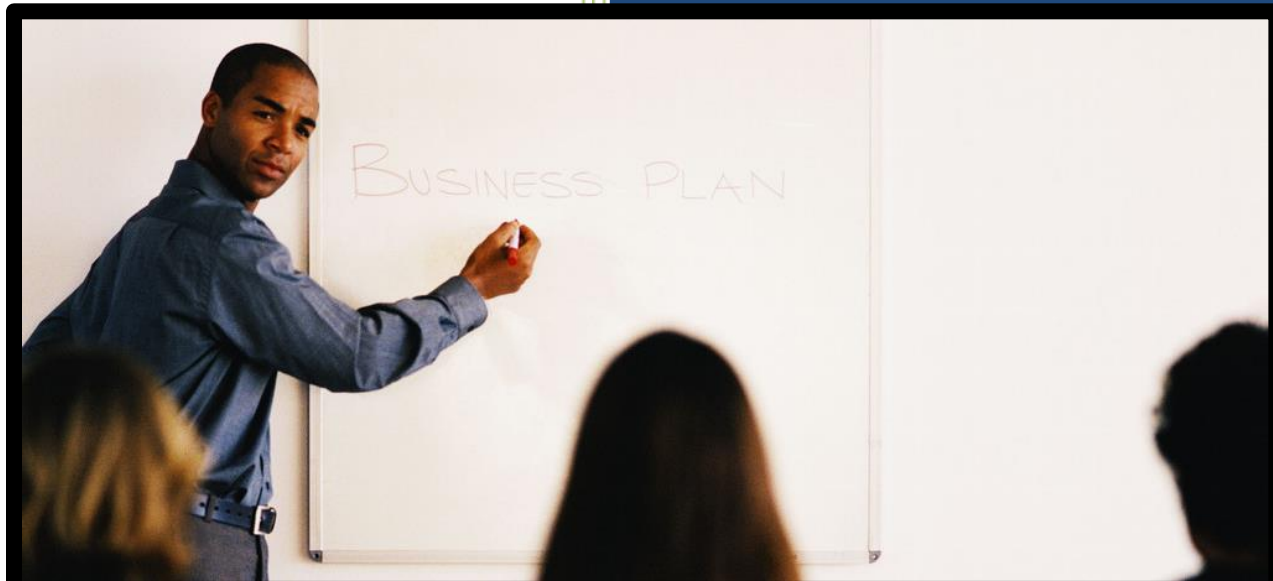


2017 Business Education Research Conference



ARBE-DPE Association for Research in Business Education—
Delta Pi Epsilon

NABTE National Association for Business Teacher Education
Institutional Division of the National Business Education Association

NBEA National Business Education Association
Educating for Success in Business and Life

**Chicago,
ILLINOIS
April 11-April 15, 2017**

Table of Contents

Title/Author	Page No.
Creating an Instructional Framework to Prepare Teacher Education Candidates for Success on a Performance-Based Assessment—A Follow-Up Study <i>Tamara S. Davis</i> <i>Illinois State University, Normal, IL</i>	2
Perceptions of College/School of Business Faculty Involving the Content and Scope of a Business Communications Class and Self-Efficacy to Evaluate Business Communications Skills of Students: A Pilot Study <i>Tamra S. Davis</i> <i>Illinois State University, Normal, IL</i> <i>K. Virginia Hemby</i> <i>Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN</i>	4
Undergraduate Business School Perceptions of Teaching Presence in Online Business Courses <i>Lacey Finley</i> <i>Missouri Southern State University, Shawnee, KS</i>	6
Technology, Presence, and Learning in Online Business Courses <i>Thomas A. Mays</i> <i>Miami University Regionals, Middletown, OH</i>	11
Designing Discussion Forums to Enhance Cognitive Presence in an Online Entrepreneurship Course <i>Thomas A. Mays</i> <i>Miami University Regionals, Middletown, OH</i>	15
A Comparative Study of Professional Requirements for Career and Technical Education Cooperative Education Program Coordinators in Secondary Schools in the United States <i>Kathy J. Mountjoy</i> <i>Illinois State University, Bloomington, IL</i>	20
Reinvigorating Business Education <i>Marcel M. Robles</i> <i>Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY</i>	22
Core and Noncore Teachers: Perceptions Concerning Application of Student-Centered-Learning Instructional Strategies <i>Lindsay Rock</i> <i>The University of Georgia, Athens, GA</i>	24

