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Multicultural Literature as Defined in College Texts

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Abstract

The authors of this study conducted a content analysis of children's literature college textbooks to determine how the term multiculturalism was interpreted within the context of children's literature. They determined how the concept was defined, the extent to which subcultures in the United States were represented, the amount of text devoted to each represented cultural group, and the number of recommended trade books for each group.

Introduction

In the latter half of the 20th century, a trend known as multiculturalism gained prominence in American education. Hanley (2003) suggested that multicultural education emerged "to address the educational needs of a society that continues to struggle with the realization that it is not monocultural, but is an amalgamation of many cultures". (p.)

Gay (1994) in an extensive study of the most frequently used definitions of multicultural education identified 13 specific descriptions of the concept and noted that several points were common in all the definitions in that they all agree that the content of multicultural programs should include:

1. ethnic identifies, cultural pluralism, unequal distribution of resources and
2. opportunities and other sociopolitical problems stemming from long histories of oppression….
3. multicultural education as a philosophy, a methodology for education reform, and a set of specific content areas within instructional programs. (p. 3)

In her book, *Affirming Diversity*, Nieto (2000) stated:

> Multicultural education….challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. (p. 305)

A review of the numerous definitions finds them inclusive and broad in nature offering educators a term which may vary greatly in its interpretation.

For many students preparing to be elementary school teachers, their introduction to multicultural education occurs during their study of multicultural literature, a component of a required children's literature course. Bishop (1993), a pioneer in this field, presented readers with this classic definition of multicultural literature: literature about people who are members of groups considered to be outside the socio-political mainstream of the United States. The term described books about what Bishop referred to as people of color - African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics. Bishop maintained that part of the reason such books are considered multicultural is to avoid the use of the term minority, which connotes both a "low status and inferiority" to the mainstream culture. (p. 39) Multicultural literature, according to Bishop, could also include books about people of color outside the United States as well as folktales, fiction set in other countries, and information books about the countries, cultures, and beliefs of people of color. The authors of this study questioned how the term multiculturalism is interpreted in the children's literature college textbooks read by preservice teachers. What "groups" (cultural, religious, etc.) did the texts' authors include in their works? How is the concept of multicultural education defined? To what extent is multiculturalism presented as an inclusive notion or does it, in fact, become exclusive and remain so on a consistent basis?

To answer these questions, the authors examined the multicultural entries found in eight children's literature textbooks in use in undergraduate elementary education programs. Textbooks selected were those that had a second or greater edition of publishing history. Multiple editions indicate continued use in college and university classrooms nationwide.
The researchers noted:

1. The definition of the term multiculturalism.
2. How the term is interpreted as it is related to children's literature.
3. What specific groups (ethnic, religious, etc.) were identified?
4. What specific groups' literature was represented?

It is during this literature course students read about multicultural literature and begin to form a conceptual understanding of what is meant by multiculturalism. If the text being used has a limited definition of multicultural literature, the preservice teacher may develop a narrow perspective of the meaning of the concept of multiculturalism.

Although there seems to be a consensus that multicultural literature is about people who are not in the nation's mainstream, there is a lack of agreement as to what constitutes populations outside of the mainstream (Temple, et al, 2002). While some may contend that multicultural literature is by or about people of color in the United States, others may include religious minorities or diverse life styles, such as families with same-sex parents. For these reasons, the authors chose to examine how multiculturalism was being presented to future elementary teachers, what groups were being highlighted, and which were being excluded or mentioned peripherally.

Tatum (1999) suggested that children's earliest experiences tend to take place among people of their same race, ethnicity, or culture. Gay (1994) concurred and warned that the absence of significant relations across ethnic, social, and cultural lines may reinforce stereotypes and cause people to be suspicious and distrustful, even fearful of those who are different. Because this separation of cultures is prevalent in our society, people often count on second-hand sources such as books for developing ideas about people from other races and ethnic and religious backgrounds (Temple, et al, 2002). One way educators can teach youngsters about culturally different groups is by providing quality multicultural books as a component of a multicultural curriculum. What today's children learn about themselves and others in our classrooms will make a difference in the world of tomorrow (Beatty, 1997).

Colby and Lyon (2004) found that preservice teachers tend to have unexamined beliefs about cultural diversity and have little understanding of the impact of their personal views on classroom interactions, discussion, and practices. Teacher educators cannot easily ascertain the knowledge base teacher candidates possess of cultural groups in our society. Because of this unknown variable, it is imperative that teacher educators realize how multiculturalism is defined and interpreted in children's literature texts. The way authors present multiculturalism often provides the basis upon which preservice teachers develop cultural concepts. If an exclusionary approach is taken where some cultural groups are discussed while others are omitted, the preservice teachers may assume the predominate groups mentioned are the only ones that need to be addressed in the classroom. If the concept is narrowly defined, it will impact not only teachers in training but their future students. Additionally, if the children being taught are members of an excluded group, then, at worst, they might internalize the idea that they are unimportant in the eyes of their teacher and/or the world.

Multiculturalism Defined in College Texts

Russell (2005) used the term culturally diverse literature in *Literature for Children*, which he defined as stories about people in the United States outside the Anglo-American ethnic group. The culturally diverse groups he identified include African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and "the myriad of other ethnic groups that contribute to the splendid array of peoples in the United States." (p. 76) He incorporated a section on worldwide cultures in which he emphasized the importance of exposing children to a rich variety of cultures through literature which may enable them to live and thrive in diversity. Guidelines for evaluating literary works for their attention to cultural consciousness and recommended readings were offered. Additionally, he presented a bibliography for children which included titles that highlighted the following groups: African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and Jewish people.

In Stood-Hill and Amspaugh-Corson's (2005) *Children's Literature: Discovery for a Lifetime*, their chapter on multicultural literature defined the term as including books that incorporated the

experiences of white ethnic and cultural groups as well as diversities of race and religion in the United States. The specific cultures noted were: Native Americans, African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and Jewish people. They also mentioned books about the Amish and Appalachian cultures.

Norton, Norton, and McClure (2003) dedicated a chapter in *Through the Eyes of a Child: An Introduction to Children's Literature,* to the study of multicultural literature. Multicultural literature, is this work, was defined as literature about racial or ethnic minority groups that are culturally and socially different from the white Anglo-Saxon majority in the United States, whose middle-class values and customs are most represented in American literature. In-depth discussions were presented in the chapter for the following types of literature: African American, Native American, Latino, and Asian American. The endpapers of the text listed milestones in multicultural children's literature for the following cultures: African American, Native American, Latino, Asian, Jewish, and Middle Eastern. Although Jewish and Middle Eastern literature milestones were listed in the endpapers, information about these groups was not found in the body of the chapter.

In *Children's Literature: An Invitation to the World,* Mitchell (2003) defined multicultural literature as literature that calls attention to peoples and voices not traditionally written about or included in the body of literature most frequently taught. In the U.S., this group, according to the author, consisted of African Americans, Mexican Americans and Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians. Mitchell emphasized the importance of using books that respect the cultures they represent. She urged teachers to avoid the "tourist approach" to literature, where a culture is oversimplified by looking only at food, fashion, folklore, and festivals. Such an approach tends to perpetuate stereotypes and undermines the intent and values of sharing multicultural materials with children which are used to expand their understanding and appreciation of themselves and others. The endpapers included the titles of books about American Indians, African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and international characters.

Galda and Cullinan's (2002) *Literature and the Child*, included a chapter on culturally diverse literature in which they focused on books from North American parallel cultures, or groups formerly called minorities including: African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native American peoples.

Anderson's (2006) *Elementary Children's Literature*, presented a discussion of multicultural literature however, did not contain a definition in the body of the chapter. The book contained a glossary which included a definition of multicultural literature as cross-cultural literature that includes books about and by peoples of all cultures. The literature described in her text represented the following groups: Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. She included a list of four books representing each of the following religions: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson's (1999) *Essentials of Children's Literature,* contained a chapter entitled, Multicultural and International Literature which defined multicultural literature as any trade book, regardless of genre that has as a main character "who is a member of a racial, religious or language micro culture other than the Euro-American one." (p. 188) The groups highlighted included: African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, Jewish American, and Native American.

Temple, Martinez, Yokota, and Naylor's (2002) *Children's Books in Children's Hands*, addressed multicultural literature in a chapter in their text, entitled, Literature Representing Diverse Perspectives. Multicultural literature in this work was defined as literature that reflects the multitude of cultural groups within the United States and focuses on works that depict ethnic and regional groups whose cultures historically have been less represented than European cultures. The groups noted were: African Americans, Asian Americans, Latin Americans, and Native Americans. Other cultural groups recognized and mentioned by the authors included Jewish Americans, Appalachian Americans, and European Americans such as Swedish Americans and Italian Americans.

The eight textbooks reviewed each contained a chapter dealing with the topic of multicultural literature. All of the texts included the following four major cultural groups in their discussions of multicultural children's literature: African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans. Three of the textbooks included Jewish Americans as a cultural category and two mentioned Appalachian Americans as a cultural group. The major cultural groups, African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans received the largest share of in-depth coverage. The number of pages devoted to each cultural group by text and the number of recommended trade books for each group is shown in Table 1. This information indicates the quantity of text coverage and the number of recommended titles per group.

The nature of the modern world requires that all educators become more aware of and sensitive to the diverse cultures found, not just in our country, but in the world at large (Russell, 2005). Teacher

educators must be aware of the strengths and limitations found in the textbooks our students use. While most of the textbooks reviewed acknowledged the cultural diversity of the world in general, the majority focused on children's books representing four major subcultures of the United States: African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American. This finding left the authors questioning why these texts were offering such a narrow definition of multiculturalism in children's literature. A limited definition of multiculturalism as it relates to children's literature could create a cultural void in the knowledge base of our future teachers and subsequently, their students. Children's books are now available that include an array of cultures in the United States. Carefully selected literature that represents the cultural diversity of our nation can help students understand the principles of tolerance, inclusiveness, diversity, and respect for all.

One purpose for exposing preservice teachers to an assortment of quality multicultural literature is that it enables them to make educated choices regarding the types of books they have available to share with their future students. We can better prepare preservice teachers by asking them to move beyond the pages of their textbooks; by engaging them in questioning why authors are defining subgroups from a narrow ethnocentric perspective. We need to question the generic, homogeneous labels assigned to the major cultures represented in these textbooks. For instance, the designation of African American as a racial group does not apply to people of color from the Caribbean and locales other than Africa. Each of the dominate groups were assigned broad labels, such as Hispanic Americans, which basically uses the Spanish language to establish commonality. In addition, preservice teachers need to examine why some cultures are not mentioned and discuss the implications of omitting such groups, especially when we consider the conditions of our world today. The definitions of multiculturalism as it relates to children's literature were limited within the texts examined to ethnic groups that exist in the United States. Cultures that exist outside of the U.S., if they were mentioned were not examined. It therefore behooves teacher educators to expand upon the textbooks being used in college and university classrooms. We are charged with the task of assisting preservice teachers in finding quality children's literature representing diversity within the four major cultures and of obtaining a larger sampling of books about cultures outside of the major subcultures of our nation.

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Table 1

The Representation of Cultural Groups in Children's Literature Textbooks

Author(s)	Cultural Groups	Pages per Group	Number of Recommended Books per Group	Total Number of Pages per Chapter
Anderson				
Galda & Cullinan				
Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson	African American Asian American Hispanic American Jewish American Native American	1 page ½ page ½ page ½ page ½ page	91 36 41 38 58	36
Mitchell				
Norton, Norton, & McClure				
Russell	African American Asian American Hispanic American Jewish People Native American	1 ¼ page 1 page 7/8 page ¼ page 1 ½ pages	97 38 40 21 54	20
Stood-Hill & Amspaugh				

Challenges and Joys of Earning a Doctorate Degree: Overcoming the "ABD" Phenomenon

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Abstract:

Earning a doctorate degree is one of the highest honors in one's journey of academic progress; yet very few candidates actually achieve this rank. Part of the reason for some of the challenges in achieving such a rank can be the time requirement, the rigorous and focused research process, passing the comprehensive examinations, a publication requirement, and successfully finishing the journal of the dissertation. Of course, the dissertation journey can be an unpredictable and an uncertain trip as it involves many uncertainties. Two of the critical elements of successfully completing the doctoral program are to effectively layout the requirements for the comprehensive exam and dissertation process so students begin their work with an appropriate committee in the early stage of their research process. This document, which is prepared for administrators and new doctoral students, provides a review of the demand for doctorally qualified faculty members in tertiary education, discusses strategies for doing well on the comprehensive exam, and highlights some of the main requirements and ingredients for successfully initiating and completing the doctoral dissertation process.

The document transitions to comp examinations used for purposes of learning assessment and other such variables that impact the success rate of learners in higher education. Finally, the document provides suggestions and recommendations for students to successfully initiate and complete their dissertation process. Given the fact that about 30-70% of most students who enroll in a doctoral program tend to become ABDs (all but dissertation), successfully initiating and completing the dissertation process becomes very important. The authors, based on their combined thirty years of personal experience with this process, briefly state their recommendations, as well as best practices, and offer suggestions for new doctoral students who are about to begin the dissertation process.

Key Words: Higher education, doctoral, motivation, earning a doctorate, challenges in doctoral programs, doctoral programs, assessment.

Motivation for a Doctorate Degree: Its Joys[1]

A colleague once said that "I joined the doctoral program because I needed two things for my continued happiness: first, intellectual stimulation; and, then physical stimulation. Years ago when I first got married, I received both forms of stimulation from my husband; shortly after, I needed new sources of excitement and invigoration which the doctoral program fulfilled." Another colleague named Kelvin A. Massey mentioned that he was pursuing graduate studies, not necessarily for improving job potential, but to learn the vocabulary and language of business and high education research. In his real estate law practice, he was frequently called upon to resolve disputes and negotiate contracts between parties as well as implement the terms and conditions of previously negotiated agreements and contracts. During the course

[1] For more information, see contributions from the authors in the 2007 book entitled "*Earning a Doctorate Degree in the 1st Century: Its Challenges and Joys*." ILEAD Academy, LLC.

of his solo practice, he learned the concepts of managing a business such as marketing, organizational structure, financing, accounting, and strategic planning. Although he operated a highly successful practice, the limited business education relegated him to decision-making based on "what made sense" and other intuitive factors. After the sale of the business, he decided to satisfy a long deferred personal goal as well as satisfy his craving to learn "the language" of business and higher education regarding research and enrolled in the graduate business program.

While everyone can use intellectual stimulation, there are many ways to get it, and a doctoral program is just one possible source. However, intellectual stimulation is not the only reason people pursue a doctoral degree. As previously mentioned, there are many reasons for pursuing a doctoral degree. One of the biggest may be the shortage in qualified terminally-degreed faculty members on college campuses. Regardless of the reason, studying for a doctoral degree is entirely different from the previous education. Some experts believe that doctoral study differs from earlier educational pursuits in two ways: intellectual and psychological. In terms of intellectual, doctorate study must produce scholars; as such, it involves doing a number of intensive researches and completing area-focused studies. In addition, there are a number of psychological aspects unique to doctoral studies. In some cases, doctoral students also have to deal with difficult feelings such as boredom, frustration, and loneliness. Planning to get a doctoral degree, students should evaluate and ask themselves why they need a doctoral degree. Not being able to adequately identify one's personal motivation for pursuing the degree may lead to additional stress and frustration and ultimately to dropping out of the program during some of the more difficult moments…yes, there can be challenging moments that make one think and stretch beyond his or her original abilities and boundaries. Of course, it is often the desire and objective of wanting to know more about a specific topic that people start their journey of education and higher levels of learning as demonstrated by Professor Mustafa's (last author) statement:

> The reasons for why I chose to obtain a higher education, as in obtaining a doctorate degree, are many. Growing up I was always under the impression that in order for me to understand the world around me, I must attend school and continue learning. I assumed, maybe subconsciously, that by the time I finish high school, I would know everything there is to know about the world. However, I was negatively surprised! Once I graduated from Columbia High School in Lake City, Florida, and stepped into the "real world," I felt as if I was going back to kindergarten. I felt that I did not know anything, or the things that I should have known by then. Of course, I knew how to solve calculus problems, do basic and advanced chemistry problems, and even write short stories. But, I was still missing something. And that was the yearning for more knowledge. That is when I knew I had to start kindergarten again, and thus I began my college years. Again, I thought, by the time I have my bachelor's degree, I will be set. However, I was wrong! I learned much, yet I still did not know what I wanted to have known. From the beginning of mankind, infectious diseases have existed, and we have always been haunted by them. How could a bacterium that is not even visible to the naked eye cause so much harm! The more I learned, the more questions I had. Just like new computers are being introduced each year with bigger hard drives, similarly my brain capacity was being upgraded with every year I spent at the university level doing graduate research. Thus, I continued my research and doctoral studies in Microbiology at the University of Florida. Those years were time well spent. Truly, I did gain much understanding of the microscopic world, yet I still did not know. I was left with many questions. But, it took a doctoral degree for me to realize that I will never understand any topic fully no matter how long I research it. For me, it is the satisfaction of gaining that extra knowledge and "know how" that drove me to get a higher education and learn to research.

A doctorate program can certainly fulfill one's desire for knowledge as well as provide the researcher with the understanding that there is so much more that can be studied in the coming years and generations as demonstrated by Mustafa's educational journey and experience. Mustafa finished his doctorate degree and then completed three years of fellowship at Harvard University before taking a research faculty position at the University of Florida. Today, he is teaching at the Florida Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers, Florida. Of course, while Mustafa's reasons for higher education stemmed from a desire to gain more knowledge in hopes of researching and understanding what causes certain diseases and

how to prevent them from hurting human beings, everyone else can have his or her own reasons for pursuing a doctorate or an advanced degree in his or her profession. For example, according to Dr. Nilofar Jamasi, a dentist in Central Florida (Personal Communication with the first author, January 2007):

> A dentist may pursue a postdoctoral dental degree because he or she enjoys performing specific procedures in dentistry and feels fulfilled while performing those procedures. While practicing comprehensive dentistry, a dentist may develop a rising interest toward a specific field of dentistry encouraging him/her to seek more education. This newly-gained knowledge will be invaluable to the patients, as more services can be provided to them. Another reason a dentist may pursue further education is to teach and research in the dentistry field at the university level. This high level of expertise will allow one to contribute effectively to the future generations of learners, and such experts will be able to participate in the creation and progress of innovative research projects. In addition, in the developed economies, now we have access to such great learning opportunities that it often makes people feel fortunate and compelled to study and get more advanced levels of expertise. For example, a general dentist may seek a postdoctoral degree mainly because he or she is personally motivated to do so for his or her intrinsic reasons, concerned for the wellbeing of others, and have the desire to explore his/her interest further in one specific area.

Medical experts who are practicing dentistry, microbiology, or medicine, for example, often earn advanced educational degrees to provide more services to patients and/or to conduct clinical and academic research in hopes of discovering new knowledge and advancing their professions. Of course, most business, leadership and management professionals also seek higher levels of knowledge in hopes of gaining new knowledge and advancing their professions. At the mean time, they too wish to better serve their customers, employees, third party beneficiaries, and others in the community. Perhaps there are no wrong reasons for gaining more knowledge and pursuing a doctorate degree when such learning benefits society through the advancement of knowledge or prevention of catastrophes.

Bahaudin's reasons for earning a doctorate degree in business and management can be summed up as follows: personal and intellectual development, recognition of contribution, entrance into academia (research, professorship, lecturing), better employment opportunities, and social mobilization or networking with professional colleagues. Of course, regardless of the reasons, earning such an achievement also depends on many other situational variables such as time, money, parental status, martial status, and overall family support.

The Growing Challenges of Higher Education

The world of academia is growing and so is the need for faculty, especially the ones that are professionally and academically qualified. Competitive students select a university for a number of reasons and one of the important might be the faculty who facilitate the transfer of knowledge and assess student earning. Simply stated, the job of educators can be summed up as creating and validating knowledge. Educators create knowledge through research and publications, and they validate knowledge through continuous assessment of student learning and achievements. Assessment is a tool to help measure the knowledge or wisdom gained among the graduates of an academic program.

Some generals goals of education can be thought of as replacing an empty mind with (hopefully) an open one, to recondition a biased mind with a tolerant one, and, finally, to fill one's time with a positive mindset to see boundless possibilities in this world of vast opportunities rather than being a pessimist or constantly complaining about the status quo. However, the goal of a doctoral or a higher education program is often more specialized and specific to a "focused" question of determining the answer to "why? Or, the goal can be geared on spending months and years of precious time on such endeavors as proving, supporting, or simply rejecting the notion that "something is, or is not" related to something else. While these goals and thoughts might seem boring and mundane to some individuals, a growing number of well educated individuals are spending much time, effort and personal income to have the opportunity to work on such endeavors through a doctoral program in their higher education journey. Of course, while the numbers of "inquiring minds" entering doctoral programs are increasing, the demand for terminally-degreed candidates also seems to be growing at an even higher rate in the various fields of business and

management. As such, many institutions around the world are offering flexible programs to meet such growing demands in higher education (Bisoux, 2006; Mujtaba and Preziosi, 2006a).

In the article entitled "*AACSB Bridge Program Fast Tracks PQ Faculty*," the publication focused on the concern from business schools about faculty shortages. The publication further expanded on the fact that "AACSB has announced a program to encourage the transition of experienced business professionals into business teaching positions at colleges and universities" (AACSB, 2006). School leaders are encouraged by AACSB administrator to recommend qualified individuals for this new initiative and program to alleviate the shortage of qualified faculty members in academia The program is called "The AACSB Bridge Program:" and it is "a five-day intensive seminar that provides a pathway for high-level senior executives to become candidates for faculty positions." This program helps senior level business leaders to successfully transition from business to academia as their second career once they are ready for it. The participants of the AACSB Bridge Program study such topics as the academic culture and today's student, what makes truly effective teachers, teaching skills and the fundamentals of course development and delivery, and the student learning process (AACSB, 2006). To be able to get into this program, participants must have a master's degree and sufficient professional work experience related to the area of teaching assignment. Participants who successfully complete the Bridge Program receive a certificate with the seals of AACSB and the participating business schools.

Caryn L. Beck-Dudley, currently serving as the Dean for the College of Business at Florida State University, states that the decline in business doctoral production and the doctoral shortage is a critical concern for the future of management education (Beck-Dudley, 2006). Among many factors such as better job opportunities in the private sector and the required time to complete a doctoral program, are the cost considerations for most public institutions. Dean Beck-Dudley states that "The conventional wisdom is that since doctoral programs are not ranked, business schools have focused on the financially lucrative and visible MBA program and either reduced, eliminated, or failed to start doctoral programs." She says that one solution to the crisis of terminally-degreed faculty members is that "more schools to step up to the plate and produce" terminally degreed graduate. According to Beck-Dudley, Florida State University has chosen to keep a PhD program because it allows them to attract "strong faculty and to produce high quality research."

Higher education, especially attaining doctoral degrees, throughout academic institutions across the globe, has been in high demand and more private schools are getting into this arena to fill the pressing need. While more higher education institutions are beginning to offer doctoral degrees, the percentage of students successfully completing the dissertation process still seems to be fairly low. As such, understanding the needs of higher education institutions and current doctoral students has become especially important for success in the new millennium. Furthermore, understanding the common denominator of technology available to distance education students can assist administrators and faculty members to appropriately design their admission, learning assessment, teaching, and curriculum requirements.

There has been an increasing trend with schools using part-time (adjunct) faculty members to teach in their doctoral programs. One reason for this is lack of sufficient funding to hire full-time faculty members, and another reason has to do with the fact that there is a shortage of qualified candidates available. Consequently the cost of recruiting the right individuals with the right credentials has dramatically increased. Nonetheless, while many schools are dealing with the current shortage of qualified doctorate faculty members, others are taking advantage of this opportunity to offer new Ph.D. and D.B.A. programs to fill this need. According to Jain (1997), business units introduce multiple brands to a market for two major reasons: 1) to grow by offering varied products in different market segments, and 2) to avoid competitive threats to a single brand/product. Jain adds that, "multiple brands must be diligently positioned in the market." So, there maybe many good reasons for schools to go forward with offering or adding more doctoral (DBA or Ph.D.) programs in the fields of business. The Communicator: Council of Graduate Schools (2004) stated that "With attrition from Ph.D. programs averaging 30% to 50%, the nation is losing an important resource of highly trained personnel" while the demand is rising. The article further mentioned that the attrition is much more severe for women and minorities since they tend to leave doctoral programs at a greater rate than the majority and international students. Furthermore, this is a concern because projections show that about 80% of the growth in college-age students will come from minorities. The Council of Graduate Schools statistics showed that 39,955 students graduated with doctorate degrees in 2002, and this number was the lowest total since 1993. Because many schools are cutting back their doctoral programs, fewer percentage of qualified students get the opportunity to enter and successfully

complete doctoral degrees. In an article titled "Is There a Doctorate in the House" written by Tricia Bisoux at the March/April issue of BizEd (2003), the author stated that "replenishing the world's supply of doctorates in business has become imperative." While there is an increase in the demand for more terminally degreed educators (DBAs and Ph.D.s), many traditional schools have been downsizing their programs for cost-cutting purposes. As cost rises, "many Ph.D.-granting institutions are shrinking their doctoral programs in business, especially those in the U. S." (BizEd, 2003). As business schools reduce their Ph.D. Program enrollment, fewer qualified educators enter the pipeline. As the number of qualified candidates decreases in the doctoral programs, salaries will rise in the United States thereby attracting terminally degreed faculty members from other countries. As such, schools throughout the world will find themselves in a competitive compensation dilemma. The non-traditional schools are in a good position to offer doctoral programs and accordingly to economically fulfill society's needs for more research-oriented graduates. With today's internet age and advanced technology, making such programs available with a great quality should be much easier than ever before.

According to Eastmond (1998), the term "distance education" has become synonymous with instruction and facilitation provided through cyberspace technologies via the Internet. As such, many such programs are commonly referred to as online education. Eastmond discussed three different types of Internet-based courses: *first*, there is the distance learning programs which are supplemented by use of Internet technologies as a support mechanism as opposed to being the primary medium of delivery; *second*, there is the computer conferencing medium where Internet is the primary delivery utilizing asynchronous discussions and emails; *third*, there is the virtual course from the virtual institution where all or most aspects of the course are delivered online. Today's institutions are able to use a variety of formats to deliver their doctoral programs in business administration where students can complete all of their requirements via synchronized, interactive formats, while using cyberspace technology in the process to enhance learning.

Assessment of Distance Education

Integrating a systematic testing and evaluation plan into the curriculum for student learning and learning assessment is a basic necessity in today's competitive world of education. Fortunately, many educators and administrators have successfully implemented effective testing and evaluation methods in their distance education programs. However, much more may need to be done to make this an ongoing process of continually enhancing the programs holistically. Accordingly, administrators should focus on the development, assessment, and implementation of comprehensive testing and evaluation strategies in their curriculums (online, on-ground, and blended formats of distance as well as traditional offerings) while focusing on effectively achieving learning outcomes equally well in all modalities. According to Bisoux (2006), non-traditional higher education programs are likely to continue growing around the globe along with their popularity among working professionals. This growth will afford more flexibility for working professionals to continue being students of higher education programs at the masters and doctoral level curriculums. Similarly, Tricia Bisoux states that this "scenarios could present an exciting challenge to business educators, as they work to create more innovative programs to meet students' constantly changing needs without sacrificing quality, or reputation, in the process" (2006, p. 27).

Public and private colleges are viewed as public property; and this view reflects the centrality of the American institutions today, said Carol Christ who is the president of Smith College and a former provost of the University of California at Berkeley (Forum, 2004). She further stated that "If accountability is our end, then the means to that end lie in an ethic of greater transparency…we in colleges must be more open about our business practices and in our governance." Chronicles of Higher Education published a forum on its September 3rd issue titled "*How Can Colleges Prove They're Doing Their Jobs?*" which focused on accountability and assessment. The forum published thoughts and views from experts on accountability and assessment which included the following general topics: we need an honest conversation, no less than a cultural shift, a more systematic approach, focus on a larger context, the word 'public' is the key, and strive for openness (Forum, 2004). Charles Reed and Edward Rust Jr. suggested that "colleges should define goals for student learning and provide evidence that they have met them" (Forum, 2004). Material in the forum pointed out that "Private colleges aren't immune to calls for greater accountability…with tuitions continually rising, students, parents, and other constituencies are demanding proof that students are getting what they are paying for and learning what they need to know." So, some

strategic planning, changes for the better, and documentation of improvement are needed in order for business schools to successfully move forward.

Gary Hamel, visiting professor of strategic and international management at the London Business School, states that "business schools can be notorious institutions of habit" which has served them well for over a century but it is not going to get them through the next decade if they do not bring about appropriate changes. Business strategists in academia offer many suggestions for modern business schools wishing to be successful in today's technology-driven environment, including the need to defy conventions, be innovative, and to try different strategies to get better results, not follow "fads," create new competitive contexts, go beyond doing research by actually experimenting, globalize the curriculum and its focus, and form the future instead of just following it (Westerbeck, 2004). The modern business schools should be creating meaningful change if they are to survive and thrive in the world of demanding stakeholders. This change must be driven based on the assessment of what the school claimed to deliver as per their mission and its progress or intended application. Such assessment should be systematic, progressive, formal, and institution-wide if the organization is to receive a benefit from it. The role of learning assessment and evaluation to a university's future success is important for its survival. For example, for a teaching institution, the primary measure of learning would be the degree to which students actually learn the intended material. Administrators could ask relevant questions to determine the effectiveness of each program. Do students know what they should know? Can students do what they should be able to do? Have students developed knowledge and skills appropriate to their professions? Was the achievement of students' personal and professional goals enhanced by their experience at the university? Furthermore, faculty members should be asking such questions as: What did our students learn, and how well did they learn it? Do students simply acquire information, or do they learn to analyze, synthesize, and exercise critical judgment about the subject matter? Do they learn to write clear, grammatical, logical arguments? Do they learn tolerance for differing perspectives? Can they logically defend their own opinions in a rational way? Can they apply what they know to other areas of their work and life? Does their learning last beyond the end of the course and program? If a teaching university is able to demonstrate continuing accomplishment of such essential student-learning goals, the logical consequence will be their accomplishment of the other goals and purposes.

Assessment can be seen as the process of establishing and/or understanding the learning outcomes that meet the learners' needs, assessing students to determine whether or not they have achieved the learning outcomes through factual evidence, documenting those results, and reflecting on how to continually improve the process of teaching, learning and learner assessment. The purpose of the assessment process is to continually improve and document or credential learning (Mujtaba and Preziosi, 2006a). A structured review of the assessment model can enhance the assessment process by providing a framework that supports thoughtful planning and communication to relevant stakeholders before and during the learning process, deployment of valid and reliable assessment strategies, informed reflection on the results, as well as improvement of teaching, learning and assessment in order to "close the loop." When it comes to personal reflections for improvement, faculty members tend to have three formats for facilitation of learning: 1) the facilitation they plan to do; 2) the facilitation they actually do; and, 3) the facilitation they wish they had done. This type of reflection can certainly lead to improvement when the third format is put back into the loop thereby improving the next facilitation they plan to do. This closes the loop and improves the learning process for the students. It has been said that some universities have three curricula: The one that appears in the catalog, the one that professors teach, and one that students actually learn. Along with the administrators, it is also the faculty member's responsibility to find out the degree to which the curriculum asserted on paper or imagined by academic leaders accurately portrays what goes on in the minds of students. Making the curricula visible so its usefulness in terms of demonstrated learning and results through students' performance can be documented as evidence is the business of *assessment,* an activity practiced by each faculty member teaching the course.

While each faculty member should take responsibility for improving his/her teaching to enhance the outcomes achieved, it is the responsibility of program chairs, directors, and other appropriate administrators to design assessment strategies for measuring learning across all courses at all locations for determining the effectiveness of distance education programs. Educators have a responsibility to students and to the public that depend on them to provide accurate information on how students meet their goals and objectives. Of course, this responsibility extends beyond reporting to actually improving and enhancing the program in a purposeful manner. In order to meet their responsibilities and document student learning, program directors and chairs along with their faculty members often strategically create an outcomes

assessment plan for their programs. These plans are usually comprehensive, systematic, structured, and goal-oriented. The purpose of a comprehensive assessment process is to contribute to the pursuit of an institution's vision by assisting faculty, staff, and administrators in identifying the needs of stakeholders and adapting courses, curricula, delivery methods, and services according to these needs. The comprehensive exams, in addition to the dissertation and publication requirements for the program, provide evidence of students' success as to how well the program is achieving its intended outcomes.

Guidelines and Recommendations

According to Dr. Freda Turner, as mentioned by Mujtaba and Scharff (2007, p.70), there are a number of obstacles and hurdles in the doctoral journey and four of them are as follows: the first year seems to be a major problem in regard to dropout of students since a good number of them leave in this initial year; 2) a student's relationship with his or her dissertation chair is another key factor in deciding to continue or withdraw, 3) the selection of the dissertation committee can also be stressful and problematic, and 4) lack of focus on the dissertation topic seems to be another major variable leading to the "ABD" phenomenon. While there can be many challenges and obstacles in higher education, one important hurdle in the doctoral program seems to be the successful completion of the comprehensive examination. The authors recommend that students should take their comprehensive exam as soon as they have completed the required courses. Furthermore, they should leave plenty of time to study for the comprehensive exam since successfully completing the courses may not be enough to earn a passing score.

