 1997, General Electric Fund awarded the faculty at Syracuse University’s School of Management

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a grant of \$450,000, to support the joint development of entrepreneurial management courses and modules that could integrate entrepreneurship into existing courses.

Schneider (1999) reports that once the curriculum committee has come up with a reformation idea, garnering buy-in and interest from the rest of the faculty can be difficult if nearly impossible as faculty often see the resulting curriculum recommendation report as merely a rhetorical device. There is irony in the fact that while faculty uninvolved in the curriculum planning processes may perceive the plan as ‘window dressing’, administration typically perceives that something tangible and worthwhile has been accomplished (Schneider, 1999).

### USING THE TOOL

In the previous sections of this paper seven Boyer Commission Report directives were discussed along with guiding principles for each (The Boyer Commission, 1998). These are presented in the first two columns in the curriculum audit and planning tool found in Table 1. Prior to, and after the Boyer Commission Report was released, marketplace reactions occurred from researchers, academics, and universities alike. A review of the literature found that reactions to the ‘call for undergraduate curriculum reform’ occurred in each area that the Boyer Commission Report had a directive, and came in many forms; ranging from the addition of interdisciplinary electives to the marketing curriculum, to encouraging students to attend university sponsored events that are related to their field of study. Marketplace reactions to each directive are listed in the third column of Table 1 along with recommendations from the Boyer Commission Report (1998). The curriculum planner should add to each categorical listing; examples may include current programming efforts or courses that are being implemented but are not pre-printed on the tool, ideas for future programming that are thought to support the directive in question. Once the tool has been customized to the undergraduate program, the planner proceeds to the right hand column of Table 1. Here five columns for curriculum reform stages are shown, however depending upon the mission and vision of the marketing department and their current curriculum plan, more or less stages may be planned. Each stage may represent a year, several years, or may be progressive based upon certain goals being met (e.g., once the goals of stage I are met, the faculty begin implementation on stage II of their curriculum plan). If a department does not have a curriculum plan for the future, then only the first column (stage I) would be used for assessment purposes. In the course of assessment, the curriculum planner begins at the top of the tool, refers to each potential action and indicates in the first column whether the current marketing curriculum includes that action or addresses that area or not. An ‘NA’ placed in the cell indicates that the current curriculum does not meet that directive element; shading the cell indicates that the current curriculum does meet that directive element. Once stage I column is filled in, the rest of the columns can progressively serve as a tracking/planning tool as defined timelines proceed. For example, if the stage columns were to represent years, and the marketing program had no interdisciplinary electives in the current

curriculum (e.g., an 'NA' in the stage I cell), planners would discuss whether an interdisciplinary elective would be a valuable asset to the current curriculum and if so, discuss from which department the elective may come from, and after considerable discussion and research determine that they would like to introduce an interdisciplinary elective in year 2. This tool helps curriculum planners of undergraduate marketing programs assess the degree to which their current and desired curriculums meet directives as put forth in the Boyer Commission Report (1998).

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Frost and Teodorescu (2003) state that successful curriculum transformation must begin with structural changes to the curriculum, be followed by behavioral changes, and ultimately result in cultural change. The alternative is to change the structure of the curriculum and assume that faculty behaviors, teaching emphasis, assignments, technology use, and collaboration with colleagues will automatically happen; which will result in unmet curriculum goals, frustrated faculty, students, and administrators, wasted efforts, and a dysfunctional culture (Frost & Teodorescu, 2003). Wasted efforts may span formation of faculty committees, conducting internal evaluations, hiring external consultants, developing new courses/majors, revising incentives for faculty (Boyer Commission, 1998; Frost and Teodorescu, 2003). Many marketing faculty see curriculum reform as a futile effort, done to check an administrative box or enhance public relations. According to Anrea Leskes, former vice president at the Association of American Colleges and Universities and an expert on curriculum reform, even when the curriculum reform effort is sincere, it's often managed poorly and fails to get faculty buy-in. In contrast, there is hope. The research by Frost and Teodorescu (2003) reveals five themes related to cultural change that must be operationalized in the curriculum through collegiality and faculty collaboration: 1) clarifying the institutional mission and educational goals, 2) making teaching a priority, 3) supporting intellectual community, 4) recognizing teaching as a multifaceted activity, and 5) understanding the responsibility of students. Several years ago, the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) expanded its curriculum reform consulting program and can provide comprehensive and instructive reviews (Karukstis and Rowlett, 2005).]. And finally, in terms of the rate of curriculum change, Stanford University's panel overseeing curriculum reform recommends 'moderate' and incremental changes that allow the university to see what works (Bartlett, 2002; Leatherman, 1994).