Elaine Adams
The University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Employability Skills with Purpose: Service-Learning in Graduate Business Education 28

Molly J. Wickam
Bethel University, St. Paul, MN

CREATING AN INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK TO PREPARE TEACHER EDUCATION CANDIDATES FOR SUCCESS ON A PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT— A FOLLOW-UP STUDY

TAMRA S. DAVIS
ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY, Normal, IL

Keywords: edTPA, Performance-based assessment, teacher education, teacher performance assessment

Background: The current study is a follow-up to a previously published study that analyzed student data as a basis for creating an instructional framework to prepare teacher education candidates for success on a performance-based assessment. In the original study, all students were participating in the performance-based study although passing the assessment was not consequential to obtaining a teaching license in one mid-western state. This study examined the performance of the first group of students required to pass the assessment for a teaching license. In addition to analyzing overall data, the researcher analyzed 15 data points and compared the results with the instructional framework created from the first study.

Purpose: The research question examined whether the instructional framework implemented in the pilot study affected the performance of the first group of teacher education candidates who had consequential implications based upon their performance on the assessment. In addition, the study drilled down into the 15 data points to determine if additional modifications would be required to the instructional framework.

Research Design: The study methodology utilized Comparative, ex post facto deductive data analysis to determine the effects of differing instructional frameworks on candidate performance. The researcher acknowledges that it is not possible to establish a causal relationship in this study.

Data Collection Procedures and Analysis: The study compared three groups of teacher education candidates. Group 1 candidates completed the performance-based assessment during the spring 2014 and fall 2014. Group 2 completed the assessment during the spring 2015. Group 3 completed the assessment during the spring 2016. All teacher education candidates in the business education program were included in the study. The mean assessment score and 15 individual data point scores were compared for all candidates to determine if differences occurred.

Findings: It was determined that the changes in the instructional framework may contributed to the increases in final scores on the performance-based assessment. After the original study, changes were implemented into the junior- and senior-level classes. After reviewing the individual data points, it was determined additional changes were needed in three specific areas within the teaching methodology classes. Additional instruction was added to included questioning techniques to

deepen student learning, ways to help the candidates recognize why they selected instructional strategies and justify the use of the strategies and assessments, and practice in analyzing personal teaching effectiveness as it relates to the individual needs of students. By completing an in-depth analysis of the performance-based assessment and the instructional framework of the teaching methodology courses, instruction for teacher education candidates was altered to focus on specific skills needed by current teachers.

Conclusions/Recommendations: Recommendations based upon this study include the following:

Teacher education faculty should (1) require students to practice the skills of teaching, (2) require teacher education candidates and student teachers to review all stages of lesson planning, instruction, and assessment in order to analyze and justify each step of the teaching process based upon the individual student needs of their classes.

PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE/SCHOOL OF BUSINESS FACULTY INVOLVING THE CONTENT AND SCOPE OF A BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS CLASS AND SELF-EFFICACY TO EVALUATE BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS OF STUDENTS: A PILOT STUDY

TAMRA S. DAVIS
ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY, Normal, IL

VIRGINIA HEMBY
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, Murfreesboro, TN

Keywords: Business communication, faculty self-efficacy, writing across the curriculum

Background: Based on a review of business communication literature and an examination of the curricular requirements of multiple colleges and schools of business, the researchers determined that business communications lacks identity within the university system. This study examined perceptions of business faculty within colleges and schools of business that are AACSB accredited and institutional members of NABTE to determine what they knew about the business communications course within their programs, the content of business communications, the desired content of business communications, and the faculty member's self-efficacy to teach writing to students.