Another important elements of a doctoral program is the selection and determination of a succinct research question that excites the student to get it answered This research question should be important, timely, provide the foundation for the building of existing literature in the field, and be of interest to existing journal editors. This research question forms the basis of the dissertation which begins with chapter one. The first chapter is basically the longer and more developed version of what is often known as the Prospectus or the Concept paper; and thus the initial chapter should parallel the Prospectus / Concept Paper.

The preparation of a prospectus or concept paper, preliminary literature, and Chapter I should be focused on answering such questions as the following (Mujtaba and Cavico, 2006b):

1. Why should this premise (idea) be researched?
2. Why is this research topic important?
3. Who would benefit from this research?
4. What key research, prior to this dissertation, has addressed this premise?
5. Which authors have done similar work on topics?
6. Who are the key (important) researchers in this field?
7. What is the contribution that these researchers have made?
8. What are the conclusions of key researchers concerning the topic?
9. How will the research follow or complement key researchers' work?
10. How will the research expand or add to the "body of knowledge"?
11. What are the potential "real world" applications of this research?
12. What established theory, model, methodology, and survey instrument will be used to provide a sound analytical approach?
13. Who is to be sampled, what is the sample size, and what is the expected return rate?

The researcher must have a clear and focused research question or problem statement. A good research problem must deal with something that student has a genuine interest in; it should not be trivial; the area needs to be researched; and it should be amenable to either qualitative or quantitative methods of research. Other questions to consider can include, but are not limited to: Can the student get the required data and the permission to get data? Can the student obtain specialist knowledge, especially statistical help? Is the student capable of doing the research, especially the statistical analysis? Can the student do the dissertation within a reasonable amount of time? Is the dissertation publishable through academic journals?

Almost all doctoral programs are concerned with the assessment of their students in the comprehensive exam and research areas. According to Beck-Dudley (2006), 'we continually evaluate the effectiveness of the program, which has brought us to the following conclusions: producing terminally-degreed students for the academic market, as well as creating excellent scholars, teachers and members of the academy.' Most doctoral programs require research activity the day the student enters into the

university or course. Similarly, in most schools, producing sole-authored peer-reviewed research papers and journal paper submissions are expected. Of course, the dissertation process is established to help students become familiarized with primary research and the publication process.

Content and Format of the Dissertation[2]

Chapter I. The first chapter should contain the following: purpose of the research, statement of problems and sub-problems, background and justification for the study, definition of key terms, some relevant and recent literature, delimitations of the study, assumptions, expected contribution, and how the student intends to add to the body of knowledge. Delimitations should not be confused with the "Limitations," as the latter of which belongs in the last chapter of the dissertation. *Delimitations* of the study state what the student is not doing; for example, not surveying everyone everywhere, but only a class of participants at a selected geographic locale. Limitations, which are discussed in Chapter V, are in essence the student's "confessions"; that is, now that the work is done, what should the student have done differently and why. One should remember that the research problem or premise is the general area to be investigated; the research propositions are more specific and state what one expects to find by means of the research; and the hypotheses are very specific statements, stated in the Null and then Alternative format, which the researcher will accept or reject based on his or her research findings. The research problem/premise is typically stated in Chapter I; the research problem/premise and the propositions are stated at the end of Chapter II; and the research problem/premise, propositions, and hypotheses in Null and Alternative forms are stated in Chapter III.

One must remember that the research problem is the purpose of the study, the student's statement of intent, which must be stated in a clear and concise manner, as it will be the premise to be tested. The student should be able to answer the following question: Can the research problem be concisely and precisely stated, ideally in one sentence? If so, create this sentence which will be the research question; then study it, memorize it, know it by heart, and stay focused on it until it is answered.

The researcher should also know the difference between the problem statement and sub-problems which can also be studied now and also in future projects. "Problem" is broader formulation; the sum of sub-problems, which are narrowly stated, and which add up to the problem; but which are mutually exclusive, and thus each can be researched independently. Overall, the student must research the background of the problem and provide justification on why one should spend such a major part of one's life in further studying it. One should fully provide justification for initiating this research by comprehensively answering the following questions:

1. Why should this premise (idea) be researched; why is the research topic important; and who would benefit from the research?
2. How will the student's work follow or complement others' work? How will the research add to or expand the body of knowledge?
3. What are the potential "real world" applications of this research?

With regards to the definition of specific terms, it is best to remember that specific and/or complex terminology must be clearly defined either in Chapter I or in the literature review section of Chapter II. Also, with regard to assumptions, one should clarify what facts are taken for granted in the study? Overall, with regard to the delimitations, the student must state explicitly what he or she is not doing (for example, certain sample size, geographic area, type and/or level of position sampled). To clarify once again, delimitations are "up front" constraints to the study, while limitations are shortcomings ('confessions") that have been revealed during the course of the study and which are addressed in Chapter V.

Proposal Chapter II. The major objective of Chapter II, which is the Literature Review or a historical summary of what has been written thus far, is to review succinctly the pertinent literature; that is, the literature that applies the theory to the research problem. The idea is not to "write a book," but rather to focus on the literature that pertains directly to the research premise or problem, the research propositions, the hypotheses, and the variables therein. At the end of the Literature Review chapter, the student should include a succinct paragraph or two demonstrating how the review of the literature has logically led the

[2] The authors would like to extend special thanks to the following colleagues for their input, thoughts, and general contributions to the formation of these suggestions over the past fifteen years: Timothy McCartney, Barbara Dastoor, Preston Jones, Russell Abratt, Mike Bendixen, and others at the H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship.

student to examine the research problem/premise, propositions (that is, what the student expects to find), and hypotheses. It is not necessary in Chapter II for the student to state the hypotheses in Null and Alternative form, as that component of the work belongs properly in Chapter III.

While providing a brief summary of general literature; focus should be on the literature that applies the theory. The researcher basically answers: What key research has addressed the research problem or premise? What authors have done similar work on the topic? Who are the important researchers in the field? What are their conclusions? What contributions have they made? This chapter needs literature that explains how the theory applies to the research problem. Emphasis should be on the application of the theory, especially literature that helps to identify potential solutions to the research problem. The chapter also needs literature that justifies the research question, problem statements, and hypotheses. Do not merely "regurgitate" the work of others, especially if they are not related to the current research problem. Be systematic and chronologically, recognize any hierarchy to literature sources. Overall, remember that the:

- The major objective of Chapter II, which is the Literature Review, is to review succinctly the pertinent literature, that is, the literature that applies the theory to the research problem.
- Focus on the literature that pertains directly to the research premise or problem, the research propositions, the hypotheses, and the variables therein.
- At the end of the Literature Review chapter, the student should include a succinct paragraph or two demonstrating how the review of the literature has logically led the student to examine the research problem/premise, propositions (that is, what the student expects to find), and hypotheses. Note that it is not necessary in Chapter II for the student to state the hypotheses in Null and Alternative form, as that component of the work belongs properly in Chapter III (Mujtaba and Cavico, 2006b).

Proposal Chapter III. The goal of Chapter III is to propose a methodological "recommended path" for the dissertation through a number of hypotheses that will be tested. Hypotheses should be limited to a manageable number based on time constraints as well as the student's statistical capabilities. The statement of five to six hypotheses, stated in the Null and Alternative format, is a good foundation for a dissertation research. Chapter III, in addition to the aforementioned components, should include the following: population (sample size and who is being surveyed), sample methodology or design (e.g., random sample), survey instrument or questionnaire, or source of data, validity and reliability of survey instrument, and method of data analysis (that is, what is the student going to do with the data; and what statistical tools will be used to analyze the data). If a survey instrument is somewhat "old" or "outdated," that is, 20 or more years old, the student will have to address the "validity" issue. For example, is the instrument still valid? Has it been updated? Do the questions and scenarios therein comport with current practices, usages, customs, and ideas? If the instrument is still fundamentally valid, but old, the student should point this out in Chapter I in the Delimitations section. The methodologist on the committee should be consulted before the student initiates and certainly before the student completely writes Chapter III.

In this chapter, one needs to restate the research question and problem statement from the previous two chapters. One should understand that hypothesis testing means that one is to assess the likelihood that a premise is true. Accordingly, formulate hypotheses in Null and Alternative formats. If Null format is rejected, then the Alternative format is accepted. The result is that one narrows the range of falsity and thereby expands the body of knowledge. The researcher should keep in mind that there is a difference between a hypothesis and a proposition. Hypothesis is a narrow and specific assumption that can be tested and accepted or rejected; whereas a proposition is more of a general plan or agenda for research, which is not necessarily tested. It is best not to have any complex or "mixed" hypotheses; that is, there should be one hypothesis for each variable. Chapter III should really clarify every question about this research and it should state the population, sample size, sampling method, and expected outcome. Be realistic about sample size, but attempt to secure a sample as large as practically possible (200 is recommended as a minimum). The researcher also needs a random sample so as to generalize results; otherwise, one should state the limitations and possibilities of the research. State the survey instrument to be used to secure research data as well as the questionnaire to be used with the survey instrument. How will you get permission for using the instrument or survey? Identify exactly what is to be measured by using this instrument.

Be aware that the terms validity and reliability must be clarified for each instrument that is being used for the study. Validity refers to the extent an instrument measures what one wants it to measure; whereas reliability means the measurement procedure is accurate and precise. That is, what evidence is

there of measurement (validity), and how precise and accurate is the measurement (reliability)? There is also a difference between external and internal validity. External validity refers to the ability of the research to be generalized across persons, settings, and times; key factors are sample choice, size, and method (random), as well as credibility for qualitative research. Internal validity refers to the extent the measuring instrument provides adequate coverage of the topic. That is, what are the dimensions of a topic, according to the literature, what questionnaires have been used, and what questions have been asked? If a demonstrated survey instrument or questionnaire is being modified by the student, then the modified version must be demonstrated as valid and reliable. Thus, it is better to seek and to add the supplemental information separately when using an existing instrument. State explicitly the method to be used to analyze the data. Overall, reliability is the extent to which the instrument is free from variable error (random error), or the degree of variable error in the instrument. Validity is the extent to which the instrument is free from systemic error (bias), or the degree of systemic error in the instrument. Accuracy is defined as the extent to which the instrument is free from systemic and variable errors.

The researcher must also understand correlation and regression. Correlation means there is a relationship or association between two variables; it does not imply that one causes the other; whereas regression assumes causation; that is, an independent variable causes a dependent one. For example, does advertising cause sales (regression), or is there a relationship between advertising and sales (correlation)? Overall, the data secured must relate to and be tied into the research question/problems, so as to "answer" them. The research methodology and design process in Chapter III should clarify many issues including defining the research problem, premise to be tested, required information and data, and appropriate variables for the study. Know that statistical hypothesis is basically a statement about one or more parameters of the population. Hypotheses testing assess the likelihood that an assumption about some characteristics of the population is true. Rejecting or not rejecting the hypothesis means proving or disproving the hypothesis. Null hypothesis, the $H_{o,}$ is basically an assumption about the population that is tested, using sample evidence. Alternative hypothesis, the $H_{1,}$ is a statement about the population that must be true if the null hypothesis is rejected. The researcher must avoid complex or "mixed" hypotheses; in other words, one should only have one hypothesis for each variable. The researcher must then decide on whether the study will use a qualitative approach or a quantitative process to gather the data.

The biggest challenge for a dissertation study is to keep it focused and simple. One should not attempt to change the world as this project is only for the student to prove that he or she can conduct quality research and focus on one specific research question. So, keep the focus of the dissertation narrow, time-bounded, and, given one's limited available resources, make sure the survey implementation and data gathering processes are easily doable. Overall, with regard to the entire study, make sure that the dissertation is a "do-able" one. Be keenly aware of time constraints; accordingly, allocate sufficient time; make an appointment with oneself; do a little every day, even if just writing a paragraph or a few sentences. Avoid the "Royal We" writing style as it is one person doing the research; instead use a neutral more modest approach, that is, "the author" or "this study" type of descriptions. It is always good to be humble. While the researcher might be the "king" or "queen" in his/her department, industry, or profession, it is best to remember that one is probably a novice in the research process; therefore, get as much help as possible and thank each person for his/her assistance and guidance. Overall, with regard to the study, seek the best approximation of the "truth" based on current knowledge.

Before beginning the research process, the learner should be aware of the institutions Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies regarding research requirements and prerequisites with human subjects. Most institutions have a policy stating that no pretests, "pilots," or surveys can be distributed without approval; similarly, no "field work" can be conducted without IRB approval. IRB approval is often needed for any questioning of human subjects. However, for surveys, IRB approval can be obtained at the "center" level by the IRB representative, and thus petitioning the university's IRB may not always be necessary. The student can state in his or her Proposal that IRB approval will be obtained for any pretest or pilot, and then either option can be implemented; however, the full survey should not be distributed until not only after IRB approval, but also the approval of the student's dissertation committee.

In summary, remember that the goal of Chapter III is to propose a methodological "recommended path" for the dissertation. Hypotheses should be limited to a manageable number based on time constraints as well as the student's statistical capabilities. The statement of five to six hypotheses, stated in the Null and Alternative formats, is a good foundation for dissertation research (Mujtaba and Cavico, 2006b). Chapter III, in addition to the aforementioned components, should include the following: population (sample size and who is being surveyed), sample methodology or design (e.g., random sample), survey

instrument or questionnaire, source of data, validity and reliability of survey instrument, and methods of data analysis. The methodologist on the committee should be consulted before the student writes Chapter III.

Draft Chapter IV. Chapter IV is basically the analysis of the results from the data gathered as a result of what was planned in the first three chapters. For most schools, the required statistical software seems to be the Numbers Crunchers Statistical Software (NCSS) (Student Version), or the other popular software known as SPSS. Of course, students who are advanced in statistical testing are not limited to using these packages so long as they are able to use statistical testing effectively.

Draft Chapter V. The last chapter simply summarizes the purpose of the study, the conclusions, provides a link about the benefits of the study, makes some recommendations for practitioners, and managers, discusses the limitations of the study, and provides guidance and questions for future study. Suggestions for future scholarly work should be provided, and should be tied into the limitation "confessions" where appropriate. Note that the student does not necessarily have to use all the data collected for the dissertation, as some data may be able to be saved and used for future scholarly work.

References. The references section must include all the works cited (if a work is cited within the document, then it must also appear in the references, and if a work is in the references it must appear in the body of the work as a citation). The bibliography, which appears after the reference section, includes all the references as well as all the works that the student used for the dissertation, for example, background books and articles, but which were not specifically cited.

Appendices. The appendix section can include copies of survey instrument, additional questionnaires, and "permissions" for using any copyright material. This section can also include any other data, figures, tables, or visuals that readers might to review to further understand a concept that is discussed within the dissertation.

Summary

As stated in the Huizenga School's 2006 Dissertation Guidelines, "A dissertation is an unpredictable process," as it can "involve uncertainty, ambiguity, and unexpected events." It is an uncertain process because the researcher is exploring unknown questions and topics. Therefore, one must be patient and persevere in achieving the dream of successfully completing the comprehensive exam and the dissertation projects to earn a doctorate degree.

While there is no *perfect* institution, higher education and doctoral programs should have an infrastructure in place that ensures learning happens at a high-level consistently so their students can successfully achieve their academic dreams. There should be an emphasis on the development of high-level curricula that blends pragmatic and theoretical knowledge so doctoral students can pass their comprehensive exams and successfully complete their doctoral dissertations in the allotted time.

Today, cyberspace technologies offer many possibilities in the twenty first century but such possibilities cannot be realized without breaking the outdated industry rules of the past. Breaking industry rules requires effective training of both faculty members and administrative staff so they can jointly be more flexible in hearing their students' learning needs and so they can be empowered to be innovative in integrating student feedback in the education process while trying new learning strategies. This document offered suggestions for administrators and doctoral students regarding the dissertation process so new students can have a general vision of what this project should look like from the outset. It is hoped that doctoral program administrators, faculty members and students can use the content of this material to help new learner understand the comprehensive examination and dissertation completion processes and thereby successfully achieve their doctoral "dream" in an expeditious and productive manner.

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Technology Majors Preferences for Business Communications

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine if there was any association between technology majors and their preferences for business communications tasks and tools. In the quest for preparing technology students for their future roles in the workplace, sometimes technologically savvy workers believe their future roles will have limited involvement in creating business communications. In today's workplace the "techies" can no longer think of themselves as working behind the scenes. Expectations are that all workers will be versed in both written and oral communications. This study provides information about technology majors understanding of their roles as business communicators. Technology majors who understand these roles will be more effective and productive, and as a result will be more successful in their career.

Keywords: Business Communications, Business Tasks, Technology Majors

INTRODUCTION

Communication skills are vital to any profession. Yet, in this day and age, professional organizations, businesses, and corporation continue to struggle with recent college graduates who lack communication skills. A recent article, The Best Places to Launch a Career (Business Week, 2007) highlighted major companies in the U.S. for the "hothouse" generation to work. Deloitte & Touche was ranked as the number one employer; while Disney ranked as the seventh employer. Both companies indicated that communication skills were the most desirable trait among new employees. In a national survey of adult workers, 87% rated communication skills as "very important" in doing their jobs (Locker, 2007). Many companies now find themselves utilizing email in their day to day business functions as compared to traditional printed mail (Adler, 2005 p. 125). In one survey of over 1,000 adult workers, 87 percent of respondents rated communication skills as being "very important" for performing their jobs (Adler, 2005, p.6).

This sampling of literature indicates that for nearly 20+ years employers have been concerned with the lack of communication skills possessed by past or present college graduates. One particular group of college graduates who may have been able to get by solely on their technical skills and abilities were information technology majors. Research and report writing are common activities in business. They can be used to develop procedures, test products, explore markets, or gather opinions. The results of research may be reported orally or in writing, informally or formally, and to internal or external audiences (Krizan, Merrier, Logan, and Williams 2007). Simply possessing information technology is an insufficient condition for achieving the tangible outcomes in which shareholders are interested (Compeau, Haggerty & Tsai, 2007).

The business community has complained about the poor quality of college graduate's communication skills, with information systems and computer science graduates are often criticized most severely. Poor communication skills were at the top of CIO's lists of concerns about incoming recruits (Perelman, 2007, p. 41). Where in the curriculum can technology majors learn the necessary communication skills? The business communication curriculum is filled with a variety of topics that lead to improved communication skills. Business communication courses support many majors in the university. Little research has been conducted on the value of the content of business communication courses (i.e. tasks and tools) in relation to specific majors. Is it possible that preference for business communication tasks and tools could be based on a student's major?

An appreciation and understanding of technology majors' preferences for business communication tasks and tools in the workplace will aid current business educators in obtaining a barometer of the

perceptions that technology majors hold concerning their future roles in business communications. Educators can use this information to clear up many of the common misperceptions "techies" may have in relation to these roles in the workplace. These facts or fallacies concerning business communications will better prepare technology majors for business. Research has revealed that people in the technology industry often feel that business communications will not be a part of their daily responsibility. Successful teachers know that students learn best when they view what they are learning as relevant. Teachers can create learning environments that stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning if they can relate topics taught in school to career or life goals of students. If technology students become aware of their preferences for business communications and the importance in their future careers, they may gain a greater appreciation of these tools for use in their future. Could technology majors as a whole be more alike or dissimilar in their perceptions about business communications tasks and tools in the workplace? Could their preferences or indifferences for these tasks be based on their specific major? This research study focused on technology majors and their preferences for particular business communication tools and tasks. Other related factors were also considered.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were addressed:

A. What preferences do technology majors' have in relation to the roles of business communication tasks and tools?

B. Could the difference between these preferences be based on a specific information technology major such as Business Information Systems (BIS), Computer Information Systems (CIS), or Management Information Systems (MIS)?

C. Do technology students, as they relate to preferred business communications tools and task, differ based on their majors?

HYPOTHESIS

The following primary null hypothesis guided the study:

H0. There will be no tested differences between technology majors and their preferences for business communication tasks and tools.

H1 There will be tested differences between technology majors and their preferences for business communication tasks and tools.

For this study, technology majors were defined as students who are pursuing a degree in either Business Information Systems (BIS), Computer Information Systems CIS) or Management Information Systems (MIS).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Business communication tasks and tools: Business communication typically is associated with writing and reading as well as speaking and listening. Research on the opinions of executives towards college graduates reveals that communication skills consistently rank in the top competencies necessary for job success (Adler, 2005; Krizan, Merrier, Logan, and Williams, 2007), 2005; Ober, 2004; Bovee and Thills, 2007; Emanauel, 2005; Young, Marcel, Wondra 2006; Locker, 2007; and Alder and Elmhorst, 2005). This importance is not new to any business educator, but may be overlooked by technology educators and their respective majors. The importance of these skills are continuing to be of paramount importance as evidenced by the following:

> Understanding how communication works in business and how employees communicate competently within an organization will help you participate more effectively in every aspect of business. Good communication skills are crucial to your success in the organization (Ober, 2004, p. 3).
>
> Dozens of studies support the fact that communication skills are essential in a number of areas (Emanuel, 2005, p. 154).
>
> One study revealed that practitioners in Big Six accounting firms spent 80 percent of their work time communicating with others, individually and in groups (Elmhorst & Adler, 2005, p. 6).

> Communication skills can increase productivity and efficiency. American Management Association research concludes that the higher one goes in an organization, the more they communicate (Pieraccini, 1998).

Pieraccini (1998) posed that there seems to be a correlation between one's ability to communicate and one's ability to succeed in the workplace. Towner stated that research carried out by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) provided further evidence that soft skills are gaining in importance across all industries (Towner, 2002). Current business or technology educators can not allow students to enter the work force without a knowledge of business communications. Regardless of the field or the career students choose, his/her chances of being hired by an organization are better if he/she possess strong communication skills. Failure to do so is only sets up students to fail in their future professional roles.

Technology majors and business communications: Prior literature has stated that often times Information Technology (IT) majors who possessed strong technical knowledge, expertise, and skill would be hired solely on the possession of these abilities. Other skills were not paramount in the decision to hire a technology graduate. "But the times they are a changing" as Towner stated. The principal judging criteria is still the candidate's experience and technical expertise, but the ability to work well in a team and communicate clearly is rapidly growing in importance (Towner, 2002). Numerous authors have expanded upon the need for not only technical skills but the possession of soft skills, mainly communication skills. The days of the IT worker who sits alone in their data center, office, or cubicle is relatively over as far as the social and work requirements of the organizations are concerned (Morrill, 2005). A statement as found in the June 11, 2001 issue of Information Week, sums up the need for preparation of IT majors and communication skills. Information technology employers were asked, "What are the top skills colleges and universities need to be teaching their IT students that they aren't now?" The top-ranked response was communication/people skills (Liebowitz, Agresti, & Djavanshir, 2006, p. 38).

Likert Scale. One subtle way to collect data and to ascertain preferences for business communication topics is through the use of a Likert Scale. Babbie stated that when the researcher is interested in determining the extent to which respondents hold a particular attitude or perspective on a particular concept and they are able to summarize the attitude in a fairly brief statement, then the use of a Likert Scale is appropriate (Babbie, 1990). Sturges offers his support of using a Likert Scale in business communication research (Sturges, 1990):

> Business communication theory incorporating attitudes and opinions of communication senders and receivers has been built on research gathered through techniques such as self-administered survey questionnaires or data-gatherer administered instruments using Likert Scales or semantic differential scales for measurement (p. 17).

Technology Majors. Various academic institutions define MIS, BIS, and CIS in unique ways. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2005) projects tremendous growth and high salaries for those seeking careers in computer-related industries and academic institutions such as James Madison University, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Bloomsburg University, Moorehead State University, and the University of Whitewater, offer programs geared towards those who have an interest in the technology industry.

In reviewing universities offering undergraduate degrees in MIS it was found that students should expect to receive specialized training in both technical skills and business knowledge. Major curriculum components gathered from course descriptions, curriculum guides, and syllabi include database management, systems analysis, and the design and management of front-end / back end business applications.

In an effort to entice students and to broaden their program the Universities studied defined Computer Science programs as a CIS degree. In reviewing universities offering undergraduate degrees in Computer Science it was found that students should expect a fundamental education with sufficient understanding of basic principles and concepts in computer science to solve computational problems. Major curriculum components gathered from course descriptions, curriculum guides, and syllabi include programming, hardware support, and computer graphics.

In describing this major, universities vary in the names used to describe their program. Business Technology Support, Organizational/Office Systems, and End User Technology are just a few titles for this major. However, the course descriptions associated with this major are very similar. For the purpose of this paper this major will be titled BIS. In reviewing Universities offering undergraduate degrees in BIS, it was found that students should expect to fill roles as computing specialists, technology coordinators and

trainers, and network administrators. Major curriculum components gathered from course descriptions, curriculum guides, and syllabi include telecommunications, Web design, and computer based applications.

METHODOLOGY

This research study focused on technology majors and their preferences for business communication tasks and tools. Other related factors were also considered. The population sample for the study was five universities in the northeast who offer a degree in either BIS, CIS, and MIS. Students enrolled at these universities/colleges were the population for the study. Participation was voluntary. The informed consent form was used for students. Students in major classes from the various colleges/universities were the population. Faculty at those institutions offered to administer the survey. One research instrument was utilized for the collection of data in this study.

A Likert Scale was developed and juried to determine the preferred business communication tools and tasks in the workplace. Likert scaling is a method designed to measure people's attitudes (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1987). The data in this descriptive study was collected using survey procedures as described by Dillman (1978). This study followed a descriptive research design using survey methods with statistical treatments. The design was a cross-sectional survey. Babbie (1990, p. 65) stated that the cross-sectional design is the most frequently used study design.

When employing survey research, one must be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of this type of research. When discussing the survey method offered, "…its major advantages are lower costs, relatively small biasing error, greater anonymity, and accessibility (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996). Its disadvantages are a low response rate, opportunity for probing, and the lack of control over who fills out the questionnaire" (p. 248). In order to minimize the disadvantages of using the survey methods, "The Design Method" (TDM) suggested by Dillman (1978) was used as a guide. Dillman (1978) defined the TDM as consisting of two parts. The first [part] identifies each aspect of the survey process that may affect either the quality or quantity of response and to shape each of them in such a way that the best possible responses are obtained. The second [part] organizes the survey efforts so that the design intentions are carried out in complete detail (p. 12).

Using Dillman's TDM will help to minimize the problems of response quality and quantity. The data in this descriptive study was collected using survey procedures as described by Dillman (1978).

Each of the potential student participants received a survey packet containing the following items:

1. Informed Consent. Cover letter describing the study to the potential participant and outlined the procedures to be followed in completing the forms in the survey packet.
2. The survey with a section on demographics (brief questions asking for biographical and demographic information).

Data for scores from the Likert scale were hand-scored and calculated. Through the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for Windows (SPSS+ for Microcomputers), statistical tests were performed on the data from the scale. Descriptive and comparative analyses were made.

FINDINGS

The following tables were constructed from surveys sent to 448 participants who were asked to identify business documents and communications tasks or tools that will be used in the workplace. Of 448 participants 248 were usable responses which resulted in a response rate of 248 (55%). Students chose which tasks or tools they believed would be used daily, weekly, monthly, and never.

Business documents choices were:

- Letters
- Reports
- Memos
- Forms
- Instructions
- Contacts

Business communication tasks were:

- Meetings
- Speeches

- International Communication
- Customer Communication
- Client Communication
- Supplier Communication
- Employee Communication

Business communication tools were:

- E-Mail
- Fax
- Telephone
- Visual Aids
- Audio Communication
- Data Communication
- Video Communication
- Audio Telecommunication
- Data Telecommunication
- Video Telecommunication.

The following tables provide the data collected from technology majors and business communication documents, tasks, and tools.

Table 1
All Technology Majors: How frequently do you think you will initiate the following business documents and communications tasks or tools?

Daily		Percent
Valid	E-mail	91.5%
	Telephone	89.9%
	Employee Communication	83.9%
	Client	68.5%

Table 2
CIS Majors: How frequently do you think you will initiate the following business documents and communications tasks or tools?

Daily		Percent
Valid	E-mail	97.1%
	Telephone	95.6%
	Employee Communication	89.7%
	Client	61.8%

Table 3
MIS Majors: How frequently do you think you will initiate the following business documents and communications tasks or tools?

Daily		Percent
Valid	E-mail	93.2%
	Telephone	89.2%
	Employee Communication	81.1%
	Customer	71.6%

Table 4
BIS Majors: How frequently do you think you will initiate the following business documents and communications tasks or tools?

Daily		Percent
Valid	Employee Communication	88.2%
	E-mail	85.3%

Telephone	85.3%
Client	79.4%

DISCUSSION

From the findings, technology majors have an idea of the importance of the role that business communications documents, tasks and tools play in the workplace. To be extremely successful technology majors can no longer rely on their knowledge of IT. While IT roles in the past were not communication-centered, professionals who excel in this area are currently in the greatest demand and will continue to be as IT becomes more central to the organization (Perelman, 2007, p. 41). Table 1 provided the three most frequent responses to the business documents and communication task and/or tools that will be used daily in the workplace. This table indicates that all technology majors believed that e-mail, telephone, and employee communications would be used on a daily basis.

There is agreement among technology majors that email is a regular business communications tool. Literature has supported that these rankings are very indicative of what technology majors will face in the workplace. Elmhorst (2005) offered:

> One study based on responses from over 1,000 employees at Fortune 1000 companies found that workers send and receive an average of 178 messages each day via telephone, e-mail, faxes, pagers, and face-to-face communication. Some experts have estimated that the average business executive spends 75 to 80 percent of the time communicating – about 45 minutes out of every hour (p .7)

Krizan (2005) stated:

> One of the most common questions business professionals ask today is, "What's your e-mail address?" Today, many individuals and organizations have found that they receive more e-mail than they do print mail (p. 125)

Elmhorst (2005) additionally declared:

> Electronic mail (or e-mail) allows communicators to send and respond to one another's written messages via computer. In the United States and Canada, e-mail has become the most used communication tool on the job; 97 percent of workers surveyed report using it daily or several times a week (p.29).

To be cautioned, the astute technology major will need to select the appropriate tool when completing their daily tasks. Email is a way of life in corporate America. Technology majors should keep in mind the "email the guy down the hall effect." Goleman (2007) defines this as the use of email increases in an organization the overall volume of other kinds of communications drops, particularly routine friendly greetings. This may lead to workers feeling somewhat disconnected from others in the workplace. Technology majors also indicated in Table 1 that the regular use of the telephone will be a routine part of their profession. In some instances a phone call or chat is more effective than an email message. The manner in which a company's telephone is answered gives strong signals to the caller on the corporate character of that organization (Baldrige, 2003).

Tables 2 and 3 further showed that CIS and MIS shared the same common belief that e-mail, telephone, and employee communication were the three most common daily tasks to be used in the workplace. CIS and MIS students are geared more towards technology as compared to the people who run them. The MIS curriculum includes coverage of computer programming, database design and implementation, networks and data communications, systems analysis, systems implementation, managerial decision making, and managerial aspects of an organizational information systems. The CIS curriculum is more involved with the software and hardware behind the business rather than the actual people in the business operations. MIS students receive specialized training in both technical skills and business knowledge. CIS students receive a fundamental education with sufficient understanding of basic principles and concepts in computer science to solve computational problems. Given both of their backgrounds, they are well versed in mastering the business communications tasks and tools as illustrated in Table 2 and 3. They were in-sync in ranking email and phone, both tools of non personal business communications, as expected tools utilized in the workplace.

Table 4 shows that while BIS also had the same three tasks, employee communication was found to be the highest daily function. Given the nature of the major, BIS students have a tendency to be more extroverted in their roles with business communications. Analysis of tables 2, 3, and 4 show that regardless of the students major, a common belief of the daily business communications tasks or tools was present.

Further analysis reveals that BIS majors viewed face-to-face communication as a daily component in the business arena. This can be explained as BIS tasks encompass functions such as working with people, training, and end-user support that are defined by their major. They will be performing roles as technology specialists, technology coordinators and trainers, and network administrators.

SUMMARY

MIS majors are expected to work in the fields of project planning, analysis, and design which all involve having a structured and organized approach and involve being task oriented. BIS majors must be flexible and open to new experiences as working directly with employees and groups invites new and unexpected experiences. CIS majors work in a more casual and open environment not associated directly with the business and people who operate the technology. From the findings, it is apparent that technology majors have ranked the appropriate business communication task/tools in the 21st century workplace. In addition, the rankings of these tasks, as suggested by literature, are indicative of their majors. As Perelmans (2007) survey highlights, IT is no longer an island. CIO's are demanding that their technology professionals have the interpersonal skills to work easily with others in the company. They ranked communication skills as the most important employee trait. The findings suggest that email and telephone are ranked as the most common tools technology majors use in the workplace. It is still important for these majors to understand that face-to-face communications, through oral and written business communications, are prerequisites to success in the workplace. Literature has suggested that the days of just having a major in technology to achieve success are long gone. Cited authors have implied that having a major in technology alone, without competence in business communications; will surely not guarantee job success. The findings from this study demonstrate that technology majors understand the requirements of business communication tools (email and telephone) and understand that face to face communication (employee and customer communication) will be part of their roles in the ever changing workplace.