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Table 1: Boyer Commission Report Directives, Guiding Statements, and Marketing Department Actions by Stage of Curriculum Reform							
Boyer Commission Report Directives	Guiding Statement to each Directive <i>(quote taken from Boyer Report)</i>	Marketplace Curriculum Reactions or Recommended Curriculum Actions	Undergraduate Marketing Curriculum Stages Planned Over Time (NA = curriculum does not address this directive element; Shaded cell = directive is being, or will be addressed)				
			I	II	III	IV	V
Remove barriers to interdisciplinary education	<i>Remove barriers to and create mechanisms for much more interdisciplinary undergraduate education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdisciplinary Electives</li> <li>• Team Teaching</li> </ul>					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate Program</li> <li>• Concentrations/Tracks</li> <li>• Minors</li> </ul>					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customized Interdisciplinary Majors</li> <li>• Comprehensive Business/Marketing Plan</li> </ul>					
Make research-based learning the standard	<i>Renew emphasis on discovery-based learning guided by mentoring rather than on the transmission of information. Faculty learn from students and students learn from faculty (element of reciprocity).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students engage in secondary and primary research in as many courses as possible.</li> </ul>					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Inquiry-based Learning</i> in the form of courses allow for joint projects and collaborative efforts.</li> </ul>					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students learn how to convey the results of their work effectively both orally and in writing.</li> </ul>					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Inquiry-based Learning</i> in the form of carefully constructed internships with practical experience.</li> </ul>					
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-Service Projects</li> </ul>					
Link communication skills and coursework	<i>Undergraduate education must enable students to acquire strong communication skills, and thereby create graduates who are proficient in both written and oral communications.</i>	Student grades reflect both mastery of content and ability to convey content. Both expectations are communicated to students through syllabi and instructor directives.					
		Courses throughout the curriculum reinforce communication skills by asking for written and oral exercise.					

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			I	II	III	IV	V
Use information technology creatively	<i>Because research universities create technological innovations, their students should have the best opportunities to learn state-of-the-art practices—and learn to ask questions that stretch the uses of the technology.</i>	Faculty help students discover how to frame meaningful questions thoughtfully, beginning with the first core marketing course assignments, along with the introduction to using technology for secondary data research.					
		Create new and innovative teaching processes and materials using technology.					
		Conscientiously prepare students for professional life and may progressively enhance student understanding of the tools of technology as applied to marketing decision making.					
		<i>Boyer Recommends: Active interchange between units on campus and through professional meetings should encourage and inspire faculty to create new computer capabilities for teaching and to share ideas about effective computer-based learning.</i>					
Culminate with a capstone experience	<i>The final semester(s) should focus on a major project and utilize to the fullest the research and communication skills learned in the previous semesters</i>	The Marketing capstone is appropriate for the discipline. <i>(Boyer: Should bring together the faculty member, grad student, and seniors in shared or mutually reinforcing projects)</i>					
		The Marketing capstone prepares students for the expectations and standards of graduate work and/or the professional workplace.					
		The goal of the Marketing capstone is to be the culmination of the inquiry-based learning of earlier coursework, broadening, deepening, and integrating the total experience of the major					
		The Marketing capstone project could develop from previous research experience or internship.					
		The Marketing capstone allows for collaboration among students.					

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			I	II	III	IV	V
		<i>Boyer Recommends: All graduate students should have time to adapt to graduate school before entering classrooms as teachers.</i>					
Change faculty reward systems	<i>Research universities must commit themselves to the highest standards in teaching as well as research and create faculty reward structures that validate that commitment</i>	Departmental leaders have been faculty members with a demonstrated commitment to undergraduate teaching and learning as well as to traditionally define research.					
		The correlation between good undergraduate teaching and good research is recognized in faculty awards, promotion and tenure decisions.					
		A “culture of teaching linked with research” may be cultivated to heighten the linkages between teaching and research.					
		<i>Boyer Recommends: Prestigious professional research meetings such as national disciplinary conferences should contain one or more sessions that focus on new ideas and course models for undergraduate education.</i>					
		Sponsors of external research grants may be used to promote undergraduate participation, thus facilitating the research experiences of undergraduates.					
		Rewards for teaching excellence, for participation in interdisciplinary programs, and for outstanding mentorship may be used in the form of permanent salary increases rather than one-time awards.					
		Faculty teaching overloads should be appropriately recognized for the increased workload.					
		<i>Boyer Recommends: Committee work at all levels of university life should be greatly reduced to allow more time and effort for productive student-related efforts.</i>					

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			I	II	III	IV	V
Cultivate a sense of community	<i>Research universities should foster a community of learners.</i>	Cultivate a sense of place through appropriate <i>shared rituals</i> that are attractive to all students within the major. (e.g., Student Awards; Department Newsletter; other?)					
		<i>Boyer Recommends: The enriching experience of association with people of diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and beliefs must be a normal part of university life.</i>					
		Gathering places such as Student Study Areas or Computer Labs help to nurture community spirit among our students.					
		<i>Boyer Recommends: Commuting students must be integrated into university life by making their participation easy and attractive.</i>					
		<i>Boyer Recommends: Collaborative study groups and project teams should be used as a means of creating customized communities for residential and commuting students.</i>					
		Common interests, such as jointly sponsored events between the marketing department and student organizations help to cultivate a sense of community as students and faculty work toward a shared goal.					
		<i>Boyer Recommends: Major issues forums and other extracurricular sharing of ideas, opinions, and arts bring students together, particularly when groups or clubs sponsor or help sponsor the events.</i>					
		<i>Boyer Recommends: Campus programming, such as lectures and performing arts programs, taken as a whole, need to touch the interests of as many audiences as possible.</i>					

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