Purpose: The researchers examined two questions as part of this study.

1. What are the faculty perceptions of what is taught in a business communication course?
2. How do faculty rate their personal self-efficacy to evaluate written work?

Research Design: The study utilized survey research methodology. The survey included a mixture of ranking and open-ended questions. Seven institutions were included in the original round of surveys.

Data Collection Procedures and Analysis: The study was limited to institutions with AACSB accreditation and an affiliation with NABTE. The surveys were sent to all faculty with a valid e-mail address found on the institutions' public website.

- 1,149 surveys were sent
- 31 surveys were returned for invalid e-mail addresses
- 5 faculty contacted the researchers and declined to participate
- 7 surveys were rejected because the participant indicated that he/she was not housed in a college or school of business
- 110 surveys were completed (response rate of 9.9%)

The researchers acknowledge that the low response rate introduces response bias into the results and that the findings of this pilot study cannot be generalized beyond the sample.

Findings: Although most faculty (90%) indicated that business communication should be required for business majors, the suggested topics within the course varied. The main topics requested include the following:

- Formatting
- Writing for the situation (good news, bad news, persuasive news)
- Grammar
- Presentations (not PowerPoint)
- Knowing your audience
- Summarizing
- Creating business-related materials
- Global communications

However, the faculty indicated that employers are advising that students need Listening/Speaking skills, Writing, Critical Thinking, Networking, Confidence, Negotiation, and Emotional Intelligence. This finding indicated that for this particular group of faculty, we are seeing a mismatch between what *should be* taught and what employers expect of business students' communication skills.

In response to Question 2, faculty members ranked their abilities to grade writing (92%), grammar (86%), and mechanics (82%) as high. However, when asked to complete common tasks from an entry-level business communication class, faculty scores on the questions ranged from a low of 64% to a high of only 88%. This finding indicated that within the group surveyed, a mismatch existed between participants' belief in their self-efficacy and the actual demonstrated skill present.

Conclusions/Recommendations: Due to the low response rate, the researchers recommend that the study be revised and refined. The survey instrument was too long and too broad. The study should be refined and possibly utilize a different data collection strategy such as a focus group or Delphi Study.

UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING PRESENCE IN ONLINE BUSINESS COURSES

LACEY FINLEY

MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY, Shawnee, KS

Keywords: Teaching presence; Business education; Online education; Higher education; Student perceptions

Background:

- Business students are the largest portion of online undergraduate enrollment, with over 25 percent of total online course enrollment (Clinefelter & Aslanian, 2014).
- The impact of Teaching Presence has been studied in higher education at the university level (Baker, 2008; Tabar-Gaul, 2008; Bouras, 2009; Catron, 2012; Feeler, 2012).
- There was a lack of understanding concerning what Business students perceive as good teaching in the online learning environment, particularly in the area of Teaching Presence and the Teaching Presence Components of Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction.
- A deeper examination how undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses was needed to aid in the development of enhanced instructor practices that can ultimately lead to improved student satisfaction and learning outcomes.

Purpose: The purpose of this case study was to explore Teaching Presence in the undergraduate online Business course environment and to

- Address a lack of research on Teaching Presence at the university level on online Business students and Business faculty members
- Contribute to the knowledge base on the three components of Teaching Presence (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction)
- Provide a better understanding of how exemplary Teaching Presence is demonstrated
- Expand knowledge of Teaching Presence in online Business courses at the Research Location

Research Design: This study explored the following three Research Questions:

1. How do undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses?
2. What Teaching Presence components do undergraduate Business students find valuable in online courses?
3. How do exemplary undergraduate online Business course faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence in online instruction?

Case Study

- Captured student voices through in-depth interviews
- Provided a meaningful understanding of the nature and attributes of Teaching Presence through student-nominated faculty interviews, observations, and documentation
 - Using qualitative research methods to study undergraduate Business student's perceptions of Teaching Presence, its components, and how exemplary faculty demonstrated Teaching Presence in online Business courses provided a robust and meaningful understanding of the nature and attributes of Teaching Presence in online Business courses.
 - Student reflected on and made meaningful observations of their courses through the interview process
 - Faculty of exemplary online business courses reflected on and made meaning of the specific attributes of their courses through the research process.