Recommendations for future research would include an analysis of why those business communication tasks, which are way of life in today's workplace (meetings, oral presentations, memos, letters, internet, intercultural communications), did not achieve higher importance. The same study should be replicated using various non-technology majors in the college of business (accounting, management, marketing, finance, etc) to see if any differences occur. Additional analysis is also suggested to determine if gender, race, or educational level makes a difference among technology majors ranking of communication tools/tasks.

The current and future marketplaces indicate that technology workers will be needed to fulfill large vacancies. The U.S. Department of Commerce has forecasted that technology positions will account for half of those employed in the workforce. Currently almost half of those employed in technology positions are employed by organizations that are not traditionally thought of as technology based companies such as supermarkets, financial institutions, and police forces. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has also shown that eighty percent of fastest growing careers are based in technology fields.

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Task and Relationship Orientations of Thai and American Business Students' based on Cultural Contexts

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Abstract:

Global managers and educators should understand that cultural differences cannot be cured and, therefore, they should be accepted if professionals are to build strong relationships in order to work effectively in diverse workplaces and educational settings across the globe. Some of the common differences are across high and low context countries as well as those of individualistic and collectivistic cultures. To explore such differences, this paper focused on the cultural differences of Thai students in Thailand and American students from the United States of America (U.S.A.) in the business programs.

Using the t-test statistical analysis, the results of 77 Thai respondents' show that they tend to score similarly on the relationship-orientation and task-orientation; however, this is not the case when their averages are compared to the scores of respondents from the United States. The results of 87 American respondents are higher on both orientations when compared to their Thai counterpart. For practical application, some of the common cultural differences are presented for managers and educators who work in diverse settings, such as in the United States or Thailand. Finally, suggestions and implications for future studies are presented.

Key words: Culture, business students, high context, low context, individualistic, collectivistic, relationship orientation, task orientation, Thailand, the United States.

Introduction and Cultural Values

In the world of international business, understanding cultural behaviors are paramount to succeeding in cross-cultural management. Navigating between individualistic and collectivistic cultures and recognizing the shifts in diverse cultures can have a direct impact on how an international firm performs. People of an individualistic culture tend to value the needs, concerns, and identity of oneself above the needs of the community. As concluded by Mujtaba, Luk, Murphy, and Saowakul (2007), a collective culture's members tend to focus more on world peace, being helpful to others and group interests instead of an individual's needs. As can be seen from existing research data, presented on Tables 1.1 and 1.2, such values as true friendship and inner harmony are ranked as more important by Thai respondents (collectivistic culture) than people from the United States (individualistic culture).

The instrumental values of being polite, forgiving and helpful are ranked as much more important by people in Thailand than respondents from the United States. On the other side, the value of being independent is ranked much higher by respondents in the United States than people in Thailand. Research on the cultures of Thailand and the United States demonstrates that the people of a collective culture tend to rank being intellectual, broadminded, and having self-control as more important than respondents from an individualistic culture. These cultural differences and behavioral tendencies also carry over to the workplace as well as the educational environments.

Table 1.1 –*Terminal* Values Mean Ranking (1 = most important)

Values	USA	Thailand
Family Security	1	1
Health	2	2
Accomplishment	9	10
National security	15	15
A world at Peace	16	11

Equality	12	13
Self-respect	3	6
Wisdom	8	4
Freedom	4	5
A comfortable life	5	9
Mature love	6	12
Inner Harmony	11	7
True friendship	7	3
Social recognition	17	17
An exciting life	14	16
A world of beauty	18	18
Pleasure	13	8
Salvation	10	14

Source: Mujtaba *et al* (2007)

A focus on business students in the United States and Thailand further reveals the significant differences between two culturally opposite students, and the responses that occur when there is a change in the academic environment.

The implementation of the American MBA program to Thai students in the United States and the way the students adapted to their new surroundings shows how different the American culture is from the Thailand population. Based on the author's personal experiences with American and Thai business students in the United States, as well as Thai students in Thailand, comments about cultural differences are expanded upon for the benefit of future managers and educators. For example, in regard to technology usage in the classroom, American students engage themselves in individual activities at their respective computers while Thai students work in a group format to confer on each assignment. By analyzing the differences between the American and Thai business students' approach towards the same education program, deductions can be made to show how the cultural behavior of students reflect their own societies, and how changes in technology can potentially shift their way of life.

Table 1.2 –*Instrumental* Values Mean Ranking

Values	USA	Thailand
Honest	1	1
Courageous	9	12
Intellectual	11	7
Independent	6	14
Responsible	2	2
Self-controlled	8	4
Loyal	7	10
Loving	4	13
Capable	5	11
Ambitious	3	5
Broadminded	10	3
Logical	14	16
Imaginative	16	15
Forgiving	13	6
Polite	15	9
Helpful	12	8
Clean	17	17
Obedient	18	18

Source: Mujtaba *et al* (2007)

Culture and Communication Challenges

Cultures tend to regularize human behavior or make them more predictable for each group of people in their own unique ways, and effective communication becomes extremely critical in a diverse environment where different cultures are present. Good communication is an essential skill both in business and in life for building strong relationships. In international business it is important to realize that cultural differences can severely affect one's relationship with others and their communication. According to anthropologist Edward Hall, there is a clear distinction in the way of communicating between the so-called high-context and low-context cultures. "The notion of cultural complexity refers to the way messages are communicated within a society (Kotabe & Helsen, 2007, p. 127)." In high-context cultures such as Thailand, Japan or India, there is a less verbally detailed communication and less written/formal information. Instead, there is a more subliminal understanding of what is communicated. Often what is left unsaid is as important as what is said. Low context cultures such as the United States or United Kingdom put more emphasis on the written or spoken words. In such an environment, communication is very explicit and clear, and normally "what is meant is what is said" (Mujtaba, 2007).

It is important for international managers and cross-cultural educators to reflect on their relationships with people of different cultures and examine how differences in context can lead to cultural misunderstanding for overseas students studying or working in the United States. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the relationship similarities and dissimilarities between American and Thai students in an American university class. This section reflects on a Thai student's cross-cultural perspective of American classroom etiquette and provides insights into the classroom culture and the effects of the wider aspects of culture and society in it.

Dutch cultural anthropologist, Gert Hofstede, defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category from those of another" (Hofstede, 1991 p. 5). Despite the plentiful definitions of culture, there are at least three factors that exist to form a culture: it is learned, it is interrelated, and it is shared (Cellich and Jain, 2004). Culture is learned, it is not something that is transmitted biologically from one person to the next. A society's culture is passed on through family, school, community activities, workplace relationships, and youth clubs. Culture is interrelated, it has many parts that correlate to the next, for example one's upbringing and social class interrelates to the language that a person will use, and their social mannerisms. Finally, culture is generally shared by individuals from the same society. The factors that make a culture different from others are also what make communication difficult between diverse people groups.

Culture and communication. The low context American communication style tends to be direct, linear and explicit. In such a low context culture, often very little is left to interpretation of the receiver (Gardenswartz *et al*. 2003, p. 137). Therefore, an American in a classroom will be more interactive, direct and open with his or her professor. He/she may also go as far as challenging the professor's views or concepts in any given subject. In a classroom, Americans see it as an advantage to participate to show their knowledge or to gain points and respect from their professor. They believe it is their responsibility to communicate with others and build relationships that are important to them in a classroom setting. They look at who they need to communicate with, what they communicate, when it is appropriate to communicate, and how they should communicate to help build the relationships to make their message more persuasive. This in-turn engages discussions and influences responses and participation by the professor and other classmates.

Personal experience of the author demonstrates that Thais in the American classroom rarely spoke in class, or asked questions. In the Thai culture, speaking and giving your own ideas in the classroom to the professor is seen as disrespectful, unless you are asked by the professor to give your comments. In Thailand, students tend to show respect in class by carefully listening to what is being said by the professor. In the high context Thai style, communication is often indirect, and implicit, and meaning is found less in the words than in the context surrounding the communication. "It leaves a great deal of information about their needs, positions, and priorities unstated - understood between themselves, but not always by outsiders" (Condon, 1984, p. 43; Scarborough, 1998, pp. 36 -7; Ferraro, 2002, p. 125 – 6; Salacuse, 2003, p. 101). In the formal classroom structure, a Thai student's behavior will differ from that of an American. To the Thai student it is not just communicating that makes it important, it is when and how something is communicated. Culturally, for the Thai student, when his/her opinion is solicited from a professor that is when it is shared, outside of that they tend to listen and respect the professor by paying careful attention and not directly challenging their views or remarks.

Different cultures have different needs for structure in order to function efficiently. In the American culture active initiation of discussion and spontaneous and detailed comments are encouraged (Samovar & Porter, 2001). "To the American silence is considered socially undesirable (Ishii & Bruneau, 1994)." For that reason, an American may interpret the Thai student being reserved, silent and subdued in class as showing a lack of interest. However, in the Thai culture attentive listening and brief comments after contemplation are expected (Kindaichi, 1988). In Thai culture, silence has positive connotations because it implies contemplation, deep thinking, reflection, and respect.

Culture and foreign subsidiaries. Let us transition to a practical cross-cultural workplace scenario and assume that you are the CEO of an American-based engineering company. You have decided to establish a subsidiary in Thailand. This will be staffed entirely by the local people in Thailand. How might efficient management systems differ than those you apply in the United States?

As CEO of an American based engineering company, establishing the appropriate management system for the Thai subsidiary will take a deep level of understanding of Thai culture. Ultimately, the management system should be designed to be viable, efficient, and friendly to the employees, while helping the company achieve its goals (Mead, 2005).

Traditionally, the Thai culture is considered a collectivist entity, with relatively high needs to avoid uncertainty and where high power distances are common. To alleviate the transition of the more traditional Thai staff into the engineering company there is a need to reaffirm the long-term commitment and provide a structure with their concerns in mind. This view of traditional Thai culture will apply to the majority of Thais, however, research shows that there is a culture shift underway and the younger generations are influenced by Western ideology. This shift needs to be planned and prepared for in advance considering that the engineering firm will hire a vast range of expertise, ranking from entry-level college graduates to senior level management. Since the culture shift is relatively new, perhaps an initial goal of senior management will be to research the culture shift and implement solutions that will attract and retain top talent (Mead, 2005).

The appropriate management system will require a formal structure to delineate employee tasks and interrelationships. According to Mead, tasks are duties for which each member is made responsible, and relationships determine how each member interacts with other members (Mead, 2005, p. 169). With the Thai, the roles and responsibilities will be clearly identified for each employee. For each task Mead's contextual task model can be used to describe and distinguish between each task (Mead, p. 160). The contextual task model is a very interesting tool that can be used to answer the who, how, what, where, when, and justifies why each task exists.

The Thai engineering firm should also be provided with a clear hierarchy from the top level down. It will be its own entity, with its own internal structure, overall mirroring a divisional structure. Large corporations, with different geographical locations and/or products, usually adopt divisional structures (Mead, p. 171). The product and services the Thai engineering firm delivers will predominantly serve the Asian market, making the divisional structure appropriate due to the differences in geographical location and product services.

Mead states, "The organization designs and implements task descriptions and communication relationships that are perceived as most likely to achieve its goals as efficiently as possible" (Mead, p. 170). Hence, with the structure chosen for the Thai engineering firm, the goals of the company should be achieved; however keeping an open mind and implementing feedback from the system will ensure long-term success.

For an international organization it is essential to understand the culture of the country or region in which it is doing business. "Culture is a key pillar of the marketplace. To a large extent, the local culture drives the success of international marketing activities...These cultural variables may act as barriers or opportunities" (Kotabe & Helsen, 2007, p. 135). In essence, it is almost impossible for a company to be successful in a foreign country without knowledge and understanding of the culture. Managers of international operations should be aware of the importance of context in various countries. Context indicates the level in which communication occurs outside of verbal discussion. It is clear that high-context communicating students from Thailand and low-context communicating students from the United States have learned their classroom behaviors through socialization in their home country. Understanding the effect of the differences in context provides a knowledge base and cultural intelligence that can help provide not only effective classroom education but more over effective international business relationships.

Analysis of Behavior and Culture with Business Students

In the "*Computers in the Business School*" scenario, Mead (2005) provides a short case detailing the differences between American and Thai students. From the review of the case, one can explore whether the Thai and American students' behavior reflect their native cultures. To other cultures, especially in Asian countries, Americans from the United States can be perceived as selfish or arrogant due to their individualistic nature. When American children attend school, they are taught to be creative and innovative by thinking of their own ideas. As competition is extremely prevalent in this culture and rewards are given to the ones who succeed, children are also taught that to become a leader and to get rewarded, they should stand out and express their own opinions. Being rebellious and going against the majority is considered positive for the American society. Another way that American students are encouraged to show their individualistic tendencies is through their dress code.

The public educational dress code is an extremely liberal policy that allows public school students to choose their own clothing to encourage their own individualistic. As individualistic is highly regarded in the U.S. society, the students of public education have the right to wear their own clothing so that they may express their own individuality. Unlike other countries, like Thailand or Japan whose students wear uniforms, children in the United States are given the opportunity from an early age to learn and showcase who they are as a person, which can help them become and be more creative individuals when they get older and begin work. American students are also encouraged to cultivate individualistic characteristics by receiving a high percentage of individual assignments (Mean, 2005).

As the majority of American school assignments are set to be completed on an individual basis, American students tend to work autonomously in order to complete their coursework. These students who work alone without the assistance of other classmates depict the individualistic behavior displayed by most people in the American culture. Inhabitants of an individualistic culture tend to be more interested in taking care of themselves and forming their own identity. As one writer states "the person is expected to achieve for himself/herself, and to satisfy his/her own needs, so they are taught to think, learn, and work independently" (Mead, 2005).

It is also important to examine whether the Thai students' behavior reflect Thai culture. In Mead's case, both schools were designed with the same program and assignment input devices. There were sufficient computers for each student yet the Thai students worked in a group around computers to discuss their thoughts since this is the way most Thai students are accustomed to learning. As a matter-of-fact, as part of the inculcation process, many public universities in Thailand require entering college students to work closely with their assigned or selected mentor (or "buddy") to successfully complete their school requirements. The assigned or selected mentor of "buddy" is usually someone who is at the higher level or a senior at the college or university. The new college student is expected to closely follow the directions, guidelines, and commands of his/her mentor or buddy. This type of group work behavior is normal in Thailand's educational and work settings. This is described in Hofstede's individualistic/collectivistic model. The Thai students and employees display a collectivistic culture. A collectivistic culture or collectivism is the practice that makes a group rather than the individual the fundamental unit of societal concerns. In theory, collectivists insist that the claims of groups, associations, or the state must normally supersede the claims of individuals. In collectivistic cultures, group interests are preferred over individual interests. The Thai student derives his/her social identity from the group. Of course, there are many differences between an individualistic culture such as the United States and collectivistic culture such as Thailand. As explained by Mujtaba (2007) and others, collective cultures tend to be high on other interest, compliance, harmony, and interdependence; while individualist cultures tend to be high on self-interest, assertiveness, acceptance of conflict, and independence. Furthermore, while collective cultures tend to be focused on duties, individualist cultures are high on rights.

Trumbull (2008) lists some of the main differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultures as presented in Table 2.

Table 2 –Individualistic and Collectivistic Cultures (Trumbull, 2008)

	Individualistic	**Collectivistic**
1.	Fostering independence and individual achievement	Fostering interdependence and group success

2. Promoting democracy, empowerment, self-expression, individual thinking, and/or personal choice?	2. Promoting adherence to norms, respect for authority/elders, group consensus
3. Associated with egalitarian relationships and flexibility in roles (e.g., upward mobility)	3. Associated with stable, hierarchical roles (dependent on gender, family background, age)?
4. Understanding the physical world as knowable apart from its meaning for human life	4. Understanding the physical world in the context of its meaning for human life
5. Associated with private property, individual ownership	5. Associated with shared property, group ownership

From a quick review of Mead's case and general literature on cultural differences between the United States and Thailand, it appears that the Thai students' behavior reflect Thai culture in that the Thais are accustomed to working in groups and feel that this is the best way to learn and achieve better long-term results. Even though there are enough computers, they still rely on each other for the correct answers and opinions to questions.

In regard to new technology inducing a shift in the two cultures, it is fair to say that the two schools used their computers in different ways. The American business school had sterner, individual approach to learning, while the Thai school uses a community approach to learning. It has been said that "technology causes a shift in the culture when it causes people to significantly change how they live and work" (Mead, 2005). From Mead's example it is hard to know whether the computers caused a shift in culture since the case does not mention how the two schools had their students interact and learn before the introduction of the technology. According to Mead, technology induces a shift in culture when one of three things takes place: gaining an existing technology, the adaptation of that technology, or the making and invention of new technology. Furthermore, "While making new technology is the most drastic of the three stages in the causation of culture shift, any of the steps can cause different levels of shift" (Mead, 2005).

Thai culture differs from American culture in many ways. However, Thais as well as Americans, enjoy great levels of freedom and pragmatism as both groups of people are flexible and open-minded toward new ideas, creativity and innovations. As can be witnessed, Thais have adopted many western practices perhaps due to the constant evolution of culture and widespread availability of information over the cyberspace highways. Technology has induced changes in both cultures.

The space concept is a factor not influenced by the introduction of computers in the classroom. Every culture and more precisely every individual has its own demand of personal space. In other words, this can be described as a bubble that defines the personal boundary needed in order to feel comfortable when interacting with people. The personal space in Thai culture is rather small compared with the Americans. Based on personal observations by the author, it is apparent that Thais are comfortable working close to each other, while Americans prefer to keep a larger amount of distance between them.

It is clear that Americans have an individualistic character, and as a result students tend to work alone. The fact that a new technology, the computers, is available to the students does not change the individualistic character of the Americans, or the group character of Thais. In Thai culture the group is the primary unit of social organization as a consequence of their living in extended families (Edmundson, 2007); thus, this explains why students gather together in groups around computers, even though there are enough computers for everyone. Hofstede's cultural dimensions corroborate the fact that both cultures differ in their individualistic dimension; Americans scored 91% on individualistic, the highest, while Thais scored 20%. Lastly, the individualistic dimension and space concept of both cultures remained intact even though computers allow students to change how they interact (Edmundson, 2007; Mead, 2005).

Study Methodology: Task and Relationship Orientations

The concept of leadership has been discussed since the days of the ancient Greek philosophers and it is one of the most interesting topics for researchers and managers. One of the most widely used leadership theories around the world today is situational leadership, which was founded by Drs. Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard in the 1960s (Personal Communication with Dr. Paul Hersey, February 2008 in Escondido, California). *Leadership* is the process of influencing an individual or a group of individuals while providing an environment where personal, professional, and/or organizational objectives can be successfully achieved. Leaders tend to use various amounts of task or relationship behaviors. *Task behavior* is the extent to which leaders engage in top-down communication by explaining what the follower is to do, as well as when, where, and how each function is to be accomplished. *Relationship behavior* is the extent to which leaders engage in joint communication with followers while providing socio-emotional support. Peter G. Northouse (2007, p. 65) provides a useful instrument, known as Style Questionnaire (p. 85), which can be used to obtain a general profile of a person's leadership behaviors regarding task and relationship orientations. The Style Questionnaire can be completed by oneself as well as one's friends, peers, bosses, and/or employees for comparison purposes. The results can show one's use of various task and relationship behaviors. Appendix A shows a copy of the survey for task and relationship orientation. To determine one's personal leadership characteristics, the person circles one of the options that best describe how he or she sees himself or herself (or the person that is being evaluated) regarding each statement. For each statement, the person indicates the degree to which he or she (or the person being evaluated) engages in the stated behavior. A rating of 1 means "Never" and a rating of 5 means "Always" with the person demonstrating the specific behavior. To determine one's scores for the leadership styles questionnaire, one can add the responses for the odd numbered items to determine the score for task-orientation behaviors, and add the responses for the even numbered items to determine the score for relationship-orientation behaviors. The scoring interpretation for the Style Questionnaire by Northouse (2007, p. 87) is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 – Task and Relationship Score Interpretations

SCORES	DESCRIPTIONS
• 45-50	Very high range
• 40-44	High range
• 35-39	Moderately high range
• 30-34	Moderately low range
• 25-29	Low range
• 10-24	Very low range

High task behavior scores tend to mean that the leader engages in more top-down communication by explaining what the follower is to do, as well as when, where, and how each function is to be accomplished. High relationship behavior scores mean the leader engages in more joint communication with followers while providing socio-emotional support. Of course, the degree to which one engages in more task or relationship oriented behaviors should depend on the variables present in the situation; some of the situational variables can include the difficulty of the task, the importance of the job, the time available to get it done, and the readiness of the follower to successfully complete the task without much input. According to Dr. Paul Hersey, effective leaders stay in control by managing through a balance of both task and relationship oriented behaviors, as appropriate, to make sure the objectives and goals are accomplished (Personal Communication with Dr. Paul Hersey, February 2008).

Hypothesis

The research question for this study was to determine whether high-context culture Thai students have a higher average score on the relationship orientation than their low-context culture American counterparts? The specific hypotheses for this study are as follows:

1. *Null Hypothesis1:* Thai respondents will have similar scores for relationship orientations and task orientations.
   Alternate Hypothesis1: Thai respondents will not have similar scores for relationship orientations and task orientations.

2. *Null Hypothesis2:* Thai respondents will have similar scores on task orientation as the respondents from the United States.
   Alternative Hypothesis2: Thai respondents will have different scores on task orientation than respondents from the United States.

3. *Null Hypothesis3:* Thai respondents will have similar scores on relationship orientation as the respondents from the United States.
   Alternative Hypothesis3: Thai respondents will have different scores on relationship orientation than the respondents from the United States.

4. *Null Hypothesis4:* United States respondents will have similar scores for relationship orientations and task orientations.
   Alternate Hypothesis4: United States respondents will not have similar scores for relationship orientations and task orientations.

For the purpose of this study, a copy of the questionnaire was submitted to 150 English-speaking Thai students in Bangkok and Hat Yai provinces of Thailand in various business courses. Within three weeks, 102 completed surveys were returned to the researcher. Of the returned surveys, 25 were completed incorrectly (perhaps due to miscommunication since the survey was only offered in the English language and not in the local lingo); thus, leaving 77 surveys for analysis in this study. From the total usable Thai responses, 57 were Buddhists, 14 were Muslims, and the rest marked "Other." In the United States, for over a period of one year, a copy of the survey was given as a part of an exercise for two different graduate management courses in South Florida to 88 students and all scores were recorded for the study. From the total American responses, 41 were Christian, 3 were Muslims, 2 were Buddhists, and the rest marked "Other." The average age of Thai respondents was 23, and for the U.S. respondents it was 28 years. While only 4 Thai respondents stated that they had 1 to 5 years of management experience, 28 people from the United States said they had at least 1 or more years of experience (and 7 students reported having 6 or more years of management experience).

Task and Relationship Results

The average scores of Thai respondents for task orientation falls in "moderately high range," and their relationship orientation average also falls in "moderately high range." On the other hand, as presented in Table 3, the average scores of American respondents for both task and relationship orientations fall in the "high range."

Table 3 – Orientation Scores of Thai and U.S. Respondents

Respondents	No.	Gender		Average Task Orientation Score	Average Relationship Orientation Score
		Male	Fem.		
Thailand	77	41	36	36.82	36.03
United States	87	56	31	41.18	43.39

As can be seen from Table 4 and using the t-test for differences in two means, at a 0.05 level of significance, the first null hypothesis ("*Thai respondents will have similar scores for relationship orientations and task orientations*") cannot be rejected because the calculated t of 1.32 falls within the critical value of t for statistical significance; in other words, since the t value does fall within the critical values (+1.97 and -1.97), the hypothesis is supported. Furthermore, since the p-value is larger than alpha (α) = 0.05, there is sufficient evidence to accept the null hypothesis.

Table 4 – Thai Task and Relationship Orientations	
Task Orientation – Thailand	
Sample Size	77
Sample Mean	36.82
Sample Standard Deviation	3.56
Relationship Orientation – Thailand	
Sample Size	77
Sample Mean	36.03
Sample Standard Deviation	3.88
t-Test Statistic	1.32
Two-Tailed Test	
Lower Critical Value	-1.975
Upper Critical Value	1.975
p-Value	0.1899
Do not reject the null hypothesis	

Based on the results, the task orientation and relationship orientation scores of Thai respondents appear to be similar. As such, one can conclude that the Thai respondents have similar scores on the task orientation and relationship orientation. Perhaps because they are students, while valuing their relationships, Thais appear to be focused on the tasks at hand to ensure they are completed in a timely manner, i.e. completing course assignments during the current semester.

As can be seen from Table 5, the null hypothesis ("*Thai respondents will have similar scores on task orientation as the respondents from the United States*") is rejected because t= -5.57 does not fall within the critical value of +1.97 and -1.97. Also, because the p-value is smaller than alpha (α) = 0.05, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Based on these results, Thai respondents' scores are significantly different or lower from the American respondents. The alternative hypothesis is supported since the Thai respondents have different scores on task orientation than the respondents from the United States.

Table 5 – Task Orientation Scores	
Task Orientation - Thailand	
Sample Size	77
Sample Mean	36.82
Sample Standard Deviation	3.56
Task Orientation - United States	
Sample Size	87
Sample Mean	41.18
Sample Standard Deviation	5.99
Total Degrees of Freedom	162
t-Test Statistic	-5.57
Two-Tailed Test	
Lower Critical Value	-1.97
Upper Critical Value	1.97
p-Value	0.00

As can be seen from Table 6 and using the t-test for differences in two means, at a 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis ("*Thai respondents will have similar scores on relationship orientation as the respondents from the United States*") is rejected because t= 10.74 does not fall within the critical values. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the Thai respondents have significantly different and lower scores on relationship orientation than the respondents from the United States.

Table 6 – Relationship Orientation Scores	
Relationship Orientation - Thailand	
Sample Size	77
Sample Mean	36.03
Sample Standard Deviation	3.88
Relationship Orientation - United States	
Sample Size	87
Sample Mean	43.39
Sample Standard Deviation	4.78
t-Test Statistic	-10.74
Two-Tailed Test	
Lower Critical Value	-1.97
Upper Critical Value	1.97
p-Value	0.00

As can be seen from Table 7, the last null hypothesis ("*United States respondents will have similar scores for relationship orientations and task orientations*") is rejected because the calculated t of -2.69 far exceeds the critical value of t for statistical significance (1.97) and the p-value (0.007) is smaller than alpha (0.05). Based on these results, the task orientation and relationship orientation scores of respondents from the United States appear to be significantly different. As such, one can conclude that the U.S.A. respondents have a significantly higher score on the relationship orientation than the task orientation.

Table 7 – USA Task and Relationship Orientations	
Task Orientation – USA	
Sample Size	87
Sample Mean	41.18
Sample Standard Deviation	5.99
Relationship Orientation – USA	
Sample Size	87
Sample Mean	43.39
Sample Standard Deviation	4.78
t-Test Statistic	-2.69
Two-Tailed Test	
Lower Critical Value	-1.97
Upper Critical Value	1.97
p-Value	0.0007

In general, it was hypothesized that Thai respondents will have similar scores for relationship orientations and task orientations, and the current study did support this hypothesis. As a result of this study, one can further summarize that Thai respondents have significantly different scores on task orientation than respondents from the United States. Similarly, Thai respondents have significantly different scores on relationship orientation than the respondents from the United States. Last but not least, one can summarize that respondents from the United States do not have similar scores for relationship and task orientations.

Implications and Recommendations

Due to the societal conditioning and general nature of human beings, some managers and educators often assume that employees from high-context cultures are likely to be more relationship-oriented. The implication is that such an orientation may cause employees to not complete their tasks in a timely manner. For example, they may not be assertive enough to pressure their peers toward working faster if there is a backlog or even to ask for help when necessary because they do not want to appear "pushy" or "rude." Of course, such assumptions are often wrong. This research has shown that business students from a high-context culture of Thailand are just as task-oriented as they are focused on their relationships. This is good news for local and expatriate managers working in Thailand as employees are likely to treat their customers with respect and good service without losing focus from their assigned tasks. It is very possible that these results might only be true of business students and not necessarily others in the educational arena or in the general population of a high-context culture. Some managers may also think that people from individualistic or low context cultures are likely to focus more on tasks even when this comes at the cost of hurting the relationship. In reality, this study has shown that American respondents who had high scores on the task-orientation were actually more focused on the relationship than the task. Once again, it is possible that these results might only be true of business students and not necessarily others in the educational arena or in the general population of a low-context culture.

One implication of this research is that even though a low-context group's orientation toward individualistic cultures (such as people from the United States) might be very high, this research has concluded that they can be highly focused on the relationship while completing their tasks. Similarly, despite a high-context group's orientation toward collectivistic cultures (such as people from Thailand), this research has shown that they can be focused on the task at hand while keeping the relationship strong due to the nature of their upbringing and years of socialization. While the Thais are often expected to score higher on the relationship orientation than the task orientation, this research has not supported this notion with the business student population. Similarly, while the respondents from the United States are expected to score higher on the task orientation than relationship orientation, this research has demonstrated the opposite with the business student population. Furthermore, perhaps due to the emphasis on teamwork training and the need for working interdependently to remain competitive, the respondents from the United States scored significantly higher on both the task orientation as well as the relationship orientation than the respondents from Thailand. Despite the fact that the scores of Thais and Americans are significantly different, there are likely to be a convergence of scientific or analytical thinking and strategic decision-making processes in the business arenas as students and managers are reading and reviewing similar profession- or industry-related books and articles.

There is little doubt that we are witnessing a convergence of cultural thoughts and views when it comes to the usage of technology in the classroom and in the workplace. Furthermore, personal observations show that there is a culture shift underway in Thailand regarding the use of cyberspace technologies and global brands of various products; this is especially true of the younger generations of students who are more heavily influenced by Hollywood (U.S.A.), Bollywood (India), and Western or European ideologies.

General review of demographic data demonstrates that age seems to be a variable in the high or low orientation scores of respondents since, on the average, the American students were about five years older than their Thai counterparts. As demonstrated by the higher scores of respondents from the United States, one implication is that those who are older tend to put more focus or a higher level of importance on both the task as well as their relationships in the workplace.

Work experience is always important for quality outcomes and professionalism, and this is especially true in management. It should be noted that management experience also seems to be a factor in higher scores of Americans as more of them reported having one or more years of experience in management or supervisory levels. Since managers are required to stay focused on the timely completion of all tasks in their department, they tend to maintain a healthy relationship with their employees, peers, superiors, vendors, customers, and others who regularly influence their work in the value-chain. Perhaps, due to this requirement for a balance of both relationship and task completion with various stakeholders in the value chain, those who have been in management tend to score higher on both orientations. More data is needed to see if management experience is actually a dominant factor in the task or relationship orientation of respondents in low-context or individualistic and high-context or collectivistic cultures.

Limitations and Future Direction

There are several limitations to this study and the small number of responses is one of them. The fact that the survey was given only in the English language to Thai students in the international business program might be a factor in their scores. It is recommended that future researchers translate the instrument into the Thai language and have another person "back-translate" it into the English language for accuracy evaluation so the final survey can be made available in both languages to respondents in Thailand. Another limitation is the fact that this study was conducted with a student population where the respondents from Thailand were younger, but the respondents from the United States were older and many of them were employed full-time. Future studies can compare students with similar demographic backgrounds. Another limitation is the fact that some students might have felt obligated to respond according to the "textbook" answers since for a majority of them this was part of the course assignment during discussions of management and leadership styles. As such, some of the responses might be geared toward "pleasing" the teacher for a higher score on the participation evaluation rather than representing their true intentions. Perhaps future studies can remove this pressure from respondents by having a third party facilitate the distribution and collection of data from the target groups.

While the Thai students seem to have an equal focus on task-orientation and relationship-orientation, this might be true simply because they understand the importance of completing assignments in a timely manner during each semester. Or, it is possible that these respondents, who are enrolled in the English-speaking international business program, are both task- and relationship-oriented simply due to the convergence of work practices as they may have adapted a Western style of managing their time and activities. However, these results cannot be generalized to the total population as students are conditioned differently than working adults. Furthermore, students tend to be younger than traditional working adults. As such, future studies can focus on working populations in Thailand and in the United States, and such research can analyze the responses based on different categories of age to see if being older or younger makes a difference in the task or relationship orientation scores of respondents from high and low context cultures.

Researchers should also note that management experience seems to be a variable or factor in the scores of respondents. Therefore, future studies should compare those who have five or more years of management experience with those who have never been a manager to see if this is a variable in the task and relationship orientation scores of respondents. Finally, it should be mentioned that it is very possible that these results might only be true of business students in both high-context and low-context cultures and not necessarily of others in the educational arena or in the general population. Therefore, future researchers can test these hypotheses with students in non-business fields as well as with employees in the general population.