Data Collection Procedures and Analysis: The population for this study consisted of 20 undergraduate Business students and 3 student-nominated Business faculty. Participants included Business students enrolled in online Business courses. Based on the student interviews, the faculty most often nominated by the students as demonstrating effective methods of Teaching Presence in online Business courses served as faculty participants. Interviews of students and faculty were conducted during the Fall 2015 semester.

Data Collection:

- Data gathered from multiple sources
- Semi-structured interviews – Interview protocols were used for student and faculty interviews
 - 1) Documents
 - 2) Course Content
 - 3) Course Materials
- Teaching Evaluations (Student Survey Responses)
- Observation
 - 1) Discussion posts
 - 2) Announcements
 - 3) Recordings

Coding:

- Interviews coded by question within NVivo

- Meticulously focused on the purpose of the study, paying special attention to tying all information back to the research questions
- Themes and categories were broken into “Nodes”
 - Matching comments were coded by Node
- Pattern Coding
- Documents and Observations were organized as “Memos” in NVivo

Findings:

Question 1: Undergraduate Business students perceived online course Teaching Presence most through Direct Instruction. Students perceived prompting student engagement in discussions and encouraging student participation as important elements of the "Discourse Facilitation" theme. Students perceived good course design methods as being important to Teaching Presence.

Direct Instruction

Confirm Understanding

- (1) Students needed to know that their instructor was present and available to answer questions and explain expectations.
- (2) Instructor reassurance through interaction influenced student perceptions of Teaching Presence.
- (3) Instructor-driven communication prompted Teaching Presence.
- (4) Students valued specific assignment feedback.

Discourse Facilitation

Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion

- (1) Teaching Presence was apparent through instructor participation in course discussions and assisted in establishing a positive learning environment.
- (2) Extra support and guidance was provided by instructors in discussion forums.

Question 2: The "Design and Organization" theme was found to be most valuable to undergraduate Business students in the form of designing methods and establishing time parameters. Setting a climate for learning within the "Discourse Facilitation" theme and confirming understanding within the "Direct Instruction" themes were important to students when discussing what Teaching Presence components they found valuable in online Business courses.

Design and Organization

Designing Methods

- (1) Students needed specific learning activity requirement information.
- (2) Video lectures were a valued aspect of “Design and Organization”.
- (3) Clear expectations stated at the course outset were valued by students.

Design and Organization

Establishing Parameters

- (1) A full course schedule was desired on the first day of the course.
 - (2) Instructor reminders and announcements further established time parameters.
- Discourse Facilitation

Setting Climate for Learning

- (1) Students valued facilitation in the form of instructor encouragement and prompting of exploration.

Direct Instruction

Confirm Understanding

- (1) Students wanted a “lifeline” in the form of instructor reassurance to know if they were on the right track or not and to be able to meet the expectations of the required learning activities.
- (2) Feedback fostered student understanding.

Question 3: The major findings were that the "Design and Organization" theme was found to be of the utmost importance to exemplary faculty when discussing the demonstration of Teaching Presence in online Business courses. Within the "Discourse Facilitation" theme, faculty emphasized the importance of drawing in participants and prompting discussion. Confirming understanding was found to be the most important aspect of the "Direct Instruction" theme.

Design and Organization

Establishing Time Parameters

- (1) Exemplary instructors communicated time parameter information frequently and early.

Utilizing Medium Effectively

- (1) Teaching presence can be demonstrated through effective use of the medium.

Direct Instruction

Confirm Understanding

- (1) Instructors that demonstrated a high level of Teaching Presence in online Business courses provided specific feedback.

Discourse Facilitation

Assessing the Efficacy of the Process

- (1) Presenting information in an effective manner assisted students with task management.

Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion

- (1) Exemplary course instructors understood that some students needed specific directives to actively participate.
- (2) Instructors that demonstrated a high level of teaching presence were thoughtful about discussion development to prompt engagement.

Conclusions/Recommendations:

Teaching Presence Model Online Business Course Guidelines:

Design and Organization

Recommendation 1: Provide students with clear learning activity instructions and use consistent course learning activity arrangement throughout the semester.

Recommendation 2: Provide students with integrated video lectures that describe course unit requirements and learning activity instructions.

Recommendation 3: Provide students with a clear, detailed course calendar on the first day of the course. Provide a calendar that is downloadable and can be printed by the student to use as a supplemental resource when they are away from the course.

Discourse Facilitation

Recommendation 1: Serve as an active facilitator in online course discussions.

Recommendation 2: Provide students with well-crafted discussion questions that are based on real-life examples, case study scenarios and discussions that parallel the material being addressed in the course assignments. Offer opportunities to share meaning and create an authentic exchange.

Recommendation 3: Provide students with a supplementary discussion forum to address questions and seek guidance. Let this discussion forum serve as an additional resource for connection.

Recommendation 4: Provide students with specific directives regarding how to participate in course discussions in order to prompt engagement and keep students on task.

Direct Instruction

Recommendation 1: Provide a responsive, multifaceted approach to instructor-student interaction.

Recommendation 2: Actively prompt student-instructor interaction. Students voiced their gratefulness of instructors that sought out opportunities to reinforce student understanding and encouraged questions to confirm understanding,

Recommendation 3: Identify and address student comprehension struggles.

Recommendation 4: Provide students with feedback that guides student understanding of a topic and enables students to move forward in a successful manner.

TECHNOLOGY, PRESENCE, AND LEARNING IN ONLINE BUSINESS COURSES

THOMAS A. MAYS

MIAMI UNIVERSITY REGIONALS, Middletown, OH

Keywords: Online learning, Community of Inquiry, business education, course access technologies

Background: Online learning has changed tremendously over the last few years, specifically with respect to the devices and technologies used to create and access course content. Of concern to the researcher is the quality of the online learning experience measured by the development of teaching, social, and cognitive presence as well as student satisfaction and learning. Also of concern is the influence of the changing technologies used by students to access course content and the potential differences in learning behaviors based on the technology.

Teaching, social, and cognitive presence are a part of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework developed by Garrison et al. (2000). These forms of presence have been found to correlate with a number of academic success factors (See Akyol & Garrison, 2008; Baker, 2010; Boston et al., 2014; Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2014; Richardson & Swan, 2003; and Tu & McLissac, 2010). This study uses the CoI instrument published by Arbaugh et al. (2008) to measure presence. The researcher added items to measure student satisfaction and perceived learning as well as to collect data on technologies students used to access course content.

Purpose: The purpose of this exploratory study is to study the relationships between the three forms of CoI presence and several variables including the technologies used to access the course, student course activity, student satisfaction with the course, and student perceived learning. The problem addressed in this study is student success in online business courses offered by the regional campuses of a Midwestern public university. Several potential phenomena may correlate with success including the degree of presence, technology skills, and the technologies used to access the course. These technology issues should be examined concerning student learning experiences and academic outcomes.

The research questions are as follows:

- What are the relationships between CoI presence measures and student satisfaction, perceived learning, and course access technologies?
- What are the relationships between student course activity, perceived learning, student satisfaction, and course access technologies?

Research Design: The researcher used descriptive and correlational designs for the study. Summary statistics of survey participants' demographic and course access technologies are reported. Community of Inquiry presence variables as well as course satisfaction, perceived learning, course page and forum views, and course access technologies were tested for correlational relationships.

Data Collection Procedures and Analysis: The study was conducted at the regional campuses of a Midwestern public university during the Fall 2015 and Fall 2016 semesters. The sample included nonresidential students enrolled in one of five online business courses. Two surveys were administered. The first survey was distributed during the first week of the semester, and it measured student technology skills and the technologies students planned to use to access the course. These included desktop computer, laptop computer, tablet, and smartphone.