Conclusion

This paper discussed some of the common differences regarding individualistic and collectivistic cultures where an individualistic environment is often linked to low-context cultures and a collectivistic one is linked to high-context cultures. After reflecting on the behaviors of people in Thailand and the United States, one is better able to get an understanding of Thai and American students and their cultures. American students tend to work based on their individualistic views, and Thai students work based on their collectivistic views. Individualistic and collectivistic paradigms are conflicting views of the nature of humans, society, and the relationship between them. Contrary to the popular belief, the results of this study

show that Thai students are equally focused on tasks as they are on their relationships. Furthermore, as shown in the responses, Thai business students are not necessarily more relationship oriented than their counterparts from the United States.

The cultural behaviors of people do not easily change because of the introduction of new technology or a few inculcation and familiarization exercises about another culture. As demonstrated through various cases and studies, people usually function in the way that they are accustomed to working based on their cultural upbringing and socialization. However, despite a group's individualistic orientation in a low-context culture (such as people from the United States), this research has implied that they can be highly focused on the relationship while completing their tasks. Similarly, despite a group's collectivistic orientation in a high-context culture (such as people from Thailand), this research has implied that they can be equally focused on the task at hand while keeping the relationship strong.

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Appendix A: Task and Relationship Orientation Survey

1. ***Gender***: A - Male, B - Female.
2. ***Age***: A – 17 to 25, B – 26 and above.
3. ***Management experience***: A – None, B – 1 to 5 years, C – 6 or more years.
4. ***Religion*** – A: Buddhist, B: Muslim, C. Christian, D. Other.

To determine your dominant personal leadership style, circle one of the following options that best describe how you see yourself (or the person that is being evaluated) regarding each statement. For each statement, you can indicate the degree to which you (or the person being evaluated) engage (s) in the stated behavior. A rating of 1 means Never and a rating of 5 means Always with the person demonstrating the specific behavior.

Table AP1 – Task or Relationship Style Questionnaire

Questions	Never……Always				
1. Tells group members what they are supposed to do.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Acts friendly with members of the group.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
3. Sets standards of performance for group members.	1	2	3	4	5
4. *Helps others feel comfortable in the group.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
5. Makes suggestions about how to solve problems.	1	2	3	4	5
6. *Responds favorably to suggestions made by others.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
7. Makes his or her perspective clear to others.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Treats others fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Develops a plan of action for the group.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
10. *Behaves in a predictable manner toward group members.*	1	2	3	4	5
11. Defines role responsibilities for each group member.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
12. *Communicates actively with group members.*	1	2	3	4	5
13. Clarifies his or her own role within the group.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
14. Shows concern for the well-being of others.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Provides a plan for how the work is to be done.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
16. *Shows flexibility in making decisions.*	1	2	3	4	5
17. Provides criteria for what is expected of the group.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
18. *Discloses thoughts and feelings to group members.*	1	2	3	4	5
19. Encourages group members to do high-quality work.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
20. *Helps group members get along.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

To determine your scores for the leadership styles questionnaire, do the following:

1. Add the responses for the odd numbered items to determine your score for task-orientation behaviors.
2. Add the responses for the even numbered items to determine your score for relationship-orientation behaviors.

Task Orientation Scores: _____ ***Relationship*** Orientation Scores: _____

Barriers to Accounting as a Career Choice for African-American Students

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Abstract

While the AICPA and accounting firms have recognized that an ethnically diverse profession is better able to serve its clients, diversity gains have been meager over the last 35 years. Career choices made by African-American students may cause this trend. The current study uses social cognitive career theory as a framework to set forth propositions for why traditional recruiting of African-American students may not be successful. Research on factors that hinder African Americans' entrance into the profession will promote addressing those specific barriers in diversity efforts. This paper makes several suggestions for research to advance this goal.

Keywords**:** recruiting, diversity, career theory, self-efficacy, job outcomes, social values

Introduction

In the late 1960s the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants undertook national initiatives to increase minority representation in the accounting profession. These initiatives continue today and have included scholarships, doctoral fellowships, and faculty development seminars (Craig, 1987). In the last 35 years the chief purpose of diversity initiatives has changed from one of providing access to the profession in response to the civil rights movement to recognition that diversity makes good business sense (Hammond & Paige, 1999). The AICPA and accounting firms have recognized that an ethnically diverse profession will be better able to serve its clients as minorities grow to comprise a greater percentage of U.S. business owners and of the United States population.

Despite this extended effort toward diversification, gains have been meager. For example, Hammond and Paige (1999) reported that while Hispanic representation in accounting had increased, African-American representation in nonminority-owned CPA firms declined from 1.8% to 1.4% between 1976 and 1996. Evidence from Nelson, Vendrzyk, Quinn, & Allen (2002) also reflected a decline in the number of African-American students majoring in accounting between 1995 and 2000. Research by Hermanson, Hill, & Ivancevich (2002) suggested overrepresentation of Asian-American entrants but an underrepresentation of both African-American and Hispanic-American entrants. Finally, recent data from the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants [AICPA] (2005) showed that African Americans comprised only seven percent of new accounting graduates and only three percent new hires by CPA firms in academic year 2003-2004. The purpose of the current study is to set forth propositions for why recruiting of African-Americans into accounting has not succeeded in hopes that these propositions will be provocative enough to stimulate empirical research of their value.

Theoretical Framework

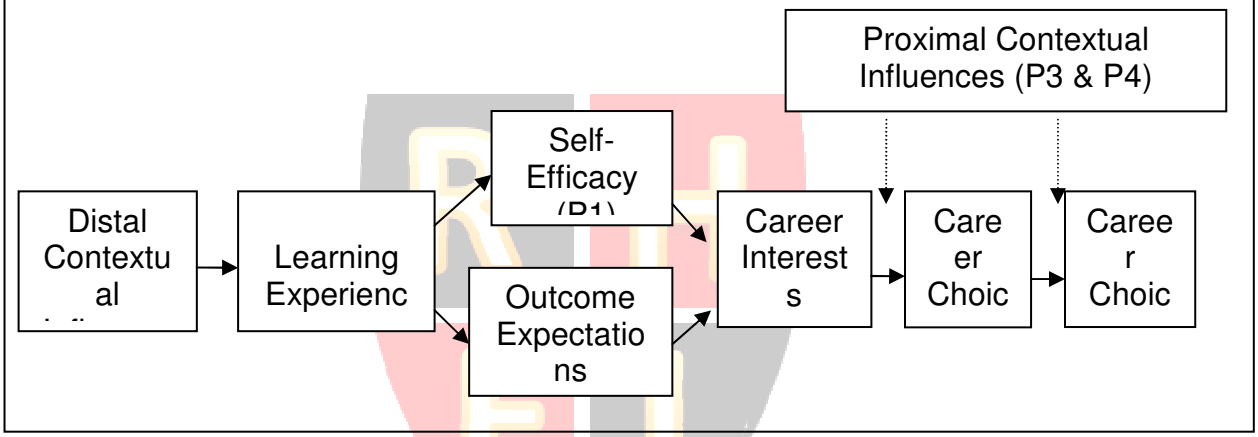
The current study proposes that current diversification struggles are due in part to career choices by African American students. The study uses social cognitive career theory (SCCT) to set forth five propositions for why traditional recruiting of African-American students may not be successful. These propositions are rooted in factors that may differentially affect African-American and Caucasian students' career choices. The SCCT choice model synthesizes and builds conceptual linkages between diverse career theories. It has been tested and shown to be a good fit to the career choice process in a variety of contexts. Two studies have examined applicability of the model specifically to African Americans. Gainor and Lent (1998) supported the utility of the SCCT choice model in predicting math choice intentions of African American college students. Lent, Brown & Sheu (2005) applied the model in an engineering context at both historically Black and predominantly White universities and found it to be predictive for both races.

The SCCT choice model is depicted in Figure 1. Variables in the model that lead to research propositions have been noted as P1 through P5. The model contains two key personal variables that help

determine career choice: self-efficacy and outcome expectations. These personal variables develop from collective learning experiences throughout childhood and adolescence and up to the point of decision. Self-efficacy refers to a person's beliefs about their ability to attain career-related achievements. Outcome expectations are personal beliefs about the consequences of performing certain behaviors. SCCT posits that people will develop lasting interest in a career when they view the career as leading to valued outcomes and they view themselves as competent at the required skills. Interest in turn promotes development of goals to become involved in the particular activity. These goals then lead to the selection and practice of a career (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1996).

In addition to key variables, SCCT proposes that contextual influences may impact key variables and relationships within the model. These contextual influences can be divided into two broad categories. Distal influences are those more distant from the decision point which shape learning experiences, social cognitions and, ultimately, interests. These influences may include factors like early skill development and cultural socialization. Proximal influences are near the decision point and may moderate the relationship between career interests, goals and choice. These influences may include factors like job availability or financial support for a particular career option.

FIGURE 1:SCCT Career Choice Model (Lent et



Propositions Based on Key Variables

Proposition 1: Low self-efficacy for the perceived skills necessary for accounting may cause African-American students to avoid accounting as a career.

Self efficacy is specific to particular performance domains and depends heavily on success and failure experiences within each domain. No research has examined the self-efficacy of Black students in the accounting domain. However, the broader construct of personal efficacy may have implications for self-efficacy in accounting. Personal efficacy is a general feeling of competence, personal control and confidence in managing one's life. This construct is similar to self-efficacy but related to life in general rather than a specific performance domain. As such, personal efficacy may impact self-efficacy in a number of different occupational domains.

Sociology literature has found that African Americans score lower than Caucasians on personal efficacy measures (Hughes & Demo, 1989). Similar to self-efficacy, development of high personal efficacy depends greatly on successful performance experiences. Research suggests that institutional inequality may deprive African Americans of opportunities for successful experiences that would enable them to feel efficacious. Institutional inequality does not denote intentional racism but perpetuation of institutional systems that, whether intentionally or unintentionally, have discriminatory impact (Hughes & Demo, 1989). Low personal efficacy may cause African Americans to have low self-efficacy in a number of occupational domains, particularly domains that are perceived to be challenging or those with low African American representation.

While personal efficacy research suggests African Americans may have low self-efficacy for accounting, additional research creates some ambiguity about whether to expect low self-efficacy. Results from Ellis and Ryan (2003), which studied race and self-efficacy in the context of cognitive ability test performance, showed higher self-efficacy among African Americans than Caucasians. Gaffney, McEwen, & Welsh (1995) measured expectations of accounting career success among Black accounting majors and found them more optimistic than White accounting majors. This result appears to suggest that self-efficacy for African-Americans in accounting may be high. However, 70% of the African American participants in this study were from a predominantly African American university. Thus, lower levels of institutional inequality may have resulted in a sample with greater self-efficacy. Hence, high self-efficacy in this study may not indicate high self-efficacy for accounting in the general Black student population. Additional research is needed to more fully understand this construct as it applies to African-American students.

Proposition 2: Differences in the extent to which work values match perceived outcomes may lead African-American students to choose careers other than accounting.

Outcome expectations are personal beliefs about the consequences of pursuing a particular career. This construct can be viewed as having two components: a person's work values and his or her perceptions of the likely outcomes of a career choice. A person is likely to develop interests in a particular career if there is a match between work values and the perceived outcomes of choosing a particular career. Research suggested that African Americans and Caucasians may hold different work values, or they may prioritize work values differently (Brown, 2002). These differences may affect the likelihood of choosing accounting as a career. Alternatively, differences may exist in the perceived outcomes of a career in accounting each race holds which may also affect career choice. Both work values and perceptions accounting of are discussed further below.

Work values are beliefs about work that a person holds as standards that guide how he or she should function. These may include values such as the level of financial prosperity, altruism and independence that should accompany one's work. While work values are cognitive structures, they have behavioral and affective dimensions and serve the purpose of meeting felt needs of the person who holds them. Hence, work values play a major role in setting professional goals (Brown, 2002).

Roe and Ester (1999) proposed three levels at which values exist: individuals, groups and countries. One parameter that may define a group is race. Thus, values shared among a racial group can motivate individual action and guide collective action. The greatest determinant of such values is personal experiences which primarily shape values development in two ways. First, children receive thousands of values-laden messages in their day-to-day lives which come from people with whom they have personal contact like parents, siblings, and other adults and children at school, church, etc. Second, the mass media is an important source of values messages as children are exposed to television, radio and print media (Keller, Bouchard, Arvey, Segal, & Dawis, 1992; Brown, 1996). On both dimensions, children raised in African American homes may have personal experiences that are different from those raised in Caucasian homes. These differences may lead to differences in values that affect career interest development. Two studies have surveyed African American and Caucasian populations for differences in work values. Brenner and Tomkiewicz (1982) surveyed business students while Brenner, Blazini, & Greenhaus (1988) surveyed utility firm managers. Both studies found that African Americans scored higher on most tested job values.

Little research exists to give an indication of whether African American and Caucasian students' differ significantly in their perceptions of accounting, the second component of outcome expectations. Only one study, Lieberman and Marquette (1986), compared student perceptions by race. In their survey of 700 high school students, African Americans held more favorable perceptions of accounting than Caucasians.

Propositions Based on Contextual Variables

Proposition 3: Cultural differences in social values may lead African-American students to choose careers other than accounting.

Separate from research on work values, psychology and sociology researchers have developed a broader theory of value-orientations. Value-orientation theory contains five dimensions: human nature,

person/nature relationships, traditional vs. future time focus, doing vs. being activity focus, and social relations (Kluckhohn & Strodbeck, 1961). To the extent that members of a group evaluate the dimensions similarly, their evaluations form the basis of group norms that guide group members' lifestyles and decision-making. When the group is a race or culture, these guiding principles are termed "cultural values" (Kluckhohn, 1951).

The value dimension most directly related to the current study is social relations. This value dimension measures whether a group tends to hold group goals or individual goals as more important. Research suggests that Caucasian Americans tend to value individual goals more highly than group goals and, hence, tend to be individualistic in their decision-making (Kluckhohn & Strodbeck, 1961; Brown, 2002). This perspective is consistent with seeing choice of a career as one's own personal right such that parents and other relatives should have little or no influence (Young, 1994). In African-American culture, values tend to dictate a more collective decision making process consistent with subordinating one's individual goals to the goals of the group (Carter & Helms, 1987). Ethnic groups with more individualistic social values are more likely to choose careers consistent with their personal work values. When more collective social values are held, choice of career will depend heavily on the values of parents and other important parties, altering the extent to which personal work values will lead to a career choice consistent with those work values (Brown, 2002; Simpson, 2001). Thus, successes in convincing a student that choosing accounting will result in desirable outcomes may be negated by the perceptions of parents and others who may be less aware of the benefits of the profession. More successful minority recruiting in areas like law and medicine suggest that African-American students may be steered toward careers with which their parents and other adult relatives are more familiar (Hardin, O'Bryan, & Quirin, 2000). Hence, while career interests may develop, social values may moderate the relationship between interests and career choice making this a proximal contextual influence.

Proposition 4: Perceptions of discrimination may lead African-American students to choose careers other than accounting.

The fact that racial discrimination persists and is a major quality of life issue for African-Americans is well-documented. Researchers have noted the existence of such discrimination in public places including the workplace and have studied its effects on life satisfaction, mental health, self-esteem and coping strategies (Feagin, 1991; Utsey, Ponterotto, Reynolds, & Cancelli, 2000). Racial discrimination has been pervasive enough and permanent enough that most African-Americans have likely experienced it in some way. Brown (2002) suggested that this condition might lead minorities to avoid professions in which they perceive a likelihood that they will be discriminated against, making this a proximal contextual influence.

Consistent with this idea, Tracey and Hopkins (2001) found that ethnicity moderated the relationship between interest and abilities and occupational choice. Specifically, the extent to which interest and abilities lead to career choice appears to be lower for African-Americans than for other races included in the study. Research suggests reasons for this result might include career barriers such as perceived discrimination (Chartrand & Rose, 1996; McWhirter, 1997). A meta-analysis by Fouad and Byers-Winston (2005) drew similar conclusions finding that race/ethnicity did not play a role in expressed career interest but appeared strongly related to perceived occupational opportunities and perceived career barriers.

Weisenfeld and Robinson-Backmon (2001) studied discrimination in accounting and found that 48.5% of African Americans respondents agreed they had faced racial discrimination in their jobs. Twenty-six percent reported that their career advancement had been curtailed due to discrimination. These perceptions of discrimination may be passed on to students which may discourage them from choosing accounting as a career. Collective decision-making may exacerbate this problem.

Proposition 5: Lack of access to information about accounting may lead African-Americans to be less likely to choose accounting as a career.

Research suggests that African-Americans have less access to information about careers than Caucasians (Brown, 2002), which may create a distal contextual influence. The AICPA (2000) reported that students had many negative misconceptions about accounting as a career. These misconceptions reduce the likelihood that students will choose accounting as a major. To the extent that African-American

students have less access to information about accounting, they will also have less opportunity to have their misperceptions corrected.

Moreover, research suggests that access to career information often comes through a personal contact. Nelson et al. (2002) analyzed characteristics of college students majoring in accounting. A vast majority (85%) of these accounting students personally know someone who is an accountant, suggesting that a student may be more likely to choose accounting if they know an accountant who can inform, advise and mentor them. For a Caucasian student, this would often be a parent, aunt, uncle or other close relative. However, due to the current underrepresentation of African-Americans in accounting it seems unlikely that the typical African-American student will have a close relative in accounting who can serve as such a mentor. Exacerbating the problem is the fact that research on mentoring suggests that when non-familial mentoring relationships naturally form, race differences cause the relationship to be much less likely to occur (Dreher & Cox, 1996). People naturally tend to form mentoring relationships with people they perceive as younger versions of themselves. Consequently, African-American students are less likely to form advising or mentoring relationships with someone in accounting which, in turn, decreases the likelihood that they will have access to information and choose accounting as a career. In this way, underrepresentation of African Americans in accounting may be a self-perpetuating cycle or a form of institutional inequality.

Conclusion

The career choice process of African American students has largely gone unaddressed in accounting research. Limited gains in diversifying the profession can likely be attributed in part to a failure to understand factors that lead these students to avoid accounting as a major. Further research is needed to understand what factors hinder African Americans' entrance into the profession so those barriers can be directly addressed by diversification efforts. This study has suggested the following propositions for why African Americans may not choose accounting as a career.

1. Low self-efficacy for the perceived skills necessary for accounting may cause African-American students to avoid accounting as a career.
2. Differences in the extent to which work values match perceived outcomes may lead African-American students to choose careers other than accounting.
3. Cultural differences in social values may lead African-American students to choose careers other than accounting.
4. Perceptions of discrimination may lead African-American students to choose careers other than accounting.
5. Lack of access to information about accounting may lead African-Americans to be less likely to choose accounting as a career.

Future research can use these propositions to develop an operational model to attract African American students by addressing each of these potential barriers. This model can be tested and revised through further research to form an effective basis for recruiting African American students into the accounting profession.

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The Business School Strategy: Continuous Improvement by Implementing the Balanced Scorecard

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Abstract

The strategic goal of accreditation by AACSB international remains continuous improvement in the quality and content of management education. This paper proposes an integrated framework approach for the attaining and maintaining of accreditation. The framework starts with the mission statement that leads to the development of a strategy. The components of the strategy are expanded into four perspectives with goals and measures or metrics within a Balanced Scorecard. The paper considers an integration of the mission statement components with the faculty responsibilities that are related to metrics within the Balanced Scorecard. The Balanced Scorecard serves as a means of measuring performance and modifying business school strategies within a changing environment including relationships and challenges.

Keywords: Balanced scorecard, continuous improvement, customer perspective, innovation, internal business perspective, and learning perspective.

Introduction

Higher education increasingly faces demands to be accountable to their stakeholders. Many business academics and administrators have strongly criticized business education's relevance to business and the community in general. Business schools have not defined and measured outcomes and thus value added to their programs. It is extremely important for schools to develop and measure processes that lead to successful outcomes especially schools seeking AACSB accreditation and those already accredited. This paper describes and applies a specific method within a framework of continuous improvement that has significant potential to accomplish such a task within a business school: The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) approach (Papenhausen and Einstein, 2006).

Background

The concept of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) was first introduced by Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton in1992. The basic premise of the BSC is that financial results alone cannot capture value creating activities. In other words, financial measures are lagging indicators and, as such, are not effective in identifying the drivers or activities that affect financial results. Therefore, Kaplan and Norton (1992) suggested that organizations, while using financial measures, should develop a comprehensive set of additional measures to use as leading indicators or predictors of financial performance. They suggested that measures should be developed that address four perspectives.

1. The financial perspective. Measures in this perspective should answer the question, "How should we appear to our shareholders?"
2. The customer perspective. These measures should answer the question, "How should we appear to our customers?"
3. Internal business processes perspective. Measures in this perspective should answer the question, "What processes must we excel at?"
4. Learning and growth perspective. These measures should answer the question, "How can we sustain our ability to change and improve?"

In essence, the Balanced Scorecard is a customer-based planning and process improvement system aimed at focusing and driving the change process. It does this by translating strategy into an integrated set of financial and nonfinancial measures that both communicates the organizational strategy to the members and provides them with actionable feedback on attainment of objectives.

A critical factor for an effective BSC is the alignment of all the measures in the four perspectives with the organization's vision and strategic objectives. The BSC allows managers to track short-term financial results while simultaneously monitoring their progress in building the capabilities and acquiring the intangible assets that generate growth for future financial performance (Kaplan and Norton, 1992). Thus, the BSC enables managers to monitor and adjust the implementation of their strategies and to make fundamental changes in them overtime (Karathanos and Karathanos, 2005).

BSC applications focus on for profit organizations. However, a few studies of the BSC look specifically within Business schools for applications include Drtina, Gilbert, and Alon (2007) who suggested integrating measures with clearly defined strategies as a first step with various guidelines. Armitage and Scholey (2004) successfully applied the BSC to a specific master's degree program in business, entrepreneurship, and technology. Cullen, Joyce, Hassall, and Broadbent (2003) proposed that a Balanced Scorecard be used in educational institutions for reinforcement of the importance of managing rather than just monitoring performance. Sutherland (2000) reported that the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California adopted the Balanced Scorecard approach to assess its academic program and planning process. Chang and Chow (1999) reported that responses in a survey of 69 accounting department heads were generally supportive of the Balanced Scorecard's applicability and benefits to accounting programs (Karathanos and Karathanos, 2005). Also, Chang and Chow (1999) indicated that in 1993 the University of California, San Diego's senior management launched a Balanced Scorecard planning and performance monitoring system for 30 institutional functions using three primary data sources: 1) UCSD's internal financial reports; 2)National Association of College and University Business Officers benchmarks; and 3) faculty, staff and student customer-satisfaction surveys. This exercise was conducted under the framework of the university's vision, mission, and values. Reported benefits and outcomes to date have included reorganization of the workload in the vice chancellor's area, revision of job descriptions with performance standards, introduction of continual training for user departments. ongoing customer assessments and increased responsiveness to communication needs through the use of technology. O'Neil and Bensimon (1999) described how a faculty committee at the Rossier School of Education of USC adapted a Balanced Scorecard model originally developed for business firms to satisfy the central administration's need to know how they measure up to other schools of education. The format of the Balanced Scorecard adapted by the faculty included the following four perspectives: 1) academic management perspective (How do we look to our university leadership?); 2) the internal business perspective (What we excel at?); 3) the innovation and learning perspective (Can we continue to improve and create value?); 4) the stakeholder perspective (how do students and employers see us?). O'Neil and Bensimon (1999) indicated the following favorable results from the "academic" scorecard implementation:

- Easier approach for the university to accomplish its strategic goals.
- A systematic and consistent way for the provost's office to evaluate performance reports from various schools and departments.
- The scorecard established common measures across academic units that have shared characteristics.
- The simplicity of the scorecard makes it easier for academic units to show how budget allocations are linked to the metrics of excellence.

Conceptual Viewpoint

The following concepts are an integral part of the paper:

- Strategy- describes how an organization matches its own capabilities with the opportunities in the marketplace to accomplish its overall objectives.
- Balanced Scorecard- a tool that translates an organization's mission into a comprehensive set of performance measures that provides the framework for implementing its strategy.
- Continuous improvement- the process and company philosophy that create a never-ending search for higher levels of performance within many organizations.
- The preamble to the 2003 AACSB standards for business accreditation challenges schools to engage in continuous improvement of the quality of the content, delivery, and administration of management education.

At the organization level, developing the Balanced Scorecard involves identifying several key components of operations, establishing goals for these and then selecting measures to track progress toward these goals. The number and nature of components can be expected to vary depending on the nature and the strategy of the organization, though the following four components are typical for a Balanced Scorecard:

1. Customer Perspective (How do our customers see us?). This component tracks how well the organization is meeting the expectations of its customers.
2. Internal Business Perspective (At what must we excel?). It focuses on the internal processes that the entity must perform well if it is to meet customers' expectations.
3. Innovation and Learning Perspective (Can we continue to improve and create value?). This component focuses on the infrastructure that the entity must build and sustain in order to ensure and enhance its ability to satisfy customers' expectations.
4. Financial Perspective (How do we look to providers of financial resources?). It tracks how well the organization is translating its operational results into financial well being.

Measures

The strategic directions can be developed and measured within the generic structure of the Balanced Scorecard. The following is the adaptation of the sample Balanced Scorecard developed by Bailey, Chow, and Haddad (1999) for a university and its strategic business units.

1. Stakeholder/Customer Perceptive

GOALS	MEASURES
1) Students	Average SAT, GMAT, GRE
Attract high-quality ethically diverse students	High school QPA
	Market share of student enrollment
	Geographic draw area
	% minority enrollment
Development high-quality students	Students portfolios
	GPA over time, average grades awarded
	Integration of technology into curriculum
Retain high-quality students	Financial aid offered
	Retention rate
	Student satisfaction surveys
	Tuition compared with comparable schools
Graduate high-quality students and improve placement	Number of degree awarded
	Number of students recruited
	Starting salaries
	Number of visits by recruiters
2) Employee-Satisfaction with graduates	Employer survey rating graduates effectiveness
	Perception surveys
	Support of programs and initiatives
3) Faculty satisfaction and quality	Participation in decision-making
	Encouragement for research, attendance of conferences
	Office space and computer availability
	% full time, % doctorally qualified
	Level of faculty publications / conference - attendance / presentations
	Student perception of faculty quality
	Student / teacher ration
	% of budget devoted to faculty development
4) Alumni satisfaction	Increased assistance with placement
	Level of alumni giving
	Number of alumni attending special events

5) Community Public-Enhance relationships with community, improve public image	Employer surveys Outreach programs to community Community perception of faculty and staff Internships / co-op programs Advisory committees New articles featuring school and / or faculty

2. Internal Business Perspective

GOALS	MEASURES
Teaching and learning excellence	Evaluation by external reviewers and employers Peer review Students satisfaction with teaching quality Grade point standards Quality and technological level of computer labs and libraries Presentation capabilities Degree of deployment of technology in learning experience
Curriculum / program excellence	Degree to which curriculum is up-to-date with educational, business, and commercial trends Reviews by advisory boards Periodic review of each program Faculty credentials, development plans, appraisals
Quality and currency of faculty	Contacts with business and industry Utilization rate of multimedia in classrooms Degree cycle time Teaching load policy management % of students completing program in 4 years
Efficiency and effectiveness of services	Analysis of use of space Student satisfaction Placement services and opportunities Availability of internships / co-ops Allocation and use of equipment and supplies

3. Innovation and Learning Perspective

GOALS	MEASURES
Teaching and learning innovation and faculty development	Number of innovations incorporated into classroom Level of equipment Quality of instruction / advising / mentoring Number of ongoing instructional development programs Number of new initiatives / courses / programs Formally approved curriculum changes Seminars presented Expenditures for teaching enhancement Number and quality of faculty publications / presentations Attendance at conferences Honors and awards received by faculty Innovation versus competitors Adequacy of classrooms, equipment, computers, library resources

Quality of facilities	% of budget for improved facilities Time required to service, replace, allocate Reports of implementation of decentralization efforts for sites
Specific strategic decision implementation-decentralization of campuses	Evaluation of strategic planning results

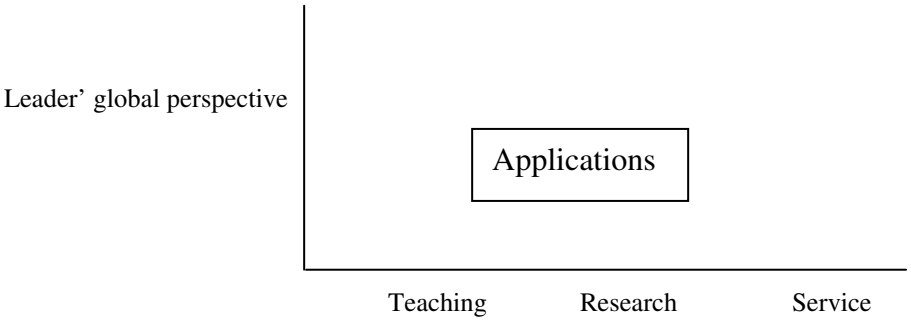
4. Financial Perspective

GOALS	MEASURES
Fund raising	Total funds raised Alumni / business funds generated Size / growth of endowment Number of donors Growth rate of annual fund Number and amounts of grants and contracts received Level of unrestricted funding
Revenues from operations	Tuition revenue growth Non-tuition revenue as % of annual budget % of funds from tuition that stay internally Contribution analysis
Human capital investment	Class size, student / faculty ratio Faculty turnover rate Salaries relative to peer group Dollars / faculty Program for release time and sabbaticals
Financial management-Budgeting	Balanced budgets and increased budgets Funds totally accountable Efficiency and effectiveness of budget allocations spent Effectiveness of monitoring supplies and Equipment Number of dollars for each revenue generating activity Cost per "credit hour production" relative to benchmark

The continuous improvement starts with a mission statement. A school develops and publishes a mission statement or its equivalent that provides direction for making decisions. The mission statement derives from process that includes the viewpoint of various stakeholders. An example of a mission statement is "The mission of the Byrd School of Business is to educate students to become successful, principled leaders with a global perspective". A matrix approach to the mission and faculty responsibilities would include:

Successful

Principled

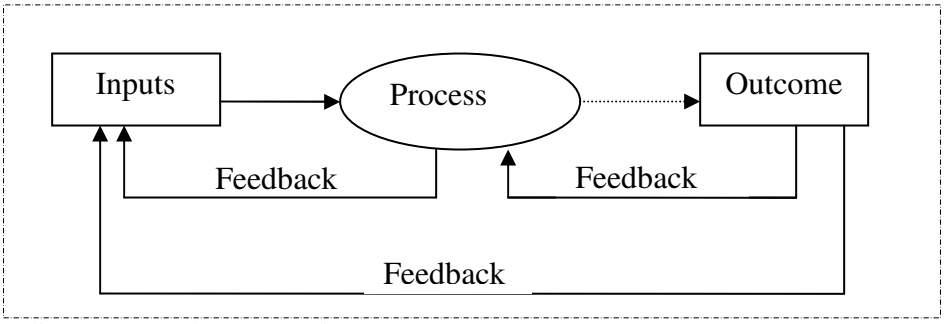


This subset would form the foundation for development and expansion within the perspectives of stakeholders/customer, internal business, and innovation/ learning as well as provide assurance of learning.

The AACSB shift to process-based standards is evident in several of the 2003 standards that require each school to utilize processes that generate the capability to enhance an important service or product for its external customers for management education. Further, the new standards are intended to improve internal service or products supporting management education: develop faculty, improve instruction, and enhance intellectual activity. Process-based standards define and document the capability of transforming inputs into desired outcomes. Because processes define an organizing structure to create these capabilities, one could argue that an important metric used to evaluate a school's performance against a given standard should be documentation of the processes that create the capability required in each standard. Accreditation standards that are process-based support continuous quality improvement in management education while those that are input-driven or outcomes-focused most often do not. Therefore, the measures or metrics must be identified as to process-based. For example, under the stakeholder/customer perspective, the measure of the level of faculty publications, conferences attendance, and presentations, is evidence how faculty are developing their research agenda and the development of quality journal articles over time. Another example would be the development or use of a case in the undergraduate level within certain core courses to assess student learning thus assessing common concepts or achievements across the curriculum. The ideas developed could be generalized into a basic model of a transformation process involving inputs, process, outputs, and a feedback loop (Hedin, Barnes, and Chen, 2005).

The inputs are transformed into outputs as a result of a defined set of related steps or operations called a process. Generally the inputs represent resources from both the internal and external environments, including the products or outputs from other subsystems of the school or university including students, physical environment and organizational infrastructure. The outputs generated by the system include the service or value addition generated by the process. The outputs can be assessed using outcomes-related metrics. The purpose of the feedback loop is to facilitate continuous improvement through the entire transformation process (Hedin, Barnes, and Chen, 2005). The basic model is shown in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1
Transformation Process Model



Source: (Hedin, Barnes, and Chen, 2005)

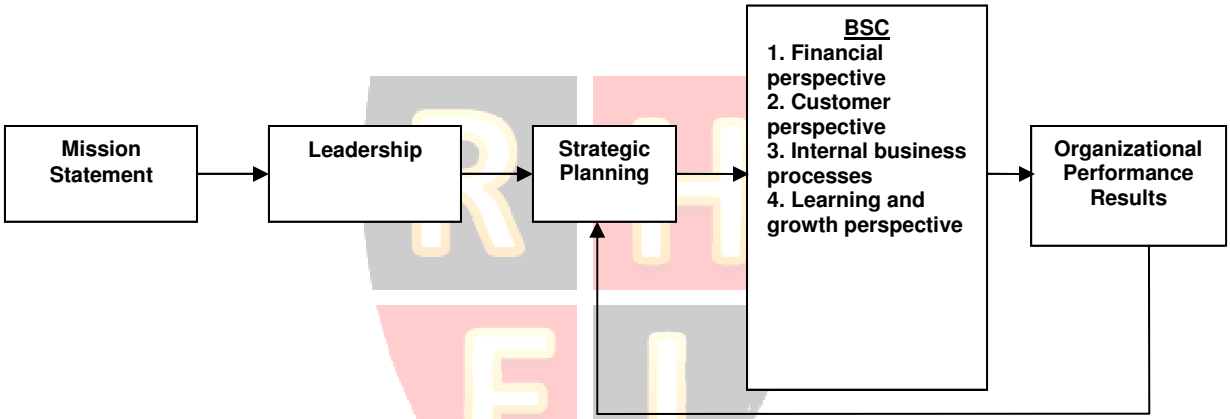
An Integrated Framework Approach

The integrated framework approach would start with the overall strategy based on the mission statement. The mission statement would be integrated with resources such as faculty including their perspectives of teaching, research, and service. A comprehensive strategy would include measures or metrics with the four perspectives outlined. The content within the perspectives would be viewed on a continuum of improvement over time. The framework can be further developed by considering other AACSB standards for measurement and application within the BSC and consideration of actual data provided by a university.

The framework would provide a systematic perspective for long-term planning and decision making. A generic architecture to describe the framework is shown in Figure 2. The measures or metrics could be further developed into a BSC strategy map as illustrated by Kaplan and Norton (2004). Each measure would be considered in a chain of cause-and-effect logic that connects the desired outcomes from the strategy with the drivers.

Figure 2

Generic Architecture



Continuous improvement within an environment including relationships and challenges will lead to the planned or expected outcomes. The measures or metrics illustrated in this paper may then be tied to multiple goals. The important concept is that each measure or metric align with the organization's strategy based on the mission statement.

Conclusion

The current environment demands increasing accountability from business schools especially those schools seeking AACSB accreditation. The proposed framework centered on the Balanced Scorecard approach offers an alternative for developing and implementing a strategic performance management system in a business school. The implementation of a strategy based on the mission statement requires communication and active participation by not only the business school faculty but the faculty and administrators across the campus. This would lead to consistent messages and sets of priorities throughout each academic school or division. Through continuous improvement, each faculty member will gain a thorough understanding and appreciation for the strategy, implementation of planning, and results achieved. A successful BSC can provide feedback to the administration and faculty that can lead to a long-term process that will foster individual and collective growth resulting in improved organizational performance.

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Developing Critical Thinking in College Programs

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Abstract

The general public sometimes regards accounting as a rule-bound, algorithmic profession—as simple bookkeeping—when in fact it has been and is increasingly focused on creative thought. Accounting "rules" are fundamentally invitations to the accountant to practice critical thinking. The accounting profession faces increased demands from students, parents and employers to prepare students better; programs must "do more" with ever-diminishing resources. In response to these demands, many programs now go beyond teaching traditional accounting knowledge to focus on writing, critical thinking and other important skills to help develop more graduates that are successful. After discussing the general background of critical thinking skills, we discuss how college programs have and can more effectively implement this important skill. We thus summarize proven methods to develop critical thinking skills and show how faculty members can use these ideas in an accounting context.

Keywords: thinking, critical, accounting, skills, teaching, writing

Introduction

The general public sometimes regards accounting as a rule-bound, algorithmic profession—as simple bookkeeping—when in fact it has been and is increasingly focused on creative thought. For example, accounting seems to be moving from a *rules-based* profession that focuses on ascertaining if the client or company followed pre-ordained rules (regardless of the underlying economic circumstances) to a *principles-based* profession, e.g., assuming responsibility that the set transactions follows overall guidance. For example, under a rules based system, an entity should not capitalize a lease that covers 74.49% of the asset's expected life, but under a principles-based system the entity should focus on whether the proposed lease contains the lack of a "transfer" of risk associated with capital lease transactions. Since accounting "rules" are fundamentally invitations to the accountant to practice critical thinking, as new technologies and global realities work their way through the accounting profession, the demand for change in preparing accountants increases. Clients now expect professional accountants to "add value" to what these accountants observe, read and write; i.e., to evaluate complex systems and information, and detect, predict, advise and recommend appropriate courses of action. Critical thinking is generally the name of the process that provides this added value and communicates the results effectively to others.

The accounting profession has demanded improved critical thinking skills in the past. For example, Hardy, Deppe and Smith (1992) reported that Brigham Young University (BYU) received an Accounting Education Change Commission grant for its proposal for curriculum evaluation and modification, placing increased emphasis on critical thinking (as well as communications, group work and people skills). More recently, Springer and Borthick (2007) found that accounting education would be well-served by having students improve their higher-order critical thinking skills, including their cognitive conflict task skills which entice learners to make more elaborations and inferences to resolve conflicting aspects and to strengthen their abilities to comprehend and respond to business dilemmas.

CPA firms, management accountants and other employers of accounting graduates want improved competency in critical thinking and other related skills. For example, the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) wants to revamp the entire accounting curriculum required to sit for the Uniform CPA exam, and the Institute of Management Accountants (among other accounting organizations) responded to this suggestion by suggesting that the accounting profession study accounting curricula more deeply. Thus, today's graduating students and practitioners must respond to the progressive diversity and complexity of accounting practice and develop life-long learning skills that focus on their ability to think critically; i.e., to understand, apply and adapt concepts and principles in a variety of contexts and

circumstances. Colleges should understand this process and ground their students in it to help prepare their students to meet today's professional challenges. After defining critical thinking, we will discuss various ways to bring it into the accounting curriculum.

Background

Critical thinking has many definitions. The American Heritage Dictionary (2008) characterizes *critical* not as negative or neutral, but as "careful and exact evaluation and judgment." Critical thinking points to a positive ability in those who possess it. Focusing on problem definition and problem solving, responding rationally to questions that cannot be answered definitively and for which all relevant information may be unavailable. It explores situations to derive optimal, justifiable hypotheses or conclusions. This thinking rests on a basic wariness; a willingness to take nothing for granted and to approach each experience as if it were unique—it demonstrates the qualities that we associate with a good accountant, especially a good auditor. While keeping a constant purpose—to understand—it usually leads to evaluation and, thus, to judgment.

This critical thinking approach differs greatly from other methods of thinking. Ideas are always present in our minds; hence, we always think in one way or another. Daydreaming is one kind of thinking (usually an unfocused kind), as is remembering (focused but uncreative—simple information retrieval). But critical thinking is purposeful, goal-oriented and creative—as an active process rooted in a series of qualities that add up to a wariness attitude that takes nothing for granted.

Just as good writing entails intensive rewriting, critical thinking entails rethinking, or transcending the obvious and easy way. It requires a willingness to say, "I don't know." It requires openness to alternative ways of seeing and doing—alternatives based on an understanding of how things work and a caring for ideas of others even when they don't agree with yours. It requires thoughtfulness, including genuine (not merely idle) curiosity; desire to find out what other people have done and thought, and insistence on getting the best evidence before drawing conclusions (Boostrom, 1992).

The general purpose of critical thinking is to understand. But its goal goes beyond the purpose: it almost invariably leads to evaluation and therefore to judgment. In the end, we all should judge the value of that which we have reflected on. Critical thinking is a process of understanding how thinking and learning work, using higher order skills to comprehend issues, and analyzing, synthesizing, and assessing those ideas logically. It focuses on an attitude and the activity of using higher-order reasoning skills, such as analysis of a problem, or breaking ideas into their component parts to consider each of them separately, synthesis or the connection among different components or ideas in order to derive relationships that tie the parts of an answer together, critical assessment of the conclusions reached, requiring an examination of the conclusions for soundness of reasoning and logic.

King and Kitchener (1994) Wolcott and Lynch (1997), Wood and Lynch (1998) and other researchers in accounting education define critical thinking more narrowly as "reflective judgment." King and Kitchener (1994) note that reflective judgment focuses on the underlying assumptions or processes involved in addressing unstructured problems. Wolcott and Lynch (1997) have developed writing assignments and a measurement rubric to help develop and assess the skills students use in the reflective judgment process, such as specific prompts to provide information on students' abilities to recognize their own potential biases, potential multiple perspectives and viable options. King and Kitchener (1994) have developed a seven-stage reflective judgment model, which Springer and Borthick (2004) tested on their students—finding that reflective judgment in a business simulation environment can significantly improve students' critical thinking skills.

The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) has attempted to translate the concepts in thinking, such as the preceding, into an accounting-targeted set of principles; however, educators have not responded well to the AICPA's recommendations. Kimmel's (1995) study finds that accounting educators replying inadequately to the profession's demand for improved students' critical thinking skills. For example, the Accounting Education Change Commission (AECC) (1990) called for general education criteria that develop students' capacities for inquiry, abstract logical thinking, and critical analysis. The AECC (1992) specifically asked that the first accounting principles course ask students to analyze and solve unstructured problems; the AECC funded a grant for Community Colleges to strengthen their students' critical thinking skills (Williams 2002).

Baril, et al. (1998), Kern (2000), Wolcott et al. (2002), Warren (2005) and others stress that the accounting profession has developed no universally agreed-upon definition of "critical thinking" or how to

improve such skills. Nonetheless, a review of the literature finds that the term critical thinking generally associates with such terms as “higher-order” thinking and cognitive skills and reflective judgment.

Moreover, the AICPA (1999) named critical thinking as one of its “Broad Business Perspective Competencies,” encompassing "the ability to link data, knowledge, and insight together from various disciplines" and including the following elements:

- Articulates the principles of the strategic-planning process;
- Identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with a specific scenario, case, or business activity;
- Identifies and gathers data from a wide variety of sources to provide insightful interpretations for decision making;
- Transfers knowledge from one situation to another; and
- Analyzes and prepares strategic information (e.g., market share, customer satisfaction, competitor actions, product innovation, etc.).

The question the list poses is how does a teacher develop these skills in accounting students?

This study summarizes proven methods to develop critical-thinking skills and show how faculty members can use these ideas in an accounting context. We also summarize Bloom's taxonomy of critical thinking and then suggest how to help accounting students to progress to higher levels of thinking. The need to develop these skills early in the accounting student's academic career so that they can master this domain-specific material in upper-level accounting courses is emphasized. Such skills should concurrently emphasize basic writing skills in separate business-writing courses and throughout the entire business program and specifically in all accounting courses. Despite pressures for many universities to increase class sizes, administrators should understand the need to keep relatively small class sizes in such critical thinking and writing courses.

A long and distinguished body of literature reflects the view that the only effective way to help develop critical thinkers is to engage them in critical thinking. Dewey (1910) states that in order to learn to think, we must engage in thinking. Similarly, Symonds (1936) claims that students must practice thinking itself in order to improve thinking. Hunt's (1974) “match-mismatch educational model” finds that gradually withdrawing structure can enhance students' critical thinking levels, such as increasing student feedback when using case studies to explain the applications of discussed theoretical principles. To help develop their students’ critical thinking skills, educators can use various approaches and structures (e.g., focus on the “whys” of certain accounting procedures and concepts). Courses that focus on rote memorization or on teaching and testing exclusively in an algorithmic fashion, e.g., many intermediate and cost accounting courses, leave little time to focus on improving critical thinking skills. However, requiring students, for example, to derive adjusting entries from partial data in new situations represents both unstructured and nondirective classroom material, which should improve critical thinking skills. It is necessary to understand the general process for dealing with this material. Harold Bloom has been helpful in theorizing about that process.

Bloom’s Taxonomy

Bloom (1956) hypothesized that using higher-level (critical thinking) skills improves higher-order knowledge. For example, practitioners use higher-level application skills to complement lower-level recall skills to focus on “what” successful accountants do (to “add value” to their organizations’ goals) and question the bases of acknowledged assumptions and standards.

Bloom’s taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) implies that the levels of thinking are incremental, e.g., performing at Level Four is a prerequisite to move up to Level Five. Ideal readers, writers, accountants or auditors move up the levels until they can perform at top levels. To use Level Six skills, one must already possess the skills below that level. Inferring properly, for example, first requires defining and describing accurately the objects or situations from which one will infer. Skills become more complex as the levels rise. To analyze a situation, for example, is a far more complicated process than simply recalling a situation, while to evaluate a situation (using definite criteria and for a given purpose) is more complicated than either of the others. Thus, assuming constant levels of competence, the basic differences between the levels are largely a matter of attitude, not procedure.

Fowler (1998), found that Barton’s (1997) questions help to implement Bloom’s Taxonomy in the classroom by using certain “key” words. Barton also extends the use of key words to a list of suggested

questions. Using such key words in questions helps professors teach students higher-level critical thinking skills. Some of the different levels and suggested questions that a professor can use are as follows:

Level 1: Knowledge - exhibits previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts and answers, as in memorizing Internal Revenue Service [IRS] policies for the depreciable lives of certain classes of fixed assets, or memorizing the requirements of a specific Financial Accounting Standards Board Pronouncement.

> Key words: who, what, why, when, omit, where, which, choose, find, how, define, label, show, spell, list, match, name, relate, tell, recall, select
>
> Examples of Questions: What is . . . ? How is . . . ? Where is . . . ? When did _____ happen?

Level 2: Comprehension - demonstrating understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions and stating main ideas, as in comparing and contrasting IRS tax treatment for capital and operating leases for similar types of assets.

> Key words: compare, contrast, demonstrate, interpret, explain, extend, illustrate, infer, outline, relate, rephrase, translate, summarize, show, classify
>
> Examples of Questions: How would you classify the type of . . . ? What is the main idea of . . . ?

Level 3: Application - solving problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different way, as in describing the advantages and disadvantages of a small business electing to become an S Corporation.

> Key words: apply, build, choose, construct, develop, interview, make use of, organize, experiment with, plan, select, solve, utilize, model, identify
>
> Examples of Questions: How would you use . . . ? How would you show your understanding of . . . ?

Level 4: Analysis - examining and breaking information into parts by identifying motives or causes; making inferences and finding evidence to support generalizations, as in justifying the allocations of the market value of goodwill in a basket purchase or an acquisition relating to a purchase of a large company with many different types of assets.

> Key words: analyze, categorize, classify, compare, contrast, discover, dissect, divide, examine, inspect, simplify, survey, take part in, test for, distinguish, list, distinction, theme, relationships, function, motive, inference, assumption, conclusion
>
> Examples of Questions: What are the parts or features of . . . ? How would you classify . . . ? What ideas justify . . . ?

Level 5: Synthesis - compiling information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions, as in suggesting a long-term acquisition strategy for a company that hopes to dominate the, say, the widget industry.

> Key Words: build, choose, combine, compile, compose, construct, create, design, develop, estimate, formulate, imagine, invent, make up, originate, plan, predict, propose, solve, solution, suppose, discuss, modify, change, original, improve, adapt, minimize, maximize, delete, theorize, elaborate, test, improve, happen, change

Examples of Questions: What changes would you make to solve . . . ? What way would you design . . . ?

Level 6: Evaluation - presenting and defending opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas or quality of work based on a set of criteria, as in considering the tax, financial and managerial implications of using stock vs. cash to acquire a large competitor.

Key Words: award, choose, conclude, criticize, decide, defend, determine, dispute, evaluate, judge, justify, measure, compare, mark, rate, recommend, rule on, select, agree, interpret, explain, appraise, prioritize, opinion, support, importance, criteria, prove, disprove, assess, influence, perceive, value, estimate, influence, deduct

Examples of Questions: Do you agree with the actions . . . ? with the outcomes . . . ? What would you recommend . . . ? What judgment would you make about . .? How would you compare the ideas . . . ?

The Elements of Critical Thinking

Another way of conceptualizing "critical thinking" is to see it as a series of decisive acts. Ennis (1962: pp. 81-111) shows that in order to strengthen their critical thinking skills and to make good decisions, individuals should understand a statement's meaning and decide whether (a) a conclusion follows necessarily from the underlying data; (b) an observation statement is reliable; (c) an inductive conclusion is warranted; (d) a statement is an assumption; (e) a definition is adequate; and (f) a statement made by an alleged authority is acceptable. A further discussion of these ideas appears below.

Deciding on a statement's meaning

At a low level, grasping a statement's meaning entails simply not mistaking its intent--being able, that is, to put the statement into one's own words without significantly altering its meaning. But moving up the levels changes the skills. For example, the formula (the statement) to determine the sum of an arithmetic series of numbers is: $(n + 1) \times (n/2)$. Being able to recall the formula (one level) and apply it (a higher level) does not prove that one knows the statement's meaning--which is that the sum of each of the pairs that can be made in the series multiplied by the number of pairs yields the sum of the whole series (Ennis, 1962: p.96). For example, in performing risk analysis for derivatives, a business enterprise's statement that it has a perfectly matched hedge is much easier to grasp than understanding the underlying concepts of that derivative and its appropriate, complex weightings. Deriving that meaning takes a higher order of reading skill than simple paraphrase. Thus, grasping a statement's meaning implies an ability to apply the statement in situations and to recognize statements that contradict or support it. A clear and concise understanding of the meaning of this issue is essential to effective accounting and auditing research.

Deciding whether a conclusion follows necessarily from the underlying data

Deductive reasoning yields *a necessary* conclusion that must follow if its denial contradicts the assertion of the premises (Ennis, 1962; p. 87). This reasoning generally derives mathematical, "if-then" or syllogistic reasoning or other deductive reasoning rules, as when auditors ascertain that client accounts receivable balances are both reasonable and collectible before rendering an audit opinion on the (entire) financial statements. This process applies generally accepted auditing standards, which, in turn, often rely heavily upon deductive logic.

Deciding whether an observation statement is reliable

Ennis provides a "combined list of principles from the fields of law, history, and science" relating to the reliability of *observation statements*, which tend to be more reliable if the observer:

- Was unemotional, alert, and disinterested;

- Was skilled at observing the sort of thing observed;
- Had sensory equipment that was in good condition;
- Has a reputation for veracity;
- Used precise techniques; and
- Had no preconception about the way the observation turned out.

Observation statements tend to be more reliable if the observation conditions:

- Were such that the observer had good access; and
- Provided a satisfactory medium of observation.

Observation statements tend to be more reliable to the extent that the statement:

- Is close to being a statement of direct observation;
- Is corroborated;
- Is corroborate-able; and
- Comes from a disinterested source with a reputation for veracity.

Observation statements, if based on a record, tend to be more reliable if the record:

- Was made at the time of observation;
- Was made by the person making the statement; and
- Is believed by the person making the statement to be correct.

Finally, observation statements tend to be more reliable than inferences made from them.

Auditors gathering and evaluating audit evidence should apply this taxonomy. For example, externally generated data are generally assumed to be more reliable than those derived from internal sources (e.g., bank or other third-party confirmations are more reliable evidence than internal bank reconciliations, correspondence files, or general ledger details).

Deciding whether an inductive conclusion is warranted

An inductive conclusion is an inference, a probable (but not certain) conclusion drawn from two or more premises, which can be tested by asking (1) Are the premises reliable? and (2) If the premises are considered reliable, is the conclusion convincing? Premises can be judged by whether the evidence that went into their making meets a series of criteria:

- Sufficient - Does the accountant have adequate evidence to reach a proper conclusion or should further questions be asked?
- Representative - Is the evidence provided objective?
- Relevant - Does the evidence relate directly to the provided assertion?
- Accurate - Does the evidence come from reliable primary or secondary sources?

Deciding whether a statement is an assumption

In one sense, an assumption is simply a presupposition. The statement "The Army's lack of planning caused unnecessary casualties" assumes that the Army did not plan—as well as that casualties arose, and that the casualties were unnecessary. But the lack of planning must be proved, not assumed. Since conclusions follow and depend upon assumptions, checking assumptions entails deciding if plausible and simpler alternatives exist. For example, auditors spend much time assessing the validity of client assumptions, including the adequacy of the allowance for doubtful accounts and the expected lives of depreciable assets.

Deciding whether a definition is adequate

Critical thinking always suspects persuasive definitions—those that judge a concept, as in "liberal" meaning "standing up for the right to choose" or, at the other extreme, "addicted to change." Beyond persuasion, the criterion is simply, "Is this definition good enough for our purposes in this situation?" Auditors generally consider the concepts of materiality and audit risk for a client's assertion to ascertain the sufficiency of the evidence, recognizing that the more evidence the auditor accumulates the lower the risk of misstatement. Auditors often use critical thinking processes to make these assessments, as whether the clients' explanations seem reasonable. For example, in times of higher gasoline prices, auditors of airlines should expect higher fuel costs (unless the airlines cancelled flights or had successful

hedges). Thus, auditors finding relatively stable fuel costs should cause concern of the client's veracity or competence.

Deciding whether a statement made by an alleged authority is acceptable

Two questions really arise here: Is the source a (reliable) authority, and is the statement acceptable? Ennis calls an authority someone making statements in his or her field who has studied the matter, has a good reputation, is disinterested and has full possession of his or her faculties, has followed accepted procedures to reach the conclusions, and knows that his or her reputation could be affected by his or her statements. Whether a statement is acceptable depends on accepting the person as an authority and then checking the specific statements by reference to the other five principles. The process resembles audit procedure. While auditors often rely on authorities to help satisfy the valuation assertion (e.g., using qualified appraisers to help value precious gems), they need to ascertain the authority's competence and independence and to determine how much reliance to place on the conclusions received. To aid in the process, the accounting profession has developed a hierarchy of authoritative accounting and auditing pronouncements for use in the research process.

Critical Thinking Teaching Techniques

With the modern work environment demanding ever-more critical thinking and problem solving classroom training, professors and administrators should emphasize critical thinking on their campuses, in their curricula, and in their teaching practices in order to prepare students to function effectively in today's workforce. We present an overview of the concept of critical thinking, methods of teaching critical thinking, examples of critical thinking, and references for use in college programs.

Teachers developing critical thinking skills will profit from reviewing studies that evaluate previous attempts at the task. The AECC's and AICPA also suggest that accounting students should take courses that enhance their critical thinking skills as early in the curriculum as possible. Yet, Wolcott et al.'s (2002) review of the literature notes that no study has yet properly tested the major effects of applying such critical skills. Their review of the literature, however, compliments Palomba and Banta's (1999, Chapters 4-8) discussion of the use of oral and written examinations; oral projects, simulations and class portfolios; such outside reviews of student performance as juried activities and performance evaluations on internships as well as student, alumni and employer feedback; and focus groups.

Similarly, Kimmel (1995) finds many problems in improving students' critical thinking skills, but develops a framework for this important task. Faculty can use basic, intermediate and advanced critical thinking cases, modeling, role playing, cooperative learning and short or long opinion and research papers to help their students solve unstructured, ambiguous problems by helping them focus on such critical thinking elements as tolerating ambiguity, recognizing personal biases, thinking independently, modifying judgments, listening carefully and distinguishing fact from opinion.

Friedlan (1995) measured the effects of using mini-cases and other contextual materials, with improved classroom discussions, and stressing critical thinking skill, while de-emphasizing technical materials and other standard classroom materials.

Baril et al. (1998) compared their overall scores (including firms' analyses of their own critical thinking skills) with those the interviewers gave to 31 members of (the then) Big Six CPA firms. They first found large differences in how these employers and the interview practitioners viewed or even defined critical thinking skills. They saw many practitioners over-simplify creative thinking, by, for example, focusing on identifying problems—rather than first developing expectations and then ascertaining if any new evidence conforms or contrasts with such expectations. Practitioners also under-focused on such vital areas as recognizing when they need to gather additional evidence; fitting the found details into the overall environment of the audit; transferring knowledge among all personal and business situations; having the employee anticipate, think about, plan and otherwise "prevent audit failures before they occur."

Jenkins (1998) finds strong evidence for the need for accounting students to master critical thinking in upper-level auditing courses, as well as in introductory coursework. For example, students should review a description of some event and decide whether the entity should recognize or report this event. If they recognize the event, students must determine the affected accounts and amounts to record.

Basu and Cohen (1994) developed a student project requiring a comprehensive analysis of a publicly traded company for a management accounting course. The groups of students performed in-depth

analyses of a publicly traded company's financial stability and future competitiveness. The final project (comprising 25 percent of the students' final grades) included an executive summary of the company and its position in its industry; its competitive strengths and weakness; exhibits and charts that outline its financial health; discussions of any relevant international and ethical issues; and recommendations for future operations. Basu and Cohen's measurement of results found improved critical thinking skills for these students.

Bayou and Reinstein (1997) use Bloom's taxonomy and works from Boostom (1992) and Ennis (1962) to suggest some examples of using higher-order classroom skills such as asking students to identify relevant factors in deciding whether a sole proprietor should expense or capitalize a $10,000 purchase of a building, and then asking such relevant questions as when does the purchaser expect to sell the building; what are the owners' and companies' income tax rates; and when does the proprietor plan to retire or sell the business. Bayou and Reinstein's (2001) work expands this discussion to suggest methods for teaching management accounting students to think like corporate controllers by, for example, understanding more fully the costs and benefits of the firms' intellectual assets, which firms often undervalue and under utilize.

Kern's (2000) student groups used the Internet to gather data to perform higher- level analyses of certain companies' financial statements. Kern and fellow students grade the papers based upon the groups' mastery of such higher-level skills as cooperative learning (e.g., members of the group work well together in developing its conclusions), critical thinking components (e.g., the groups properly rank the key problems and solutions in the cases). Kern found that these projects indeed strengthened students' higher order and critical thinking skills.

Houston and Talbott (1993) used Goldratt and Cox's book, *The Goal* (1992*)* to help their students focus on critical thinking skills. After completing their "real life" group cases, the students identified bottlenecks, areas needing continuous improvement—and suggestions on how to do so, and inventory and production problems. The students, companies that the students visited and the professors were all pleased with these results. An elaboration of the above example of using this book to help enhance critical thinking skills appears below.

The book describes a company that has "floundered" because it conducted its business under certain constant, time-honored assumptions, such as:

- Keep all employees busy all of the time.
- Order materials in the largest quantities possible to receive the lowest price.
- Keep the manufacturing robots working all the time (to minimize downtime).
- Measure the "cost" of an idle machine as its depreciation expense.
- Allow management to change the priority of jobs in process to meet customer pressure.

Goldratt and Cox (1992) demonstrate that the company could operate much more profitably by challenging these assumptions (i.e., by using higher-order critical thinking skills), thereby yielding dramatically improved results. They showed that adhering to these "old" policies slowed efficiency rather than enhancing it. Some "new" results included:

- Because busy employees produce unneeded inventory, thus wasting large resources, have certain production employees perform quality control and preventive maintenance rather than produce non-essential parts.
- Because large materials orders increase unnecessary inventory, order smaller quantities of parts inventory.
- Because robots, like employees, only increase unneeded inventory, consider the cost of the inventory they produce in deciding whether to allow the robots to work.
- Because "bottlenecks" often prevent a factory from working to its full potential, focus on reducing such operating bottleneck constraints.
- Because rush orders generally impair the optimal timing of the production process, alter the normal workflow for "special" jobs only rarely.

Glock (1986) suggests ways that teachers can reinforce verbal critical thinking skills by focusing greater attention on students' "why" questions than their "who," "where" and "how" questions. Teachers should also review their own methods of asking questions, questioning answers, and questioning questions, by performing some of the following techniques:

- When a student asks a “why” question, have the rest of the class discuss the kinds of questions that are most powerful and the sources of their power. Explain the structure of analytical questions. Use such questions -- especially those generated by students -- in quizzes.
- After students are accustomed to answering analytical questions using in-class materials, ask similar questions that they must answer via their own work experience or out-of-class inquiries.
- Have students analyze the information presented in the textbook to discern which forms of inquiry were used to generate it.
- Have students read critical analyses of their text, and encourage students to develop their own criticisms based on their personal experiences.
- Compare opposing positions on a topic, and help students identify the sources of the differences of opinion. Avoid emotion-laden topics until students begin to perceive the "universality of reinterpretation and redefinition."

In another example, Tripp’s (1990) second-year oral communications course students’ (1) select, define, and establish the parameters of a school-related problem; (2) analyze the problem to identify underlying causes, its scope and seriousness, and potential impact; (3) conduct a brainstorming session to generate creative solutions; (4) assess the proposed solutions in terms of viability and potential effectiveness; (5) reach consensus on the solutions; and (6) implement the decision. This process helps to develop students' group research projects, including producing a technical report based on these efforts, where all student, group members participate in the talking, listening, gathering data, writing and editing" portions of these reports.

How College Faculty Can Help to Improve Students’ Critical Thinking Skills

College programs seeking to integrate Critical Thinking across their curricula should encourage their faculty to take appropriate seminars. For example Longview Community College (1998) often offers programs that entail such key tasks and seminar topics as:

Session 1. Define “success” by particular disciplines. Just as doctors focus on accurate diagnosis and effective patient care, writing and reading teachers demand effective communication—grasp written procedures and make oneself understood. They should thus identify standards of success (usually pragmatic) and the underlying assumptions behind these standards.

Activity: Identify presuppositions - What is taken for granted in each discipline? What is important in the discipline? What is it that we want our students to learn in our classes?
Assessment: How to find whether students understand the courses basic concepts and aims? How do you correct misconceptions about what a _____ is supposed to be/do?

Session 2. Identify each discipline’s patterns of successful reasoning. Attaining the goals identified in the first session requires using certain patterns of thought, which may vary across disciplines. Those teaching in the field must be "experts" in these patterns, and thus well-equipped to identify and formalize these patterns for their respective disciplines.

Activity: How do we want our students to think/solve problems/conceptualize in the discipline? Can we construct flow charts for each discipline - what is the process? How could you teach this process? Is the class designed to follow the process?
Assessment: How to test best for knowledge of these patterns?

Session 3. Identify core concepts and methods to teach these successful patterns. Develop terminologies to minimize student and instructor confusion. Students can understand better each discipline’s different patterns if they use a core set of concepts as the basic referent. In addition, while the exercises and examples, which facilitate an identification of these successful thought patterns may differ, the process to identify these patterns, are often similar across the disciplines.

Activity: Introduce and discuss standardized material that can apply to almost any course - CTAC site, SmartPrim, LogicWorks.
Assessment: This is built into SmartPrim and LogicWorks - but are there other methods that are not dependent on access to technology?

Session 4. Integrating "tools of discovery" and core concepts into the curriculum requires faculty to use

such standard methodologies like instructors modeling patterns for students and applying critical standards in all areas of the course (including the administration of the course). For example, students will often face classroom Socratic Questioning, practical examples and interactive web sites to help strengthen learning.

Activity: Faculty will generate at least three projects/lessons that could get students thinking critically about your subject matter - (two in class exercises and one outside of class exercise.)
Assessment: Assess that students apply the tools to situations not discussed in the book/lecture.

Summary

The need for students with critical thinking skills is now. Accounting and business professionals, whether in public accounting, management accounting, not-for-profit accounting or other management positions, provide value-added services to others, requiring students to learn to rethink; to develop lifelong learning skills to think critically (to grasp the meaning of complex concepts and principles), and to judge and apply these concepts and principles to specific issues. Colleges should recognize the importance of strengthening their students' critical thinking skills. Administrators should support their faculty in developing critical thinking programs and limiting class size so that faculty can adequately develop these skills in their students. Table 1 lists some websites and additional references to help college accounting faculty find methods to help develop their students' critical thinking skills.

Table 1 - Examples Of Colleges Using Critical Thinking Skills

1. Los Angeles Community College District using Bloom's Taxonomy in an Accounting Course:
http://www.lasc.edu/uploads/pdf/Accounting1_03-04.pdf

2. California State-Northridge stresses its commitment to accept as many qualified community college students as possible, as well as its emphasizing critical thinking skills in its Intermediate Accounting courses and many other courses:
http://www.csun.edu/busecon/assessment/embed_assess_03F.pdf

3. Many accounting publisher website provide detail examples of integrating critical thinking skills into the accounting curriculum, including, respectively, John Wiley & Sons, Thompson Learning, McGraw-Hill and Houghton-Mifflin:
http://he-cda.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-108035.html
http://www.thomsonlearning.com.au/higher/accounting/trotman/3e/index.asp
http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0070910987/information_center_view0/feature_summary.html
http://college.hmco.com/CollegeCatalog/CollegeStoreController?cmd=MainProdPage&subcmd=Main&ProdId=10805.

4. Other examples of using critical thinking throughout the curriculum
http://www.surry.edu/about/ct/index.html
http://frontpage.montclair.edu/thistle/THISTLE_links.html
http://nonprofiteye.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2006-12-12T20%3A40%3A00-08%3A00
http://www.criticalthinking.org/

5. *2004-2005 The Year of Critical Thinking: Handbook of Critical Thinking Resources,* Compiled by Bill Peirce for Prince George's Community College Faculty Members.
See also: http://academic.pgcc.edu/%7Ewpeirce/MCCCTR/handbook.pdf

This Table refers to examples from community college accounting programs, senior college programs that encourage transfer students from community colleges, major accounting book publishers and other sources. Now is the time for accounting faculty to help develop their students' critical thinking skills.

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The Incorporation of Alcohol Awareness Activities in the Hospitality Administration Curricula

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Abstract

Hospitality administration programs provide students with knowledge of basic principles underlying the industry and prepare them to assume responsible roles in business and society. A growing body of evidence suggests that providing information to students about accurate drinking norms is associated with decreased drinking on campus (U.S. Department of Education, Higher Education Center, 2006). Accredited hospitality administration programs in the United States were surveyed to determine the extent to which alcohol awareness activities are included in courses that cover the role of legal and ethical managerial behavior concerning beverage management.

Keywords: Hospitality Management, Hospitality, Beverage Management, Alcohol, Drinking, Alcohol Awareness

Introduction

Hospitality administration programs provide students with knowledge of basic principles underlying the industry and prepare them to assume responsible roles in business and society. Legal problems, financial management, personnel management, organization theory, behavior, interpersonal communication, socio-political influences, and ethical responsibilities in the hospitality and tourism industry are "common body of knowledge" elements prescribed by the Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA) (Handbook of Accreditation, 2004). Although variously titled, these courses provide students awareness and understanding that hotel, restaurant, and tourism services are an amalgamation of legal considerations, business principles, and administrative responsibilities whose bottom line will be impacted by consumer expectations and social norms.

In researching universities and colleges that offer Hospitality Administration programs, external accreditation of programs that meet or exceed certain stated standards of educational quality were reviewed. One such accrediting body, The Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration, has two primary purposes listed in their Handbook of Accreditation: 1) to ensure the quality of the institution or program and 2) to assist in the improvement of the institution or program. Agencies or bodies conducting programmatic or specialized accreditation, like ACPHA, are national in range and guide accreditation of a program preparing students for a profession or occupation. Such agencies are often closely connected with professional associations in the field (Handbook of Accreditation, 2006). Our pilot study surveyed ACPHA accredited hospitality administration programs in the United States to determine the extent to which alcohol awareness activities are included in courses that cover the role of legal and ethical managerial behavior concerning beverage management.

The goals of hospitality administration education include not only marketing of hospitality goods and services, but also ethical considerations and socio-political influences affecting organizations. Other goals include improvement of student understanding of human behavior as well as organization theory, behavior, and interpersonal communication; and, of course, the legal environment of profit and non-profit organizations.

So, what does alcohol awareness education have to do with the goals of hospitality administration and management? Several points can be noted:

1) "Among all the drugs used in the world, alcohol is probably the oldest and most deeply entrenched in human society. In many places, it is a cornerstone of social and spiritual life, and can have iconic status as a powerful symbol of trust, status,

bonding, peace, celebration, strength, etc. Although it is relatively safe if used carefully, the power of both its social significance and, for some drinkers, its addictive potential can often override 'common-sense' drinking practice." (Alcohol Education and Research Center [AERC], 2005)

2) Transportation safety is the highest priority of the United States Department of Transportation (2006). Although all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have laws in place making it illegal per se to drive with a BAC of .08 g/dL or higher, alcohol was involved in 16,885 fatal crashes in 2005 and more than 1.4 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics in 2004 (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 2006).

3) The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration will increase attention in 2007 on areas that have the greatest propensity to reduce highway injuries and fatalities, e.g., alcohol impairment (NHTSA, 2006).

4) Socialization, fun, celebration, and relaxation are some of the reasons why people drink (AERC, 2005). Socialization is a generalization that can mean:

1. to gain confidence in social situations
2. to lose anxiety about social situations
3. to appear mature or grown up
4. to feel less inhibited
5. to increase social status
6. to demonstrate group loyalty
7. to increase romantic or sexual feelings(AERC, 2005)

A Hospitality Administration faculty member can use many activities for alcohol education in the classroom. As an active learning technique, collaborative learning is a valuable teaching technique in traditional academic settings. An active learning strategy such as collaborative learning improves classrooms because students are involved as participants rather than as passive observers (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). One such activity is the use of "Fatal Vision Goggles." These goggles simulate impairment from drugs and alcohol use with the mission to promote safety in our schools and community and to contribute to the reduction of alcohol and other drug fatalities and injuries. Only the visual impairment caused by drugs or alcohol is simulated by these goggles. In combination with a presentation that could focus on responsible decision-making and legal consequences of alcohol, these goggles make a participative experience for students and, as thus, bring home the need for alcohol awareness in their future career.

One activity using "Fatal Vision Goggles" could be a Sobriety Tests for students. Before starting the activity, put tape down to represent the "line" the person being tested for sobriety will walk. Ask a male volunteer to perform the sobriety test by walking the straight line. Next, have them wear the .08 Fatal Vision Goggles and perform the same test. Compare the results. Try the same with a female student except use .15 Fatal Vision Goggles. You can also have two people use the goggles and try passing a basketball back and forth.

Methodology

A survey addressing training provided in the area of substance abuse was emailed to all hospitality administration programs provisionally and fully accredited by the *Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA). twenty-three universities are ACPHA accredited in the United States.* A total of replies were received, yielding a response rate of 33%. This study was conducted to ascertain the extent to which alcohol awareness education and activities are currently included within hospitality administration training.

Findings

The universities that responded to the survey were NYC College of Technology, University of Missouri–Columbia, Virginia Tech, Widener University, Missouri State University and Texas Tech University. These universities represent 33% of the total surveys that were emailed. When asked the types of Hospitality Administration degrees that are offered by these institutions, the answers started with

Associate of Applied Science degrees up to Doctorates. The following table represents the types and number of Hospitality Administration degrees that are offered by these institutions:

Associate of Applied Science Degree	Baccalaureate	Master of Science	PhD
1	6	4	2

These programs can be found in the following departments: Hospitality Management; Hotel and Restaurant Management; Hospitality and Tourism; School of Hospitality Management; Hospitality and Restaurant Administration and Nutrition; Hospitality and Retailing.

When asked in which course alcohol liability was taught, the responses indicated the following:

Name of Course	Percentage
Introduction to Hospitality Management	33%
Food System Management II	17%
Beverage Control Management	67%
Legal Aspects of Hospitality Industry	33%
Restaurant Operations	33%
Resort and Club Management	17%
Survey of Beverages	33%
Other	50%

When asked what activities are used in teaching alcohol liability, the following table shows the responses:

Activity	Percentage Use
Lecture	83%
Hands-On	33%
Internships	17%
Alcohol Consumption Models	33%
Lab	33%
Problem-Solving	17%
Other	17%

This presentation will use "Fatal Vision" goggles as one activity for teaching alcohol liability. When asked what types of activities were for this section of the curriculum, none of the responses indicated use of these goggles. In fact, only 17% had ever heard of "Fatal Vision" goggles.

When asked how much time was spent on alcohol liability within their particular Hospitality programs, 50% of the respondents indicated 3-5 hours of teaching, whereas the other 50% indicated they spent more than 6 hours on the topic.

Conclusion

Increased alcohol awareness and incorporation of alcohol awareness activities into the hospitality administration curriculum is the type of environmental management advocated by the Higher Education Center in their comprehensive prevention approach to reducing alcohol and other drug use on college campuses (DeJong, et al, 1998). Survey results did not suggest that alcohol awareness education differs substantially across hospitality administration curricula. Our conclusion as to incorporation of alcohol awareness activities in hospitality administration programs is based upon a small number of surveys sent to the director of such program. It is not known whether the surveys were actually completed and returned by the director or by the university faculty member who actually teaches the course. We, in no way, are suggesting generalization of the results of this survey to all Hospitality Administration program because of the small number of responses.

Because traffic safety is a concern of the Federal Government, it would be beneficial to expand this study to include those 443 management and business administration programs currently accredited in North America by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (2006) to compare relative levels of alcohol awareness training across disciplines.

The use of the "Fatal Vision" goggles as one of many activities within the Hospitality Administration programs serving to enhance student awareness of alcohol consumption might be an option as well as the current alcohol consumption models that are currently used.

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Phishing for Undergraduate Students

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ABSTRACT

Electronic phishing attempts have grown to unprecedented levels. Phishing can result in identity-theft and can clog email servers. Because educators have a vested interest in student electronic behavior, this study was conducted to empirically investigate the incidence of undergraduate phishing attacks. Survey data was collected each semester during a three-consecutive semester period. Results suggest that student phishing problems are minimal. Only 26% of respondents indicated receiving phishing email. Of those individuals, merely 16 phishes were received per month. In addition, 97% of undergraduates ignored the phishing email and did not respond to any phishing requests during the previous year.

Keywords: phishing, electronic mail, empirical study, undergraduates, survey

INTRODUCTION

According to the Federal Trade Commission, the number of fraud-related complaints received annually has increased by 24% from a level of 542,378 in 2003 to 674,354 in 2006 (Reilly and Swanson, 2004; FTC, 2007). The most common complaint is that of identity theft. In 2002, there were 161,896 identity theft complaints (Konrad, 2005). By the end of 2006, there were 246,035 complaints. This accounted for 36% of all fraud-related complaints received by the FCC and has been the most common complaint filed for seven-consecutive years. The second most common complaint is shop-at-home/catalog sales-related, which is only 7% of all complaints. It is feared, however, that most crimes go unreported and that there were 8.4 million victims of identity theft in 2006 (Monahan, 2007). Identify theft may come as a result of supervisors who steal their employees' identities (Mehta, 2006). Or, a more insidious method is through the use of phishing. Javelin Strategy & Research estimates that 1.7% of identity theft is a result of phishing attempts (Epstein, 2005).

Phishing can be described as an electronic attempt to fraudulently acquire sensitive information such as usernames, passwords, and credit card data by masquerading as a trusted entity in an electronic communication (Wikipedia, 2007). Phishing scams began in the mid-1990s as a method of gaining free Internet access (Fisher, 2005). The success of online banking and bill paying of 2003 marked the beginning of the type of phishing activity that is seen today. As a result, the Anti-Phishing Working Group, a consortium of security vendors, banks, and other concerned parties began recording unique phishing attacks.

Although this history of modern phishing has been brief, it has been dramatic. The Anti-Phishing Working Group reports that there were only 198 unique phishing sites at the start of 2004. But, there were 457 by September of 2004, 5,200 by September of 2006, and 14,191 by September of 2006 (Toland, 2005; Gibbs, 2005; Keizer, 2006). This is an increase of over 7,000% in two and one-half years. There has also been a noteworthy increase in the number of brands hijacked. In October of 2004, there were 46 brands spoofed (Fisher, 2005). By July 2006, there were 154 brands hijacked. The result, according to Gartner, is that between May 2004 and May 2005, roughly 1.2 million U.S. computer users suffered phishing losses valued at $929 million (Kerstein, 2005).

Vendors have made efforts to combat the problem. During the second half of 2006, the Symantec Probe Network detected 166,248 unique phishing messages (a 6% increase from the first half of the year) and blocked over 1.5 billion phishing messages (Turner, 2007). In other words, 8.48 million phishing messages were blocked each day.

Consumer reaction to phishing is varied. In a 2005 study, 55% of respondents stated that he/she would delete a suspicious electronic mail that asked for security reasons to click on a link, log into their account, or enter personal information (Epstein, 2005). Twenty-nine percent would call or otherwise

contact their bank to determine if the electronic mail message is legitimate. Twenty-eight percent would report the electronic mail message to their bank. Ten percent indicated that they would click on the link but not enter personal information with the belief that they are safe. And, three percent would comply with the electronic mail message instructions.

Information systems faculty are entrusted with developing and promoting professional computing behavior. Of interest to educators, therefore, is whether our undergraduates are prone to phishing electronic mail and if so, do they respond in an appropriate manner when an attack occurs. Because little empirical evidence is available, this study investigated student behavior with regard to electronic mail usage and phishing incidence.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs a survey research design. The research was conducted at a private, northeastern U.S. university. A Student Electronic Mail instrument was developed by the authors and administered to undergraduate students enrolled in a School of Business course. The courses included a variety of subjects such as BIS-310 "Business Information Systems", BIS 320 "Business Telecommunications", ACCT-202 "Introduction to Managerial Accounting", MSC-301 "Management and Organization Behavior", and MSC-413 "Business Policy." A convenience sample of class sections and faculty members was selected. The surveys were collected each semester during a three-consecutive semester period (from Spring 2006 until Spring 2007).

The survey instrument was utilized to collect student demographic data such as academic class, major, and gender. In addition, the survey examined student electronic mail behavior. Students were asked to estimate the number of various types of electronic mail messages they received each week.

All surveys were anonymous and completed in an academic classroom. The response rate was 100 percent. Students were also informed that results would have no effect on their semester grade.

Survey responses were converted into a computer-based database management system to improve the ease of tabulation. A program was written to summarize and filter data.

RESULTS

A sample of 585 usable surveys was obtained. Table 1 indicates that 370 (63%) of the respondents were male and 215 (37%) were female.

TABLE 1
Response Rate By Gender

	Percentage	Count
Male	63%	370
Female	37%	215
Total	100%	585

Table 2 illustrates respondent academic major. The students who participated included accounting majors (27%), marketing majors (22%), management science majors (19%), finance majors (9%), business information system majors (3%), undecided business majors (12%), and other non-business majors (8%).

TABLE 2
Response Rate By Major

Major	Percentage	Count
Accounting	27%	156
Marketing	22%	130
Management Science	19%	109
Finance	9%	53
Business Information Systems	3%	18
Undecided Business	12%	69
Non-business (other)	8%	37

The response rate by academic class is relatively equally distributed. Table 3 illustrates that 22% of respondents were freshmen, 23% were sophomores, 26% were juniors, and 29% were seniors.

TABLE 3
Response Rate By Academic Class

Class	Percentage	Count
Freshmen	22%	130
Sophomore	23%	137
Junior	26%	150
Senior	29%	168

Responses were first examined with regard to type and quantity of electronic mail received per month (Table 4). Results indicate that 20% (45 messages) of electronic mail received per month is class-related messages. In addition, 12% (26 messages) are non-class-related from friends and family. Moreover, 46% (100 messages) of electronic mail received is spam. Finally, 22% (49 messages) of electronic mail is "other mail" such as from notice boards, campus clubs, and so on. Overall, each student reported receiving an average of 220 electronic mail messages per month.

TABLE 4
Messages Received by Type Per Month

Type	Average # of Messages Per Month	Percent of Total Messages
Class-related	45	20%
Friends or family	26	12%
Spam	100	46%
Other (notice boards, campus clubs, etc.)	49	22%
Overall	220	100%

Table 5 examines the type and volume of phishing electronic mail received. In terms of volume, the most prevalent type of attack was with regard to credit cards. Respondents indicated receiving 8.8 electronic mails per month phishing for credit card data. Undergraduates also indicated receiving 7.2 Nigerian scam phishes, 6.6 Amazon.com phishes, 6.2 eBay phishes, and 7.8 other phishes per month. Other phishes included PayPal, loan payoff, bank accounts, myspace.com, and car loans. In terms of percent of respondents, 19% indicated received credit card phishes, 14% eBay phishes, 12% Amazon.com phishes, 9% Nigerian scam phishes, and 3% other phishes. Overall, only 26% of respondents reported receiving at least one phish per month. The average quantity of phishing electronic mail received per month was 16.4 messages. This accounts for 7.5% of the total electronic mail received by undergraduates per month.

TABLE 5
Response to Phishing Electronic Mail

Type of Phishing Request	Number of Electronic Mail Messages Per Month	Percent of Students
Credit Cards	8.8	19%
eBay	6.2	14%
Amazon.com	6.6	12%
Nigerian scam	7.2	9%
Other	7.8	3%
Overall Average	16.4	26%

Finally, undergraduates were asked if they responded to at least one phishing electronic mail in the past year. Only 3% indicated responding to a phish while 97% indicated not responding.

TABLE 6
Response to Phishing Electronic Mail

	Yes	No
I responded to at least one phishing electronic mail during the past year	3%	97%

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Results indicate that students receive a considerable number of electronic mail messages per month. On average, students get 220 messages per month, or 7-8 per day, in their inbox. The vast majority, approximately 46%, are spam messages. Twenty-percent are class-related, 26% are from friends or family, and 49% are from other sources such as clubs and notice boards.

Relative to phishing, the largest percentage of students received credit card information requests. Nineteen percent of respondents indicated receiving credit card phishes. Fourteen percent received eBay phishes, 12% received Amazon.com phishes, 9% received Nigerian scam phishes, and 3% received other phishes such as PayPal and myspace.com. In terms of volume, the most common type of phish was credit card-related. Undergraduates reported receiving 8.8 per month. Other types included 7.8 other phishes (such as PayPal), 7.2 Nigerian Scam phishes, 6.6 Amazon.com phishes, and 6.2 eBay phishes.

Student response to phishing electronic mail was strongly positive. Only 3% of undergraduates indicated responding to at least one phishing electronic mail during the previous year. This result is consistent with the 2005 study that found only 3% of respondents complied with a phishing electronic mail request for data.

There are four important implications from the study. One finding is that electronic mail resources have a high waste factor. Nearly half of electronic mail received is spam. Unfortunately, only one out of five messages is class-related.

A second implication is that phishing attacks against undergraduates are not common. Only 26% of respondents indicated receiving phishing electronic mail. Of those receiving phishes, only 16 were received per month (or one every two days). In addition, only 16% of spam was identified as phishing attempts. This may be a result of several factors. It is possible that vendor efforts with regard to phish-filtering are becoming more effective. The study organization does utilize Barracuda, one of the leading spam filters, but does not employ a phishing filter, per se. Thus, phishing incidence would likely be higher without the spam filter. Moreover, undergraduates may not have yet developed electronic records that can be stolen. Or, phishers are targeting more economically prosperous individuals.

A third implication is that students may be practicing responsible computing behavior. Further research is needed to explore if and where the behavior was learned or if the behavior will need to be reinforced in the future.

A final implication is that phishers appear to be equal-opportunity brand hijackers. Nearly all brands identified in the study were equally spoofed in volume.

The limitations of this study are primarily a function of sample size and type of research. Even though responses were relatively equally distributed among academic class, future research utilizing a more equal gender distribution of respondents and using additional universities would increase the robustness of results and generalizability. Another limitation relates to the self-reported nature of the survey.

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Turmoil in the Towers: Competitive Gales Transforming Traditions in Business Education

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Abstract

The changes taking place in society and in higher education environment early in the new millennium present many challenges for business schools. Business schools are buffeted by heightened competition, changing demographics, technological revolution and resources constraint. The Ivory Tower is indeed caught in the competitive gales transforming businesses and business education, and the turmoil is pervasive! The responsibilities of educators have expanded significantly beyond the traditional teaching, research, and service. We examine these trends in society and in the business environment, explore the challenges faced by business schools, and discuss the evolving, expanded roles of business faculty.

Keywords: education, business, faculty, trend, challenge, roles

Introduction

In the new millennium, higher education systems of the United States and around the world are in a flux. Zahorski and Cognard (1999), assert that the higher education system of the U.S. is the envy of the world by virtue of its outstanding faculty, attractive campuses, professional growth programs, well-equipped labs, academic freedom, and student accessibility. However, they also point out that everything is not fine with this system because of a number of recent trends such as fiscal austerity, downsizing of faculty and staff, increasing faculty workloads, seemingly under-prepared students, a tenure system increasingly under scrutiny, increasing use of adjunct faculty, and demand for greater accountability and productivity. Since their work, these trends have accelerated reflecting the generally challenging situation in the overall economy.

Mr. Murray (2008) describes the deterioration in standards and expectations that universities have of students, and argues that a university education is not appropriate for many of today's young high school graduates, who might instead be better served by a few years work or military experience! Morrison (2003) also highlights the period of significant turmoil in higher education in the U.S. and other countries, in response to changes in the broader society and business world. Business schools feel the brunt of these changes because of their close connection with the business world. Business school faculty find their roles significantly expanded beyond the traditional teaching, research, and service roles (Harvey et al., 2006). Former faculty experts in functional areas like marketing, finance and production are increasingly expected to understand and emphasize mastery of the integration of these disciplines (Bishop et al., 1997). The notion of the "Ivory Tower" – conjuring up images of professors working in isolation on arcane theoretical content unrelated to the real world around them - has never been less true. If anything, the emphasis today is on real world applicability.

In this paper, we explore some factors for change in society. Then we discuss the nature of changes underway in higher education in general and in business schools in particular and how the roles of the business school faculty are changing as a result. Finally, we conclude the paper with a discussion of what the business school faculty can do to cope with the change.

Factors Forcing Changes in the Society

A significant force of change affecting society and business has been advances in computer, telecommunication, and information technology (Morrison, 2003). The Internet, as the epitome of these technological advances, profoundly affects the way people communicate with each other and how businesses conduct operations. Ubiquitous and universal information access for most businesses and even

individuals ensures that information is no longer a key differentiator or value driver. The price of information plummeted and businesses built on control of data/information have given way to those that can tease knowledge or intelligence from the data. Organizational structure and management hierarchy have undergone radical changes (Hughes, 2006). Relentless pressure on businesses to optimize speed, cost and quality simultaneously, often translates to sharper focus on what is done in-house and on shedding non-core activities for other entities to perform.

Globalization of markets has not only led to intense competition among businesses, but also allows smaller companies to become players. Major innovations make it possible to manage production functions across different countries and time zones, often seamlessly. Supply chain management enables business to operate freed from constraints of distance and time to a greater degree than ever before. Alongside falling trade barriers, trade agreements have continued to proliferate (Harrison, 2000; Morrison, 2003). Growth in Internet commerce has been significant and even functions once considered core to a business are now routinely outsourced and/or off-shored. Today's knowledge-based enterprises need a new breed of managers to cope with the challenges of the new business environment and this directly impacts what business schools teach to their graduates (Middlehurst, 2004).

The evolving demographics of the U.S. and the change in the nature of the workforce are major drivers of change affecting higher education (Klor de Alva, 2000). The baby boomers are aging, with the early ones quitting the workforce, even as the pool of young workers shrinks. The percentage of skilled workers has increased from 20 percent in 1950 to a projected 65 percent at the turn of the century. Considerable emphasis is placed on human capital with focus on technology skills as the primary productive asset. Unfortunately, technology and associated skills have half-life measured in months and not years. Life-long learning is now a core requirement for many jobs. Universities that focus on serving their core clientele over the years see increased value from each student, as they change from a transactional approach to a life-long relationship or partnership mode. "Refresher Weekends", "Beyond MBA" and non-credit continuing education programs are growing in popularity. One such program was provocatively advertised by a top business school with the message, "Are you still a 'know it all' or 'knew it all'? Switching jobs and returning to school to retool multiple times are getting more commonplace for skilled workers.

We have observed, at our own university, that with increasing pressures on state and federal budgets, there is a change in attitude in viewing public higher education – from "publicly funded to publicly assisted" universities. Generating financial resources from non-budget allocation sources has become a priority for many public universities. Business schools increasingly look to faculty to generate either grant funds or take up other "for-profit" activities like Executive Education Programs. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some schools generate large cash flows each year from these programs and use them to support other education related activities. Anecdotal evidence also supports a growing expectation that faculty research be commercialized and a portfolio of intellectual property be created, managed and exploited to generate funds for the university. A Google search brings up many entrepreneurship centers and business incubators associated with universities across all the US and abroad.

Thus, changes occurring in the broader society have led to big changes in the market environment in which business schools operate. It is important to understand these changes before discussing how business schools are trying to cope with them.

Changing Market Environment of Business Education

A number of different aspects of the changes in the environment of business education are evident in recent times ("The future viability", 1998). As a result of extensive use of information technology, business and other organizations are becoming hierarchically flat with greater reliance on multi-disciplinary teams of knowledge workers to manage their operations. We also see more virtual teams that cross departmental and organizational boundaries coming together to execute specific projects and disband after their completion.

Employers prefer workers with specialized expertise, and good interpersonal skills who can work effectively in a team setting. They want employees to understand how the functional areas of a business are integrated. Employers are looking for workers with knowledge and understanding of information technology and its impact on organizational processes. With increasing globalization and operations across national borders, they also seek employees with knowledge of foreign cultures, languages, and markets (Yuche and Stewart, 2001). During a recent conversation, the head of IT and Global Supply Chain for a

large multinational firm commented on how it has become increasingly common to pay premium wages for senior managers in IT having at least a few years experience working in India – the fast growing Business and Knowledge Process Outsourcing hub. With jobs on graduation on the minds of their students, business schools face pressure to provide graduates who can meet the expectations of the employers (Prestwich and Ho-Kim, 2006).

The profiles and thus the needs of business students have changed. Many are older, more mature, and have years of work experience. They often have significant job-related responsibilities and clearly defined professional goals. In a rapidly changing world, they recognize the importance of life-long learning and the need to come back to the classroom, real or virtual, multiple times. So they demand education tailored to their specific needs delivered in a time-efficient, cost-effective, and convenient mode with a high degree of customer service (Klor de Alva, 2000). In business schools particularly, we see more emphasis in changing from a "just in case" to a "just in time" curriculum as students come with a 'where / when can I use this' mindset, perhaps to the detriment of long term transformative educational experiences. Student input and feedback is common in almost all aspects of a university life – from faculty hiring, promotions, tenure and performance to curriculum issues.

The younger students entering business schools today belong to the Net generation and have distinctly different characteristics than students entering business schools a decade or two before. The Net generation is characterized by independence, collaboration, respect, and multitasking ("Policy Statement 64", 1999). These students thrive in an independent environment, like to set their own priorities and expect immediate results for their efforts. They emphasize peer oriented relationships and mutual respect for each other's expertise. They expect to be treated equally and to be assessed according to contribution rather than age or position. Hence, educating the Net generation requires rethinking of the curriculum content and delivery.

Business schools face increased competition from corporate universities and for-profit universities (Rungtusanatham et al., 2004). The number of corporate universities grew from 400 in 1990 to 2,000 in 2000 and the average enrollment is increasing 30 percent per year (Morrison, 2003). Corporate universities have been established by giants such as McDonalds, Microsoft, Federal Express, IBM, General Motors, Apple and General Electric. For-profit universities such as University of Phoenix, College Connection, Ottawa University, and UK-based Open University are growing at a fast pace while the enrollment at most traditional universities have been more or less flat ("The future viability", 1998). For-profit, online education providers like the University of Phoenix, now with the largest enrolment of any university in the US, are building back from the online operations, and now operate satellite physical campuses in easy to access location around major cities in the country. The increasing demand for self-paced at home study programs like the Teaching Company's "Great Courses" is evidence of the demand for Adult Education.

These alternative deliverers of education are flourishing because they are able to focus on learning for managers and professionals and use state-of-the-art learning technologies. Seen as more responsive to customer needs, they offer courses at convenient times and places, utilize distance delivery, have an applied orientation, and provide credit for equivalent work experience. They cater to the needs of the adult learners by providing any-place, any-time instructions using technology. Many of these new rivals of traditional institutions gain significant competitive advantage because they increasingly outsource discrete tasks of instructional activities (Harvey et al., 2006). The threat to the traditional institutions is further exacerbated because students can now search the Web for courses and other educational offerings that best meet their needs. Hawawini (2005) differentiates between business school prospects in rapidly growing economies where the traditional models may flourish and those in mature countries where complex environments pose unique demands of both students and employers.

Kane and Orszag (2003) discuss the effects of the declining state financing of higher education as a share of personal income, and assert that tuition increases and increased efficiency have only partially offset the decline in state appropriations. Declining public financial support and increasing costs to maintain and update physical facilities, together with investing in technology integration in curriculum, stack the odds against traditional universities in favor of so-called virtual universities. It is a lot cheaper to develop and maintain an impressive on-line, virtual presence than a physical campus (Epper and Garn, 2004; Paulson, 2002).

Concurrent with this is the proliferation of certification, diploma and degree granting institutions, some no more than glorified diploma mills offering a "degree /diploma" in exchange for relatively modest effort and some money (Armour, 2003). It is difficult for prospective students and employers to distinguish between the legitimate and the fly-by-night operators and enforcement action to shut down questionable

outfits leaves much to be desired. Since it is difficult to shut down some diploma mills, there are attempts to reduce demand by prosecuting the customers (Potter, 2003). Wait and Dizard (2003) report that Congress has begun crack down on federal workers' use of academic degrees from unaccredited institutions.

The changes in the market for business education raise some serious challenges to business schools potentially threatening survival for some. We next briefly review the nature of these challenges for understanding the changing roles of business faculty.

Challenges Faced by Business Schools

Business Schools, criticized for not having enough interaction with the business world, are increasingly scrutinized for what they teach their students and how. Employers worry that business school graduates are unprepared to succeed in the fast paced, globally-connected, twenty-first century. There seems to be a lack of congruence between what a business graduate should know and what is taught in the business schools (Starkey & Tempest, 2005). Prospective employers complain that MBA students often lack the knowledge, skills, and judgment needed in an unpredictable environment (Richards-Wilson, 2002). The traditional functional area approach to business education seems inadequate for an integrated business environment.

With the rapid changes in information technology, business schools struggle to keep up with modernization of their classrooms and curricula. Decreasing enrollment, shrinking funding, and increasing demand for accountability from the public place business schools in a strangle-hold. Internal challenges such as lack of leadership among senior faculty and administrators, stubborn adherence to routine, lack of innovation by the faculty, and cultural resistance to change by the entire school exacerbate the situation (Richards-Wilson, 2002).

The faculty composition in business schools is changing due to a variety of reasons. The faculty is graying leading to increased turnover due to normal and early retirements (Fleck, 2001). There is ratcheting up of criteria for promotion and tenure, besides also questions about the purpose and utility of tenure system. The growing proportion of nomadic adjunct faculty, in response to cost pressures, makes it difficult to enforce consistency in the content and delivery of quality programs.

Facing increased competition from alternative training and development providers, traditional universities have to develop, nurture and grow their brand equity, and to clearly distinguish the "key value propositions" uniquely offered by them. As such, an 'enterprise culture' has begun to emerge in traditional universities (Middlehurst, 2004). Such a shift in culture runs the risk of criticism for being too revenue-driven and/or too customer-focused leading to compromise of academic integrity (Starkey & Tempest, 2005). A delicate balance between the needs of the students and their potential employers is called for, as student input into curriculum, hiring and retention of faculty decisions often result in perceived pandering by faculty members, dilution of the content rigor and widespread grade inflation.

The intellectual capital of universities, represented by their faculty body, needs to be managed and developed with great care, to enhance reputation and visibility of the university. While external validation, such as the premier AACSB Accreditation remains an important seal of quality and approval, the demands for maintaining these accreditations grow increasingly challenging. How well a business school responds to these new challenges depends primarily on the efforts and activities of its faculty members, who find their roles expanded significantly.

Changing Roles of Faculty

Traditional roles of business school faculty involved fulfilling the requirements of teaching, research, and service (Harvey et al., 2006). The importance of teaching varies widely across the types of schools. For prestigious research schools, teaching has often been secondary to research. Most faculty members focused on research achievements to further their careers, leaving much of the teaching responsibility to graduate teaching assistants or adjunct faculty. In so-called "teaching schools" the focus on teaching means more classroom responsibility and lower research expectations. In either case, many among the faculty approach teaching as a routine task and business school curricula seem to have failed to keep up with the changing times. Warren Bennis and James O'Toole (2005) argued that elite MBA programs rewarded narrowly focused and irrelevant research as opposed to more practical, cutting edge practice oriented research and integrated approaches to business. It is certainly debatable if this applies

across a broad spectrum of universities, and a spirited defense of the value of an MBA was provided by the Dean of Columbia Business School (Hubbard 2006)..

Mirroring the increased global integration of business and markets**,** we now see universities attempting to provide their students with business curricula with more international/global flavor. Several universities have programs offered at multiple sites around the world. For example, the Graduate School of Business, University of Chicago, has 3 physical locations – Singapore, Barcelona (Spain), and Chicago (U.S.). Others have followed the path of strategic alliance to achieve global brand development and leveraging similar to that of Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, which today has a curriculum delivered at key locations essentially around the world. This has obvious implications for the faculty members involved, several of whom travel to different locations for extended periods of time and/or teach programs in different countries.

In the area of research, a criticism often heard stems from the perception that only a limited proportion of business faculty engage in research relevant to the real world. Although faculty research is supposed to enhance curriculum and classroom teaching synergistically, little of the research conducted by most business faculty seems to find its way into the courses and classrooms taught by the faculty. In the area of service, most of the faculty time and effort seem to be devoted to unproductive committee work for the business school as well as for the university. Bacdayan (2008) offers some areas of shared priorities for business faculty and community to leverage the outreach activities expected of public colleges. The benefit, to the broader community, of faculty service involvement has often been unclear, especially when confronted with more immediate demands of the classroom and research.

The traditional faculty roles of teaching, research, and service are being reevaluated in the context of changes taking place in the business education environment and the challenges faced by business schools. The faculty teaching role is changing with respect to curriculum development as well as delivery of courses. There is greater formalization of the process of curriculum redesign and innovation, and to some degree the sacred cow of 'academic freedom' has been gored more often. Greater reliance on external validation, student feedback, and assessment of outcomes means that courses and programs are continually being reviewed, revised and enhanced. In the area of research, we find, from our own experience and the experience of our peers at other universities, that faculty role is changing to bring about a balance between teaching and research, and to make research more relevant to the needs of higher education as well as the business world.

Significant and ongoing revision of curriculum is vital to keep pace with the changing nature of business in the twenty-first century. With the advent of integrative cross-functional teams in the real-world businesses, there is a pressing need to integrate curricula across all functional areas of business (Schleede, 2002). Such curricula should emphasize core competencies as learning outcomes and should include both general and technical competencies. There is also an increasing impetus for developing curriculum customized for the type of business community or industry served by the business school (Schleede, 2002). Since faculty play a dominant role in curriculum development and revision, successful curriculum change calls for significant change of faculty role in the new millennium.

It is imperative for faculty to keep abreast of the changes in the business world by keeping close contact with the business community, which sometimes results in increased pressure on full-time faculty to expand their roles as business consultants. The trend, discussed earlier, towards generating, managing and exploiting intellectual property (IP) with cash flow expectations, raises difficult questions about "ownership of intellectual property", permissibility of external consulting activities, and demands for "revenue sharing". Faculty employment contracts at our university were modified several years ago to incorporate an Intellectual Property ownership clause. Many universities, for the first time, are developing IP policies and procedures to manage portfolios of IP, and are designing contracts geared towards stimulating creation of enterprises and IP**.** Siegel and Wright (2007) discuss the increased commercialization of IP and assert that, "Existing institutions, most notably universities, have become much more aggressive in protecting their IP and devising ways to generate additional revenue from their IP portfolios."

Alongside the thrust on curriculum revision, there is increased emphasis on teaching activities as a result of a paradigm shift of focus from teaching to learning. The new curriculum requires faculty capable of creating higher order learning involving synthesis, integration, and problem-solving (Schleede, 2002). Considering changing characteristics of the student population discussed earlier, we believe that faculty role needs to be changed more toward that of a mentor and guide rather than that of the source of knowledge. With the advent of new modes of course delivery such as distance learning, our experience shows that faculty find themselves in the role of learners and feel the pressure to upgrade their

technological skills continually. The imperative to leverage scarce faculty expertise has resulted in automation of some course content delivery, standardization of course delivery using Course Management Software such as Blackboard, WebCT and Desire2Learn. The proliferation of "Internet courses" is so pervasive that even some prestigious universities are trying to capitalize on this trend. We suspect that the online degrees now offered by a large number of universities, come with its own set of challenges, such as ensuring comparable quality between the online and face to face programs, risk of cannibalizing on-campus student demand, and ensuring alumni good-will and bonding.

The faculty role in the area of research has changed as well. There is an increased preference for faculty internship and sabbatical. This arrangement benefits companies which may not have the needed resources to employ highly qualified experts for studying specific problems important for them. At the same time, it provides the faculty first-hand exposure to changes taking place in the business world that the business graduates are expected to face, and this can enhance teaching relevance. Business schools are collaborating with industry as well as other disciplines within the university to establish applied research centers similar to management development centers and joint degree programs, such as JD-MBA (for law). and MD-MBA (medicine). Bisoux (2007) details the long term partnerships being forged between business schools and the business community to foster active involvement by business in the educational process.

Business school faculties are being increasingly involved in partnership programs with industry that require developing and offering customized educational programs. Faculty roles in these situations are dramatically different from traditional role of teaching in the classroom. Finding cost-effective ways of serving learners who are full-time practitioners in the business world becomes vital. Faculty role involves ensuring high quality of customer service while teaching relevant content, because of high customer expectations (Tricker, 2005).

Conclusion

In this new millennium, the pace of drastic change in the business world has picked up as a result of rapid technological innovation and globalization induced hyper competition. Consequently, graduates need to be prepared to successfully lead the organizations of the future in a turbulent and uncertain environment. Similar to the business world, the environment of higher education is also in turmoil, buffeted by changes in student bodies, demographics, expectations, costs and competition. Business schools have no option but to respond to the changes in the environment of higher education and the roles of the business school administrators and faculty are becoming broader, deeper and more demanding.

Faculty roles now span from account management with major clients to student recruitment and retention, complex curriculum design and program operation, and conducting original research relevant to the real world. Being a successful faculty member and earning tenure and promotion now involve internalizing university missions and working to ensure the competitiveness of the university. Nontraditional activities include enhancing the "brand equity" of the university, preempting competition from upstart operations and online firms offering certificates/degrees, maintaining visibility, and garnering resources with the skill of private business firms. Besides vastly greater time commitment, these expanded roles call for life-long learning on the part of the faculty no less than the demand on the students they teach. Coping with the situation requires an immediate change in the mindset of faculty members to enable them embrace rather than resist the expanded roles.

In response to the challenges of a changing academic environment, doctoral degree programs in the U.S. and elsewhere, over the past decade or so have begun to provide increased opportunities for teaching experiences, so that graduates are able to transition into faculty roles successfully. For example, the Web site of Katz Graduate School of Business, University of Pittsburgh states that students in the Ph.D. program are expected to gain classroom teaching experience as primary instructors for at least six credits before graduating. Some universities have implemented new faculty mentoring programs to nurture junior faculty members. For example, the Provost's Advisory Committee at University of Michigan recommended a number of measures for mentoring junior faculty (Recommendations…, 2004). However, many of the other demands that are currently made or are on the horizon for business school faculty have yet to impact doctoral education practices. As the trends discussed in this paper continue, an option that might emerge could be something similar to the post-doctoral appointments in the sciences before regular tenure-track faculty positions are available. We suspect that the chance of imposition of this option is mitigated to quite an extent by the current and anticipated shortage of terminally qualified faculty candidates, to replace the baby-boom faculty members who might retire in larger numbers as well as by the insufficient supply

pipeline in the Ph.D. programs. The shortage of business Ph.D. holders available for teaching was reported as early as 1990 and the Doctoral Faculty Commission to AACSB International's Board of Directors in August 2003, expected a shortage of more than 1,100 doctoral faculty member by 2007 and over 2,400 by 2012 (Beta Gamma Sigma International Exchange, 2004). With the expanded role, faculty workload will emerge as a major issue in business education. Faculty will be required to do more with less. However, there is the danger of the situation turning into one where never-ending pressure to do more with less in the name of success and prosperity could undermine faculty productivity. The potential negative impact on physical as well as mental health of faculty could be significant. The new skills being demanded of business school faculty members mesh very well with what real world businesses require and reward much more richly. Hence there is considerable risk that more promising and capable faculty members might opt for the lure of lucre rather than the rewards of academe. Individuals who view teaching as their "calling" will have to learn to deal with their changing roles by striking a calculated and deliberate balance between their personal and professional lives, to avoid stress and associated burnout.

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Become A Better Teacher:
Five Steps in the Direction of Critical Thinking

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Abstract

This paper identifies an interdisciplinary, 5-step framework, built upon existing theory and best practices in cognitive development, effective learning environments, and outcomes-based assessment. The framework provides teachers with a useful means to move their lecture-based courses toward a more active-learning environment which, ultimately, is more enjoyable and effective for teachers and students alike. An example of the model is applied in accounting education, representing a business discipline in which critical thinking has been consistently cited as both necessary and difficult to implement. Barriers to implementation of the model and suggestions for overcoming them are presented.

Keywords: critical thinking, active-learning, learning environments, assessment

Introduction

Professional development in higher education takes place in many situations. Developing a knowledge and deep understanding of an educational practice, as well as the skill to use the practice effectively in the classroom, does not occur overnight. A good question to ask frequently while planning one's professional development is "How will this improve student learning?" Just as students need to see connections in what they're learning, teachers need to clearly see the connection of professional development to classroom practice. Commitment to sustained professional development is demonstrated by teachers who create specific instructional strategies or areas of interest that they would like to pursue in more depth. A particular strategy frequently cited in the professional development literature for improving teaching and student learning is that of enhancing critical thinking skills.

This paper identifies a 5-step framework that can be implemented in virtually any teaching or training setting to effectively move learners toward critical thinking. This interdisciplinary model, built upon existing theory and best practices in cognitive development, effective learning environments, and outcomes-based assessment, provides teachers with a useful framework to move their lecture-based courses toward a more active-learning environment which, ultimately, is more enjoyable and effective for teachers and students alike. An example of the model is applied in the context of accounting education, representing a business discipline in which critical thinking has been consistently cited as both necessary and difficult to implement. Barriers to implementation of the model and suggestions for overcoming them are presented and discussed.

The lecture format of learning is a venerable and popular approach to content delivery in higher education; however, this time of learning frequently does not encourage active learning or critical thinking on the part of students. Those new to the teaching profession often adopt the lecture format because this format is both teacher-centered and comes with a strong academic tradition. Unfortunately, increasing a student's critical thinking skills with the lecture format is very difficult. Topics are discussed sequentially rather than critically, and students tend to memorize the material since the lecture method facilitates the delivery of large amounts of information. The student is placed in a passive rather than an active role since the teacher does the talking, the questioning, and, thus, most of the thinking (Maiorana, 1991).

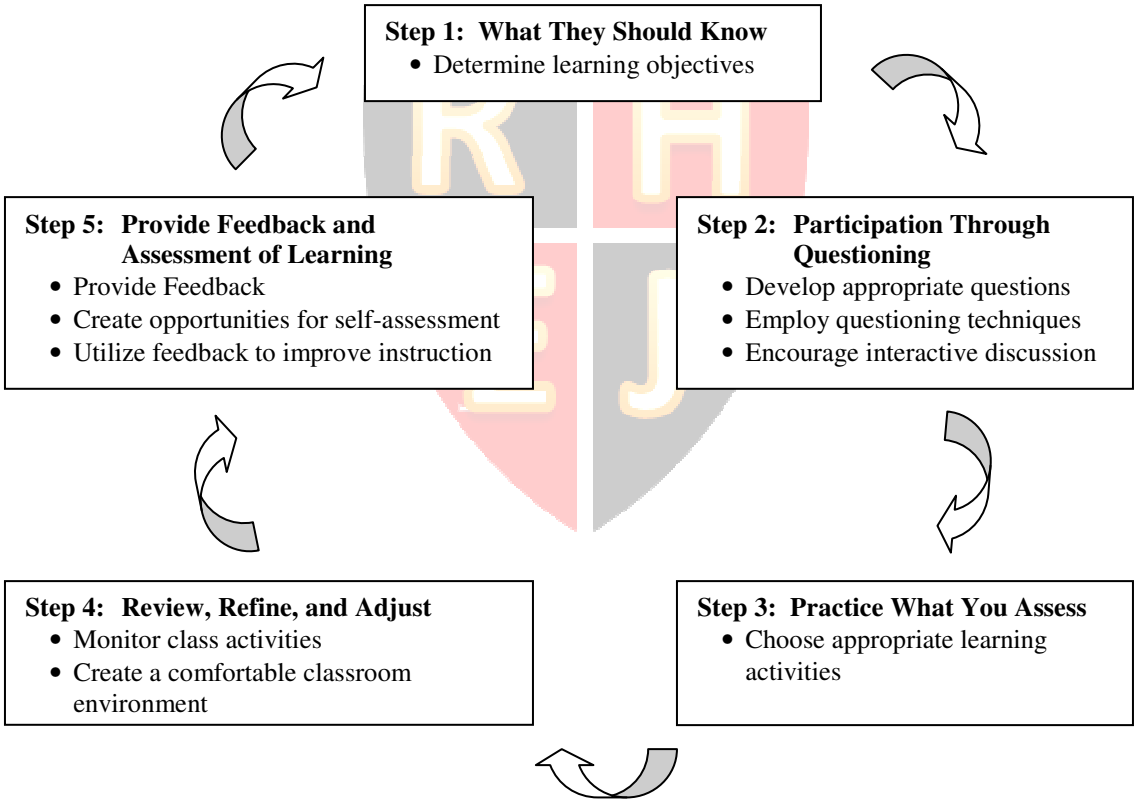
Active learning can make the course more enjoyable for both teachers and students, and, most importantly, can cause students to think critically. For this to happen, educators must give up the belief that students can't learn the subject at hand unless the teacher "covers it". While students may gain some

exposure to the material through pre-class readings and overview lectures, students really don't understand the content until they actively "do" something with the concepts and reflect on the meaning of what they are doing.

The theory of critical thinking began primarily with the works of Benjamin Bloom who identified six levels within the cognitive domain, each of which related to a higher level of cognitive ability (Bloom, 1956). *Knowledge* focused on remembering and reciting information. *Comprehension* focused on relating and organizing previously learned information. *Application* focused on applying information according to a rule or principle in a specific situation. *Analysis* was defined as critical thinking focused on parts and their functionality in the whole. *Synthesis* was defined as critical thinking focused on putting parts together to form a new and original whole. *Evaluation* was defined as critical thinking focused upon valuing and making judgments based upon information. In the context of this paper, critical thinking is deemed to take place when students are required to perform in the Analysis – Evaluation range of Bloom's taxonomy.

To provide the greatest benefit to students, teachers should provide many opportunities for students to engage in the upper levels of Bloom's taxonomy where critical thinking takes place. While most teachers believe that developing critical thinking in their students is of primary importance (Albrecht & Sack, 2000), few have an idea exactly what it is, how it should be taught, or how it should be assessed (Paul, et al, 2002). The following model (Figure 1) is a 5 step framework that can be easily implemented in any classroom or training setting to move students toward critical thinking.

Figure 1: 5-Step Model to Move Students Toward Critical Thinking



5-Step Model to Move Students Toward Critical Thinking

Step One: What They Should Know

Considering the importance of a course, its placement in a program of study, and its role in providing a base of knowledge to be built upon by other courses, a teacher should first identify the key learning objectives that recognize what students should know when they exit the class. To make critical

thinking happen, these teaching objectives, as well as the activities and assessments, must include those tied to the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy.

A well written objective should include a behavioral verb that is appropriate for the chosen level of the taxonomy. Bloom's Knowledge level requires an answer that demonstrates simple recall of facts. Behavioral verbs at this level include who, what, describe, state, and list. Comprehension requires an answer that demonstrates an understanding of the information. Behavioral verbs at this level include summarize, explain, paraphrase, compare, and contrast. Application requires an answer that demonstrates an ability to use information, concepts and theories in new situations. Behavioral verbs include apply, construct, solve, discover, and show. Analysis requires an answer that demonstrates an ability to see patterns and classify information, concepts and theories into component parts. Behavioral verbs include examine, classify, categorize, differentiate, and analyze. Synthesis requires an answer that demonstrates an ability to relate knowledge from several areas to create new or original work. Behavioral verbs include combine, construct, create, role play, and suppose. Finally, Evaluation requires an answer that demonstrates ability to judge evidence based on reasoned argument. Behavioral verbs include assess, criticize, recommend, predict, and evaluate.

Thus, a well written lesson plan should target a behavioral verb, introduce and practice the desired behavior, and end with the learner exhibition of the behavioral response. The development of well written questions will greatly accelerate a learner's movement into critical thinking.

Step Two: Participation Through Questioning

Questioning is a vital part of the teaching and learning process, allowing the teacher to establish what is already known and then to extend beyond that to develop new ideas and understandings. Questions can be used to stimulate interaction between teacher and learner and challenge the learner to defend his or her position, (i.e. to think critically). Clasen (1990) posits that although many strategies exist that can impact student thinking, teacher questions have the greatest impact. He went on to indicate that the level of student thinking is directly proportional to the level of question asked. When teachers plan, they must consider the purpose of each question and then develop the appropriate level and type of question to accomplish the purpose. All students need experience with higher level questioning once they become familiar with a concept. Thoughtful preparation on the part of the teacher is essential in providing that experience.

Questioning techniques can be used to foster the thinking ability of students. Questions can be categorized in a number of different ways. One simple method is to use the general categories of convergent and divergent questions. Convergent questions seek one or more very specific correct answers, while divergent questions seek a wide variety of correct answers. Convergent questions apply to Bloom's Knowledge, Comprehension, and Application levels while divergent questions apply to Bloom's Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation levels. Divergent questions are generally open-ended and foster student-centered discussion and thereby encourage critical thinking.

To most effectively encourage student participation, teachers must become highly skilled questioners. This is understandably difficult and takes commitment. According to Teaching Strategies (2003), the crucial elements of a skilled questioner are that they: are brief and concise; are prepared to rephrase questions; are prepared to draw further responses from participants; use a variety of techniques; redirect questions/responses; provide feedback and reinforcement without repeating answers; and spread questions around the class.

Teachers can use a number of strategies to improve their questioning skills. First, consider giving up one-at-a-time questioning in exchange for an interactive group discussion. Individual questioning engages only one student at a time. Any student not directly engaged in the discussion will have a tendency to disengage.

Second, make the difficult shift from leading the discussion to facilitating. The role of a discussion leader is very different from the role of lecturer. Your role is to lead students into discussion, foster understanding, and stimulate intellectual growth. Further, you must be prepared to deal constructively with the shy student, the lazy student, the overly talkative student, and the student who keeps challenging you.

Third, utilize the appropriate discussion model. The focused discussion model is good for the natural sciences and engineering and often works best when the teacher keeps students focused. This allows the teacher to cover larger amounts of material, to separate the major from the minor concepts, and

to place more emphasis on review, clarification, and elaboration of the lecture and course readings. The open discussion model is good for the social sciences and humanities, where seldom one correct answer or approach exists. In this setting, a less structured and less directed discussion format usually works best. As will be discussed, most fields of study benefit from a combination of both techniques.

Fourth, continually refine the art of questioning. Although many different types of questions exist, good questions are the key to inspiring critical thinking. The most productive questions will elicit a variety of responses and will invite students to think about and respond at a higher level of Bloom's taxonomy.

Fifth, guide the student to the answer or refer the student to a resource that will provide further explanation. The advantage of this process is that students are allowed, and even forced, to develop the analytical tools needed to search for answers.

Sixth, when a student asks the teacher a question the teacher should redirect the question to the class to encourage thinking and problem solving. The teacher can rephrase the question, guide the class toward the correct answer, or use the question to introduce a related topic.

Finally, all learners should have the opportunity to interact with the teacher and with others. Teachers should allow time in their course for debating. Learners must come to see themselves as risk-takers who exercise control over their own learning and experience success when they apply what they have learned to better understand and help resolve issues.

Elder and Paul (2002) proposed that the art of questioning is essential to the art of learning and that, to the extent that they fail to ask genuine questions and seek answers to those questions, students are not likely taking the content seriously. Students learn math by asking questions about math, students learn history by asking questions about history, and students learn business by asking questions about business. Teachers can and should use these questioning techniques to inspire critical thinking in the classroom.

Step Three: Practice What You Assess

In the past decade, a major shift has taken place in education; that shift is toward active learning. Teachers that have used this approach generally find that the students learn more and that the courses are more enjoyable. Bonwell and Eison (1991) described active learning as involving the students in activities that cause them to think about what they are doing. Fink (2003) indicated that the concept of active learning supports research which shows that students learn more and retain knowledge longer when they acquire that knowledge in an active rather than passive manner. To make learning more active, we need to learn how to enhance the overall learning experience by adding some kind of experiential learning and opportunities for reflective dialog.

According to Fink (2003), two guiding principles should be considered when choosing learning activities. First, activities should be chosen from each of the following three components of active learning: Information and Ideas, Experience, and Reflective Dialog. Information and Ideas include primary and secondary sources whether accessed in class, outside class, or online; Experience includes doing, observing, and simulations; Reflective dialog includes papers, portfolios, and journaling. Second, whenever possible, direct kinds of learning activities should be used. Examples of direct activities include doing in an authentic setting, direct observation of a phenomenon, reflective thinking, journaling, and dialog in or outside of class. Indirect, or vicarious, activities may be necessary in some cases; however, the quality of student learning expands when we find direct ways of providing learning activities. Examples of indirect or vicarious activities include case studies, gaming simulations, role playing, and stories. Learning activities that can provide several kinds of learning simultaneously include debate, dramatization, authentic projects, situational observation, and service learning.

One very important ingredient of active learning is in-depth reflective dialog. This provides students with the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of their learning experience. One can reflect with oneself, as in a journal, or with others, as in a class discussion. According to Fink (2003), in reflective writing, students should address the following questions: What am I learning? What is the value of what I am learning? How am I learning? What else do I need to learn?

When teachers think about what should happen in a course, they will want to consider the kinds of active learning that can encourage critical thinking. To enhance the overall learning experience and to create a complete set of learning activities, enlarging the view of active learning to include getting information and ideas, experience, and reflection is necessary. These kinds of activities also allow students the opportunity to practice the same skills that will later be assessed.

Step Four: Review, Refine, and Adjust

Teachers should strive to continually refine their courses to ensure that their instructional techniques are in fact moving students toward critical thinking. To accomplish this, teachers should monitor the classroom activities very closely. To track student participation, a teaching diary can be kept that identifies the students that participated, the main class activities, and an assessment of their success. Other reflective comments can also be tracked in this journal and can be very useful when revising or updating instructional activities. An important outcome of this journal is the identification of students that have participation issues. These would include the over-talkative student, the shy student, the lazy student, and the student that keeps challenging the teacher.

Dealing constructively with difficult students is important to keeping the class on track with the goals set for them (Leading & Facilitating Discussions, n.d.). When dealing with the over-talkative student, they must understand that the floor belongs to everyone. Teachers should acknowledge the comments of the over-talkative student, but then divert the discussion to others, calling them by name when necessary. Should the student still not take the hint, a private conversation emphasizing the benefits of listening to other students as part of a classroom discussion will generally solve the problem. Finally, because the over-talkative student may be insecure, avoid attacking them. Simply point out the situation and then work together to form a solution.

Dealing with the shy student almost always requires extra encouragement. Try bringing the shy student into the activity early on to boost their confidence. Also, encourage them to relate to their own experiences and make eye contact with them so they will feel more connected to the class. When the problem persists, explain that participation is an important part of the course and ask whether other reasons may contribute to their reluctance to participate. When the reasons are extenuating, the teacher can refer the student to other resources such as tutoring or counseling.

Dealing with the lazy student is also a challenge to facilitating active learning. This student must understand that all students will be held accountable to the standards of the class. When a student fails to meet these standards by arriving late, missing classes without excuse, or failing to complete assignments, the teacher must address these issues immediately. Should the student require additional help, suggest a tutor or encourage an individual meeting to discuss or review the material.

Finally, students may continually challenge the teacher. When a student disrupts class to discuss irrelevant points or continually challenges comments made by the teacher, the teacher should meet with them immediately. Be frank and point out the disruptive nature of the action. The student may disagree with the approach of the course; however, they should understand this is not likely to change and they should consider adjusting their expectations in order to derive some benefit. Dealing with this type of student immediately is very important so that they do not impact the rest of the class.

Creating a class for all people is of primary importance, and students should expect to bear at least half the responsibility for this task. However, the responsibility belongs with the teacher to strive to create a climate of equal opportunity and an environment where rudeness, interruptions, or dismissal of another's opinions is unacceptable. Making these expectations clear in the initial class meeting and as a formal part of the course syllabus is an effective first step toward creating a classroom environment that will be conducive to active learning and critical thinking.

Step Five: Provide Feedback and Assessment of Learning

Feedback, like assessment, compares criteria and standards to student performance in an effort to evaluate the quality of work. However, feedback differs from assessment in its purpose. The purpose of feedback is to enhance the quality of student learning and performance, rather than to grade the performance, and, importantly, has the potential to help students learn how to assess their own performance in the future. Feedback allows the teacher and student(s) to engage in dialogue about what distinguishes successful performance from unsuccessful performance as they discuss criteria and standards (Fink, 2003).

Teachers can learn to provide good feedback to their students through planning which allows students frequent opportunities to practice whatever will be expected of them at assessment time. Teachers should spend ample time helping students to understand what the criteria and standards are and what they mean. Feedback and evaluation may also be provided by student peers, provided they are given proper instruction. Each of these techniques help students learn to distinguish between satisfactory and unsatisfactory performance.

When providing feedback, teachers should be both thoughtful and purposeful. According to Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995), teachers should provide feedback that is informational rather than controlling, based on agreed-upon standards, specific and constructive, quantitative, prompt, frequent, positive, personal and differential (i.e. indicating personal improvement since the last learning was performed).

In addition to feedback, assessment itself is an important instructional goal. According to Fink (2003), educative assessment can enhance the quality of student learning and includes four key components. The first component is forward looking assessment, which incorporates exercises, questions, and/or problems that create a real-life context and relevance for the course objective. These types of questions require students to look well beyond the conclusion of the course. To write such questions, teachers must consider situations in which students might need such knowledge and then create a question that replicates the real-life context. These problems should be open-ended, and key assumptions should be provided in order to best assess the quality of the student's response.

The second component of assessment is to clearly explain the criteria and standards that will be used to assess learning outcomes. Teachers must identify the general traits or characteristics of high quality work (i.e. the criteria). The teacher should next identify qualities which distinguish student work which is merely acceptable from that which is exceptional (i.e. the standards). Citing or providing examples of exemplary student work may be useful in articulating assessment criteria and standards to the student.

The third component of assessment is to create ample opportunity for self-assessment. This is a particularly useful skill that will be required of students later in their professional lives. Self-assessment can be done in groups or individually. To be successful, students again need to understand the appropriate criteria and standards for evaluating and assessing their own work.

The fourth component of assessment is the teacher provided feedback. This feedback should be high quality and have the following characteristics identified by Fink (2003): frequent, immediate, discriminating, and loving. In this context, teacher feedback should be given as frequently as possible, should be given as soon as possible, should make clear the difference between poor, acceptable, and exceptional work, and should be delivered empathetically. Teacher provided feedback is a particularly critical element of this model given the fact that many students will at least initially be unsure and perhaps uncomfortable with their role as an active participant in their learning. Providing positive and appropriate feedback is a vital step of creating a classroom environment which fosters and encourages questioning, active participation, and risk taking on the part of the student.

Finally, important to note is the significance of assessment to the 5-step model itself. Information gleaned from student feedback and assessment provides an immediate and vital source of information to the teacher with respect to which objectives were met/not met, the effectiveness of specific learning activities, things to start or stop doing, effectiveness of feedback on standards, etc. This type of information can in turn become a valuable part of a department or discipline's outcomes-based assessment efforts.

Illustrative Example

In an effort to illustrate the application of this framework to a specific business education context, the topic of financial statement analysis in an introductory financial accounting course will be utilized. The need for fundamental change in accounting education has been well documented for most of the past two decades (Accounting Education Change Commission, 1990; Albrecht & Sack, 2000; Doney & Lephardt, 1993). In particular, the ability to think critically, reason in a variety of ways, and solve unstructured problems has been cited consistently as a necessary quality in business graduates in general and accounting students in particular (Springer & Borthick, 2004). Accounting education has been criticized for spending too much time solving well-structured, deterministic problems, placing excessive emphasis on memorization, reluctance on the part of teachers to develop creative types of learning experiences, and excessive focus on content at the expense of skills development (Albrecht & Sack, 2000; Doney & Lephardt, 1993). The model presented in this paper seems to provide an appropriate and useful framework from which to address many and possibly all of these concerns.

Basic financial statement analysis is a skill taught in most introductory financial accounting courses. The ability to analyze a financial statement represents a good example of a skill that is built upon in other business courses (i.e. finance, business strategy) and is also likely to be utilized by most business professionals. The first step in the model (i.e. What They Should Know) involves the determination of key

learning objectives appropriate to the various levels of Bloom's taxonomy. In this context, these might include, but are not limited to:

Knowledge:
1) Identify two basic approaches to financial statement analysis.
2) List and present the formulae for the basic liquidity and solvency ratios.
Comprehension:
1) Compare and contrast horizontal and vertical financial analysis.
2) Explain the meaning of each of the basic liquidity and solvency ratios.
Application:
1) Perform both a vertical and horizontal analysis of the comparative income statement of a corporation for the past two years.
2) Perform a ratio analysis of a company for the most recent fiscal year.
Analysis:
1) Identify trends or patterns in the financial analysis of an organization that might give insight into the results of its operations.
2) Compare the financial ratios of a company to industry averages and give possible reasons for any significant variances.
Synthesis:
1) Based upon financial analysis, identify several actions a company might take to improve its operating results.
2) Propose a new financial ratio of your own that might be of interest to a specific company and explain its meaning.
Evaluation:
1) Evaluate the following statement: the fact that financial statement analysis is regularly performed is evidence that the statements alone are of limited usefulness to decision-makers.
2) In the role of a potential lender, prepare a memorandum to your supervisor assessing the overall liquidity and solvency of a prospective borrower, your recommendation to extend or deny credit, and any significant assumptions made or limitations of the data you utilized in formulating your recommendation.

Note that the development of these objectives not only provides for increasingly higher levels of learning (i.e. those which demonstrate critical thinking), but also provides a basis for developing appropriate questions, designing specific learning activities, and feedback on/assessment of student learning outcomes.

The next critical step in the model (i.e. Participation Through Questioning) is to choose learning activities, develop questions (based upon the learning objectives identified above) and prepare to employ appropriate questioning techniques which help foster an active learning environment and participation by all students. In this context, the use of both focused and open discussion formats is recommended. A focused model is utilized to assist students in mastering the basic financial analysis concepts (i.e. knowledge, comprehension, and analysis), while a more open format is proposed for the learning outcomes identified above which may include a variety of "correct" responses (i.e. analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). In accounting in particular, the instructor may occasionally need to "digress" to the lecture format to explain difficult concepts or computational nuances. Nonetheless, a concerted effort should be made to keep the students actively and equally engaged.

In implementing step three of the model (i.e. Practice What You Assess), working through the objectives and questions can be accomplished using a variety of activities. For this particular topic, students might be given a reading assignment and then administered a short reading quiz at the beginning of class to provide both practice and feedback on the knowledge and comprehension aspects of the topic. Once the teacher is reasonably sure that the students are able to perform the analysis and compute the ratios correctly, students may be placed in teams to perform the actual analysis of the statements. For higher levels of learning, the guidelines of Fink (2003) can and should be followed. For example, students might be asked to utilize information from "real" companies by accessing financial statements online and then use the data to compute ratios either in groups or individually in a "real world" application. Students may report on their finding and/or be asked to "critique" the analysis/synthesis/evaluation of others. At the conclusion of class or the learning unit, a useful exercise in this setting is that of a reflective journaling activity. For example, students might be asked to reflect in writing upon "how what I learned will be of use to me in my chosen profession" or "what I have learned that I don't want to forget". In addition to

encouraging students to reflect upon what they have actually learned, this type of activity also helps make the material personally and/or professionally relevant. Students may additionally be asked to share their thoughts with other members in the class as part of this activity.

Obviously, the teacher will need to continually monitor, reflect upon and refine the activities in an effort to adapt each topic and group of students using the techniques outlined in step four (i.e. Review, Refine, and Adjust) of the model. A particular problem frequently encountered in accounting classes in general is that of the "free rider" effect, in which one or more "strong" students tend to do the bulk of the quantitative analysis to the benefit of the other members of the group. This situation can be mitigated by making expectations clear and holding all group members accountable for the work. For example, the teacher may require all students to prepare a solution and then randomly select one solution for grading and/or presentation for/by the entire group.

Feedback and assessment of learning are provided by the teacher in the final step of the model. In this setting, feedback is relatively straight-forward with respect to the learning objectives in the lower levels of the taxonomy since accounting, by nature, often affords the student to come up with a "right" or "wrong" answer. As was previously discussed, however, this quality of accounting education also has a tendency to produce professionals who have little tolerance for ambiguity or unstructured problem solving. In this area, which represents the higher levels of the taxonomy (and, thus, critical thinking); the model can make a substantial contribution to the quality of student learning. At the same time, teachers will have to make extra efforts to provide thoughtful and purposeful feedback. Examples of outstanding work from other students/groups represent one reasonably effective way to provide feedback on the learning outcomes/standards relating to the analysis, synthesis and evaluation of information. Standards might also include "ground rules" for class/group participation and responsibility for assignments.

Assessment of this topic would logically measure student performance on the objectives stated at the onset of the lesson at a level consistent with the standards articulated above. Teachers should not be afraid to ask ambiguous questions or those which require the student to identify missing or limited information, defend his or her position and recommendations, or question assumptions underlying the financial statements being analyzed. In this manner, teachers will be in the best position to assess whether or not critical thinking is indeed taking place.

While brief and certainly not comprehensive, this illustration has shown the applicability of the 5-step model developed in this paper to the specific context of teaching financial statement analysis in an introductory accounting course. Obviously, this framework can be applied to most any discipline with appropriate modification of learning outcomes, discussion models, and activities. Indeed, the model can most likely be applied more broadly to virtually any teaching or training setting in which the development of critical thinking skills is a desired learning outcome.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to present a 5-step framework which can be implemented in virtually any teaching or training setting to effectively move learners toward critical thinking. While conceptual in nature, this model provides teachers with a useful framework in which to move their lecture-based courses toward a more active-learning environment. Elements of the model were applied to the teaching of financial statement analysis in an introductory financial accounting course, and barriers to implementation of the model and practical suggestions for overcoming them were presented and discussed throughout the paper.

Finally, teachers must be willing to give thoughtful consideration to current instructional methods and to the personal beliefs that drive them prior to contemplating this particular approach to teaching. Implementing critical thinking through this framework clearly requires a commitment to active, student-centered learning which, at least initially, may be somewhat unfamiliar and uncomfortable to both students and teachers. While this may necessitate a fundamental change in instructional technique from that of the traditional lecture-based format, the results of such efforts will likely result in learning experiences which are both more enjoyable and valuable to students and teachers alike.

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Enhancing Students' Perceptions of Collaborative Projects With Pre-Group Instruction Methods

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Abstract

This study sought to determine whether pre-group instruction about effective collaboration would promote positive group experiences and to assess students' perceptions about group projects. The experimental group received instruction about group dynamics, effective communication strategies, and personality styles; the control group did not. The findings suggest that pre-group instruction positively impacts students' perceptions of group experiences; however, students' perceptions of group projects as positive learning experiences varied greatly. No patterns emerged among students' demographic variables. The article concludes with several teaching resources to support pre-group instructional strategies and suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning, Collaboration, Teamwork

Introduction

Collaborative skill is often a prerequisite to employment; therefore, learning to work well with others should not be an on-the-job experience. Because many organizations use team-based work groups in their day-to-day operations, employers seek to hire college graduates who already possess effective teamwork skills (Blowers, 2003; Ettington & Camp, 2002). Consequently, to be competitive in today's collaborative world of work, students must develop effective teamwork skills prior to entering the workforce.

To assess students' skills during employment interviews, recruiters often ask candidates to explain examples of their effective work-team experiences by explaining scenarios, tasks, actions, and results (known as the STAR method). To provide evidence of their collaborative skills, some students reflect on internship experiences while many others recall class-based group project experiences. If students adequately describe effective collaborative scenarios in which they were assigned tasks and completed actions that supported positive results, they will pass the STAR assessment. However, given their lack of enthusiasm for group projects, they may need to be creative to apply their classroom experiences to this model.

Many business courses integrate team projects to provide students with an opportunity to practice collaborative skills; however, students do not always perceive collaborative work as positive or successful. Ettington and Camp (2002) demonstrated that in most cases, students have undeveloped group process skills and that faculty should help actively rather than passively observe students' struggles. Likewise, Livingston and Lynch (2000) expressed that the degree of faculty guidance will play a role in determining whether the students find value in team-based learning (Payne, Monk-Turner, Smith, & Sumter, 2006). To encourage positive collaborative classroom experiences, instructors should embrace team learning methods that support effective group work. Students' perceptions are strongly tied to their direct experiences, and they find value in content and experiences that are meaningful and make sense to them. From an instructional perspective, the method of student preparation for a collaborative experience can have a notable positive impact on students' perceptions of collaboration.

Purpose of the Study

This research began as an exploration of course-based collaborative work in an effort to both assess students' perceptions of group work as well as determine best practices for assigning group projects. Based on the researchers' anecdotal experiences with course-based group work, students did not seem to

value collaborative work either as a learning experience or as an opportunity to develop vital workplace skills.

The study is based on the premise that it is important for students to develop an understanding of the benefits of collaborative work as well as the advantages of teaming skills prior to participating in a group project. Students' involvement with collaborative learning experiences, or group work as it is more commonly referred to in the literature, improves their communication skills, enhances their critical thinking skills, allows for reciprocal learning, and teaches students to work well with others (Payne, et al., 2006). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine if providing students with pre-group instruction impacted students' perceptions of collaborative projects.

Research suggests that students with prior group experience have more success collaborating with peers than students with no team experience (Oitzinger & Kallgren, 2004). This success is evident regardless of where the student acquires the experience (e.g., classroom projects or team sports) and whether the experience was actually positive. Additionally, when collaborative skills are effectively developed, students achieve better academic and social performance. Students are able to improve upon their existing skills by participating in pre-instructional activities specifically designed to enhance group dynamics, effective communication strategies, and personality styles. These skill areas provide the foundation necessary for students to purposefully identify the significance of collaborative activities and understand why they are relevant to their future development and progress. Therefore, this study assessed the effect of participation in pre-group instruction in group dynamics, effective communication strategies, and personality styles on students' perceptions of teamwork. In other words, does instruction about teamwork prior to a team activity change students' perceptions of teamwork?

Research Questions

To determine if students' perceptions of group work were influenced by their participation in pre-group instruction, this study focused on two student groups: (1) those who received pre-group instruction and (2) those who did not. Both groups completed collaborative assignments. Based on the review of literature, pre-group instruction should help students further understand the underlying dynamics of the collaborative experience as well as the content of the project itself. The researchers hypothesized that students who received pre-group instruction would perceive their collaborative experiences as more positive because of a deeper appreciation or sense of value for the group process. Therefore, the following research questions were addressed:

1. Do students who receive pre-group instruction perceive group experiences more positively than those who do not?
2. Do students' perceptions of group experiences change after participating in a group project?
3. Do students perceive group projects as positive learning experiences?
4. Are students' demographic variables (i.e., major, rank, and gender) related to perceptions of group work?

Review of Literature

The goal for most colleges and universities is to prepare students for the workforce. To fulfill this task, these schools attempt to provide their students with the skills sets required to become viable candidates for positions in their chosen careers. In basic terms, schools have a product (students), and to satisfy their customers (employers seeking applicants), schools must ensure that students are properly equipped with the tools necessary to facilitate their successful transition into the workforce. The research indicates that collaborative skills are a critical requirement for most employees and that pre-group instruction can prepare students for more effective group dynamics.

Collaborative Skills

Many characteristics are included in the skill sets that employers want. Given the increasingly important role of teams in business, the ability to work successfully in collaborative settings is an attribute that employers significantly value. Research indicates that employers consistently cite collaboration as a critical skill for potential employees (Luca & Tarricone, 2001). Therefore, colleges and universities must foster positive and effective team experiences. Although many business courses require group projects,

how successful are those projects at enhancing students' collaborative skills? Without additional instruction geared to equip students with group interaction skills, students may not perceive group experiences as positive learning environments and will not be prepared to work effectively in group environments in the workplace.

Pre-Group Instruction

In a study that questioned whether student group work prepares students for "leadership or skilled incompetence" (p. 590), the author suggested "emphasizing the importance of process learning, teaching team development, providing practice in communication skills, coaching individual students, and providing graded feedback for process quality" (Holmer, 2001, p. 605). These five elements create an integrated process of collaborative development that prepares students for teamwork, allows them to practice the collaborative skills required to perform well, and assesses both the individual and group effectiveness. Although most faculty are well equipped to support students' practice as well as provide feedback, their awareness of the need for preparation, or pre-group instruction, may not be as evident.

Several studies support the need to train students about collaborative practices before they participate in team projects. For example, Ettington and Camp (2002) surveyed students' perceptions of group work, and based on their findings suggested several principles that need to be applied to ensure collaborative projects adequately prepare students for real-world teamwork. These principles include "motivation, practice/feedback, follow-up similarities between learning situation and applied context, and generalization" (p. 356). A similar study, also based on student survey research but in a workshop setting (McGraw & Tidwell, 2001), supports providing group process training prior to a collaborative experience to lay the foundation for effective team experiences. They suggested integrating both a comprehensive orientation to the group experience and project goals as well as reflection activities after the project is completed. Too often, course-based group work focuses only on the group work and spends little, if any, time on orientation or reflection.

Group Dynamics

Group dynamics play a critical role in the development of a team. Within a class, some students work well together while other groups are dysfunctional. What variables contribute to these differences? Fairfield and London (2003) suggested the dynamics of team-based learning are analogous to musicians of an orchestra. Working well together (e.g., creating music), requires knowing the "melody, harmony, dynamics, tempo and rhythm" (p. 654) of the work. When the wrong notes are played or the rhythm is out of sync, the music suffers. Similarly, when students do not play their assigned part in a group project, the work suffers. When student work suffers, students engender negativity toward group experiences for varying reasons. In a study investigating students' perceptions of group work, students cited interpersonal communication as the most significant factor affecting their group dynamics (Payne, et al., 2006).

In another study addressing student perceptions and group dynamics (Anderson, 2005), students' perceptions of effective collaborative experiences were found to be directly related to the team's cohesion and independence (i.e., whether they were able to function without the instructor's support). Anderson's conclusions suggested that instructors should carefully consider several factors when structuring student teams. These factors include "team heterogeneity, opportunistic practices, and hypothesis-driven thinking" (p. 85). These variables are exemplified in personality types. More research is needed on students' perceptions of group experiences to better understand this teaming phenomenon to determine best practices for preparing students for effective team projects.

Methodology

This quasi-experimental study sought to determine if pre-group instruction enhanced students' perceptions of collaborative projects. The following sections describe the study participants, the survey methods, and the survey instrument. The content and methods of the pre-group instruction are also discussed.

Study Participants

The participants of the study were taken from a convenience sample of students enrolled in four business classes within a school of business at a mid-sized regional university in the south during the fall 2007 semester. The four classes represented two sections of consumer behavior and two sections of business communication. Two of the four sections were randomly assigned as the experimental group (n = 53), and the other two sections were designated as the control group (n = 42).

Survey Methods

At the midpoint in the semester – prior to assigning collaborative projects in all four classes – the students completed a survey assessing their perceptions of teamwork and group projects. This initial data collection was labeled as Phase 1. As per the institution's Institutional Review Board policies, students' participation in the survey was voluntary and their completion of the survey instrument constituted their consent. After the Phase 1 data collection, the experimental group received pre-group instruction; the control group did not. During the later part of the semester, all of the students in the study participated in comprehensive team projects that served as significant portions of their final grade. At the conclusion of the team projects, the students in all four classes completed the survey a second time; this data collection was deemed Phase 2. All survey responses were kept both confidential and anonymous. Survey results were aggregated within groups; individual student responses were not tracked from the first to the second data collection phases.

Survey Instrument

The self-designed survey instrument, provided in the Appendix, included 21 items. The first 10 items listed descriptors organized within a differential scale, which was adapted from existing McQuarrie and Munson RRPII scale (Bearden & Netemeyer, 1999). Students were asked to identify how they felt about participating in group projects using a seven-point scale relating to variables such as importance, relevance, meaning, exciting, appealing, interesting. The inconsistent ranking of positive to negative perceptions on the survey was done intentionally to test the consistency of individual student responses. Six items used a Likert-scale format to indicate students' levels of agreement about statements relating to their overall group project experiences. These items included statements such as *group projects are helpful to my learning and grades; I don't like group projects, but I know I need to do them;* and *overall, I consider group projects a good experience.* The final five items requested demographic information, such as major, rank, gender, ethnicity, and number of students assigned to the project group. The instrument was pilot tested for validity and reliability with a small convenience sample of students who were not included in the survey participants.

Pre-Group Instruction

Prior to the beginning of the course projects, the students in the experimental group (n = 58) received instruction on group dynamics, effective communication, and the impact of personality styles in collaborative environments. The "pre-group instruction" treatment was designed based on the best practices outlined in the review of literature and supplemental materials. The students in the control group did not receive the pre-group instruction. At the end of the semester, all of the students completed the same survey assessing their perceptions of group work to ascertain the effects of the pre-group instruction.

Group dynamics

The first class session began with a review of the stages of group development: forming, storming, norming, and performing. This traditional four-stage model is presented in all sections of the business communication course, which all business students are required to successfully complete. Building upon the students' knowledge of group development, the class discussion continued with an activity requiring students to define the word "group" and challenging students to combine their individual definitions by debating, negotiating, and determining a "best" definition. In randomly assigned teams of four, students discussed why group experiences are important in learning environments and then applied their reasoning to workplace collaboration. In both sections of the experimental group, students identified the managerial skills necessary to successfully lead a group as well as the interpersonal skills required to be an effective

team member. Students listed the pros and cons of their prior group experiences. Although most students agreed that group experiences can provide effective learning experiences, they did not like working in groups due to the typical negative aspects, such as one student doing the majority of the work. However, students agreed that effective communication strategies could provide better group dynamics.

Effective communication strategies

At the conclusion of the first class session, students were assigned a homework activity to assess their communication experiences during prior group activities. The questions were taken from the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development at Oxford Brookes University (2007):

- Were members expressing their ideas clearly?
- Were they evidently listening to each other?
- Did they make connections to or build on each others' contributions?
- Did they check for understanding or ask for clarification when they were not sure of what somebody else meant?
- Was there good eye contact [among] the group?
- Were feelings as well as thoughts communicated?

At the beginning of the second class session of the pre-group instruction, students shared their answers to these questions in randomly selected small groups (three to four students per group). The student groups found similarities among negative group experiences with regard to lack of communication. The whole-class discussion chronicled students' perspectives of good and bad group communication skills and determined strategies for improving group communication, such as providing positive feedback, ensuring all members of a group participate, and delivering constructive criticism that focuses on the product, not the person. However, even after applying these strategies, all groups indicated that individual students' attitudes or personalities can be the most negative aspect of group interaction.

Personality styles

The last half of the second class session of the pre-group instruction focused on personality styles and their impact on collaborative projects. Rather than using the Myers Briggs indicators, which include 16 variations of personality attributes, students received instruction on Tracom's Social Style Model (2006), which is based on two dimensions of human behavior: assertiveness and responsiveness. For example, students who are less assertive will *ask* their group members if they think they should proceed a certain way, while students who are more assertive will *tell* their group how they should proceed. Similarly, responsiveness is based on control of emotions. Students who *control* their feelings are less responsive; students whose emotions are obvious are more responsive. The four quadrants of this model determine the four foundational personality styles:

- Analytical (less assertive, less responsive)
- Driving (more assertive, less responsive)
- Expressive (more assertive, more responsive), and
- Amiable (less assertive, and more responsive).

Students determined their own personality style and discussed the communication strategies that would work best among the various combinations of styles. In groups that included similar styles, such as Analytical and Amiable types who are typically both less assertive, students discussed methods for ensuring the group's collegial success. At the conclusion of the experimental group's pre-group instruction, their team assignments for the collaborative group projects were randomly assigned. Students shared their personality styles, participated in ice-breaking "forming" activities, and identified strategies to ensure their effective communication throughout their group project.

The combination of activities related to group dynamics, effective communication strategies, and personality styles served as the pre-group instruction content that was provided to the experimental group after the Phase 1 data collection, but prior to the assigned collaborative team projects that all four classes completed and the second data collection (Phase 2).

Findings

After the collaborative group projects were submitted and the students conducted their group presentations, both the experimental and control groups completed the survey for a second time (Phase 2). The data from the survey collection (prior to the pre-group instruction and collaborative project) was compared to the data from the second survey collection. The findings are addressed within the four research questions of this study:

1. Do students who receive pre-instruction perceive group experiences more positively than those who do not?

Yes, students who learn about, discuss, and apply concepts of group dynamics, effective communication styles, and personality styles prior to engaging in a group experience do perceive the collaborative activity more positively than students who do not receive this instruction. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare means and determine statistical significance. Table 1 demonstrates the change in mean responses to the differential indicators that assess students' feelings about group work. The experimental group's responses were consistently higher than the control group's responses for each item. The item with the greatest significance at the $p > .05$ level was the students' perceptions of the collaborative activity mattering to them with the control group's ($n = 42$) mean at 4.6 and the experimental group's ($n = 53$) mean at 5.9 (standard deviation = 0.919).

Table 1. Control vs. Experimental Group Perceptions of Differential Items

Group Projects (Are)…	Control (n = 42)	Experimental (n = 53)	SD
Important	4.5	5.2	0.495
Relevant	4.4	5.1	0.495
Means A Lot To Me	4.3	4.5	0.141
Exciting	4.8	4.9	0.071
Neat	4.3	5.2	0.636
Matters To Me	4.6	5.9	0.919
Fun	4.2	4.4	0.141
Appealing	4.5	4.9	0.283
Boring	4.1	4.4	0.212
Of Concern To Me	4.4	4.8	0.283

2. Do students' perceptions of group experiences change after participating in a group project?

No**,** the mean scores of students' perceptions of group experiences are similar when comparing their responses before a group activity to their responses at the conclusion of the activity. Table 2 outlines the mean responses for all groups before and after the project. Again, analysis of variance was used to compare the means and standard deviations.

Table 2. Perceptions of Differential Items After Completion of Project

Group Projects (Are)…	Before Project (n = 95)	After Project (n = 92)	SD
Important	5.0	4.4	0.424
Relevant	4.8	4.6	0.141
Means A Lot To Me	4.1	4.3	0.141
Exciting	4.2	4.6	0.283
Neat	4.5	4.3	0.141
Matters To Me	4.7	4.5	0.141
Fun	4.6	4.4	0.141
Appealing	4.5	4.4	0.071
Boring	4.5	4.5	0.000
Of Concern To Me	4.7	4.5	0.141

3. Do students perceive group projects as positive learning experiences?

Yes and no. Table 3 demonstrates that the students' most favorable responses both before and after the group activity indicated that students consider group projects a good experience (mean = 3.6) and that they perceive group projects as helpful to their learning and their grades (mean = 3.5). An analysis of variance indicated that both mean responses were consistent during both data collections. However, the item that changed the most (although not statistically significant at SD = .0283) was students' perception that they always like group projects rather than working alone. In this case the students' mean score before the group activity was 2.8, and dropped to 2.4 after the group activity.

Table 3. Students' Responses to Likert-Scale Items

Likert-Scale Items	Pre-Group Activity (n = 93)	Post-Group Activity (n = 92)	SD
Group projects are helpful to my learning and my grades.	3.5	3.5	0.000
Group projects are not valuable to my education.	2.2	2.3	0.071
I don't like group projects, but I know I need to do them.	3.1	3.3	0.141
I always like group projects rather than working alone.	2.8	2.4	0.283
My general opinion of groups is unfavorable.	2.7	2.8	0.071
Overall, I consider group projects a good experience.	3.6	3.6	0.000

4. Are demographic variables (i.e., major, rank, and gender) related to perceptions of group work?

No. Statistically, no significant differences exist among demographic variables with reference to students perceptions of group work. However, the data represent several interesting findings. The variables are addressed separately.

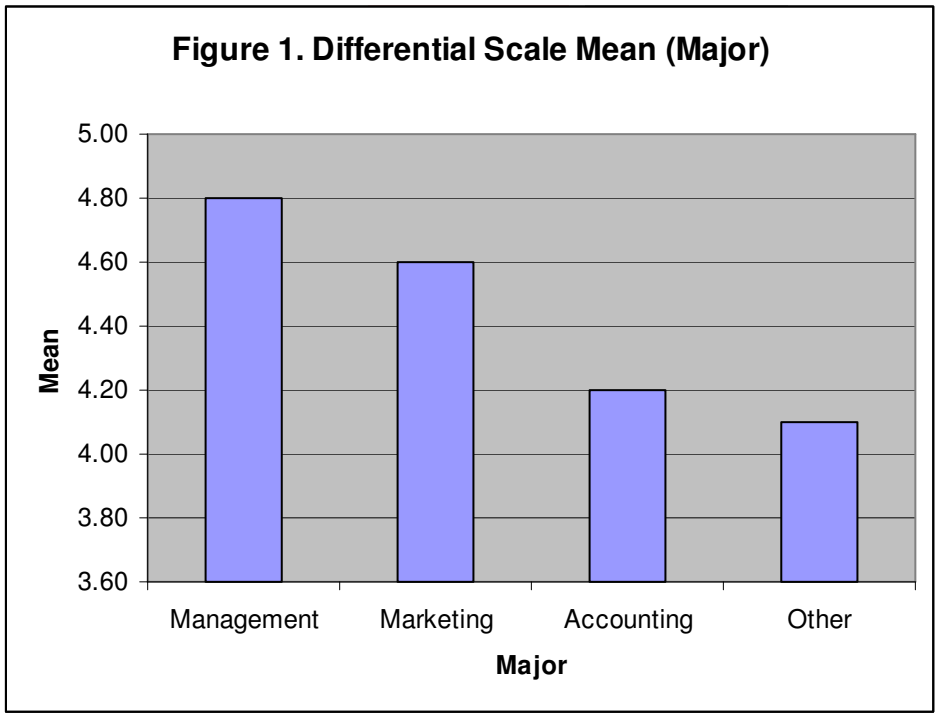
Major

In Table 4, the predominant majors are listed with their mean responses to the 10 differential scale variables itemized in Table 2. Mean responses across these items were determined, identified by major, and compared to the overall mean (4.6). Although the standard deviation does not represent statistically significant differences, the "Other Major" category suggests a less favorable perception of group work than the "Management," "Marketing," or "Accounting" majors. This difference is visually depicted in Figure 1.

Table 4. Student Responses to Differential Scale Items by Major

Major	% (n)	Mean	SD
Management	35 % (n = 32)	4.8	0.141
Marketing	33 % (n = 30)	4.6	0.000
Accounting	12 % (n = 11)	4.2	0.283
Other Major*	20 % (n = 19)	4.1	0.354

*Note: This category includes Business Administration, Business Education, Economics, MIS, and Finance majors with no more than five (5) students representing an individual major.

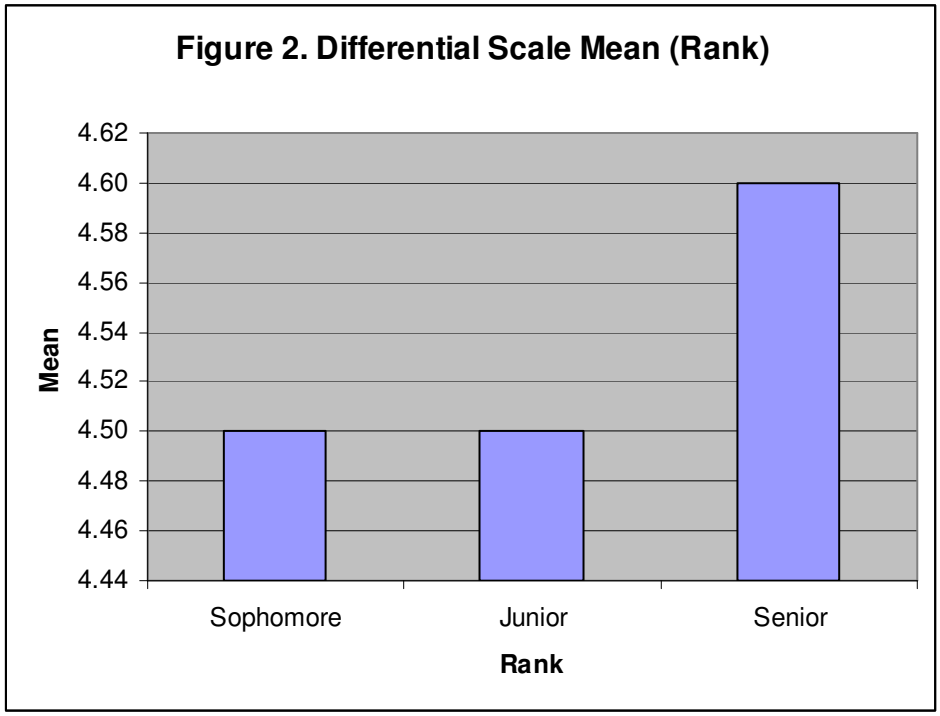


Rank

The same procedures were used to assess differences among rank. As the data in Table 5 indicate, students at all three levels (senior, junior, and sophomore) represent means consistent with the overall mean (4.6). The similarities are visually displayed in Figure 2. Although seniors report a higher mean response, the difference was not statistically significant.

Table 5. Student Responses to Differential Scale Items by Rank

Rank	% (n)	Mean	SD
Sophomore	9 % (n = 8)	4.5	0.071
Junior	38 % (n = 35)	4.5	0.071
Senior	53 % (n = 49)	4.6	0.000

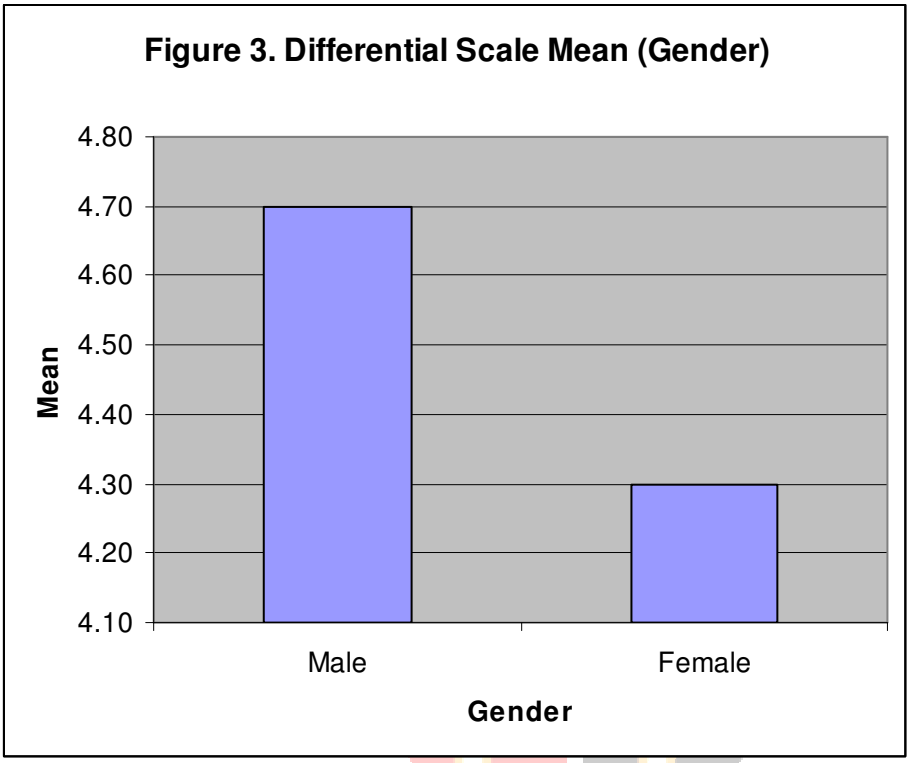


Gender

Finally, students' perceptions of group work as indicated in their responses to the differential survey items by gender did not reveal any statistically significant findings. However, male students (mean = 4.7) do seem to perceive group work more favorably than female students (mean = 4.3). Table 6 includes the means and comparative standard deviations for male and female students. Figure 3 displays the difference visually.

Table 6. Student Responses to Differential Scale Items by Gender

Gender	% (n)	Mean	SD
Male	58% (n = 54)	4.7	0.071
Female	42% (n = 39)	4.3	0.212



Discussion

Overall, the findings provide insights for instructors interested in improving their students' collaborative experiences. Some of the information elicited from the students' responses clearly parallels the often addressed negative feelings students have about participating in group projects. However, the most significant finding – that group projects matter to students – demonstrates that students' attitudes about group work can change. This finding provides an excellent starting point for instructors who want to encourage positive group experiences in their classrooms and increased collaborative skills for their students. Pre-group instructional methods can encourage students to embrace the idea that collaborative experiences are helpful to their personal and professional development and can set the stage for positive perceptions of group work in general. This findings support the previously described research of Holmer (2001) and Ettington and Camp (2002).

The students who received pre-group instruction valued the collaboration experience more than the control group; therefore, the pre-group instruction had an effect. The question becomes how the pre-group instruction could have been more significant. Potentially, it could have had more of an effect if the instruction was emphasized throughout the semester. If students are exposed to group dynamics, effective communication, and personality styles throughout the semester in the form of mini-projects leading up to a larger, more comprehensive project, they may realize that group work is important and that it can be a positive learning experience.

When preparing for class and exams, students may label as "important and meaningful" only those class experiences in which relatively large amounts of time were spent. Therefore, more emphasis on collaborative efforts (especially in business courses) is crucial. Mini-projects could include, but are not

limited to, group work in class (cases, debates, etc.), short-term out-of-class assignments/projects, and weekly tasks to be handled by groups that work together throughout the semester. In such instances, the mini-projects may be completed with group members who work together for the end-of-semester group projects. Students would then have several instances to experience and manage group dynamics. In essence, more opportunities to engage in collaborative efforts in the classroom could foster those desired corporate skills of interacting efficiently and collaborating effectively with coworkers.

To provide pre-group instruction that both facilitates students' increased collaborative skills as well as enhances students' perceptions of the group experience, instructors are encouraged to establish pre-group instruction methods early in the course and practice group dynamics, effective communication strategies, and issues related to personality styles throughout the course through mini-projects before assessing students' large-scale collaborative work. If necessary, faculty members should seek faculty development opportunities in group project instruction to give students the best chance at success and positive collaborative experiences.

Teaching Resources

As students individually and collectively become better versed in collaborative skills, they should be less likely to prefer to work alone. Their experiences of teamwork as an effective and efficient work process should encourage them perceive collaboration as a necessary skill for their future success. In combination with pre-group instructional practices, an awareness of teaching resources will help instructors integrate positive collaborative experiences in the classrooms. The following resources can help instructors stay abreast of additional collaborative research:

- The Free Management Library offers updated content and learning strategies related to group development, theoretical models, and team building exercises (http://www.managementhelp.org/grp_skll/theory/theory.htm).
- The University of California at Berkeley sponsors the Teaching Guide. Although this resource was originally developed for graduate student instructors, the information provided about facilitating group work in discussion sessions includes examples of many proven instructional strategies (http://gsi.berkeley.edu/resources/discussion/groupwork.html).
- Several online sites provide rubrics for collaborative work. Examples include, but are not limited to, San Diego State University's Collaborative Rubric available at http://edweb.sdsu.edu/triton/tidepoolunit/Rubrics/collrubric.html, the Louisiana Voices Educator Guide's Rubric for Collaborative Group Fieldwork Research available at http://www.louisianavoices.org/Unit9/edu_unit9w_colab_group_fie.html), and the RubiStar Collaborative Work Skills Rubric available at http://www.eiu.edu/~readctr/800WebQuests/Clappweb/Group%20Work%20Rubric.htm. Instructors are encouraged to modify these examples as needed to best fit their assigned collaborative projects, align with their learning objectives, and meet the needs of their students.

Future Research

The need to develop students' collaboration skills is increasingly important to ensure their competitiveness in this dynamic, ever-changing business environment that requires effective group work (both in person and via teleconference). To that end, educators must be thoughtful and creative in their approaches to prepare students and in their search for techniques. Given that significance was found with regard to pre-group instruction, the remaining results of the study should be interpreted with the following limitation in mind: The study was based on four classes in one semester at a single institution. Replicating the study with a larger sample and over several semesters would shed additional light on the best practices for preparing students for effective team projects leading to improved collaborative skills.

Another interesting direction for research is a longitudinal study examining freshmen's perceptions prior to participating in collegiate group work and tracking their perceptions throughout their undergraduate experience. Such a study may allow the observance of the effects of pre-instruction prior to students' views becoming jaded from previous group experiences. These students could be surveyed at different times during their college years. Comparison studies are also a possibility as these students could be compared to students who do not receive pre-group instruction.

In conclusion, this study may provide the foundation for more purposive faculty development opportunities relating to pre-group instructional methods that support successful collaborative projects. Faculty are encouraged to gauge their students' current collaborative skills, provide pre-group activities that will support and enhance assigned group work, and monitor students' progress throughout assigned projects. Both faculty and their students will ultimately benefit by being better prepared to support collaborative experiences and participate as effective team members.

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Appendix

GROUP PROJECT SURVEY

Directions: For items 1 - 10, identify how you feel about group projects in your classes by circling the number that best indicates your level of importance and interest.

1.	Important	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ unimportant
2.	irrelevant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ relevant
3.	means a lot to me	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ means nothing to me
4.	unexciting	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ exciting
5.	dull	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ neat
6.	matters to me	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ doesn't matter
7.	fun	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ not fun
8.	appealing	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ unappealing
9.	boring	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ interesting
10.	of no concern	___	___	___	___	___	___	___ of concern to me

Based on your most recent group project experience, answer the following questions by circling the number that best represents your level of agreement:	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
11. Group projects are helpful to my learning and grades.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Group projects are not a valuable to my education.	1	2	3	4	5
13. My general opinion of groups is unfavorable.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Overall, I consider group projects a good experience.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for providing the following demographic information:

15. Major (please print neatly): _____

16. Classification (circle one): Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

17. Gender (circle one): Male Female

18. Race/ethnicity (circle one): Black White Asian Other

19. Number of People in Your Current Group: _____

Thank you for your time!