At the end of the semester, students were given a follow-up survey that included the Col survey items in addition to demographic items, perceived learning, course satisfaction, technologies used to access the course, and self-reported improvement in technology skills. Of the 92 students who were invited to participate, 51 students completed both surveys ($n=51$). Additional data was retrieved from the learning management system. This included forum views, forum posts, page views, and number of participations. SPSS was used to provide descriptive statistics and perform Spearman's rank order correlations. The Col survey items were tested for internal consistency, resulting in high Cronbach's alpha scores ($\alpha=.978$, $n=34$).

Findings:

Descriptive statistics

Survey respondents included 11 males and 40 females with a mean age of 30.7 ($SD=11.8$, Range=19-59, $n=51$). The sample also included participants with considerable experience in online courses ($M=9.3$, $SD=2.6$) and high reported comfort with technology on a scale of 1 to 5 ($M=4.1$). Of the survey participants, 62.7% owned personal computers, 25.5% owned Apple computers, 49.0% owned tablets, and 88.2% owned smartphones. Additionally, 100% of participants used the Internet for entertainment, 96.1% for social media, 90.1% for online banking, and 33.3% for online investing.

Correlations

Teaching presence scored a mean of 4.6, social presence a mean of 4.0, and cognitive presence a mean of 4.3 on a scale of 1 to 5. The results are indicative of the existence of all three forms of presence in the studied courses. Spearman's rank-order correlations were performed to determine the relationship between several variables. Significant correlations were found between teaching presence and perceived learning ($r = 0.509$, $p = 0.000$), social presence and perceived learning ($r = 0.250$, $p = 0.000$), and cognitive presence and perceived learning ($r = 0.457$, $p = 0.000$).

Additionally, self-reported improvement in technology skills during the semester correlated with each form of presence, as well as course satisfaction ($r = 0.398$, $p = 0.000$), and perceived learning ($r = 0.673$, $p = 0.000$). Regarding data collected from the LMS, perceived learning correlated with student page views ($r = 0.260$, $p < 0.05$), and forum views ($r = 0.360$, $p < 0.05$). Lastly, the use of a desktop correlated with a number of course pages viewed ($r = 0.301$, $p < 0.05$). In summary, the higher the number of course pages and forum posts viewed, the higher the participants perceived their learning.

Course Access Technologies

At the start of the semester, 37.3% of participants reported they planned to use a desktop computer to access the course, 89.6% a laptop, 11.9% a tablet, and 37.3% a smartphone. At the conclusion of the semester, 38.8% reported using a desktop, 89.6% a laptop, 14.9% a tablet, and 46.3% a smartphone. These results are one of the more interesting findings, that student reported use of all of the available course access technologies was higher than the student's planned use of those technologies at the start of the semester. Overall, students used a greater variety of technologies to access the course than they had planned to use at the beginning of the semester. Specifically, only 6% of participants planned to use three or more device types to access the course. However, at the end of the semester, 22% of participants reported using three or more device types to access the course.

Conclusions/Recommendations: The results indicate that the three forms of presence exist in the studied courses. These presences correlate with several key academic outcomes including course satisfaction, perceived learning, and self-reported improvement in technology skills. In business courses, reinforcing the development of technology skills is imperative. Thus the findings that associate expanded technology use, as well as student reported technology skill development are important as these can translate to marketable job skills.

The finding that students used a broader array of technologies to access the course compared to what they had planned means that instructors and course designers should focus course and learning resource design, specifically that it is accessible as equally as possible across all access device platforms.

Furthermore, the correlation between using a desktop computer to access the course and the higher number of course pages viewed provides an interesting starting point for further research, specifically the relationships between presence, student success, time spent with course material, and the course access device used. Additionally, do students use specific course access technologies for particular course activities?

As access devices, learning management systems, and other online technologies rapidly change, online course developers and instructors must continue to measure how students are accessing and interacting with course material in order to best provide a quality online education.

References

- Akyol, Z., & Garrison, D. R. (2008). The Development of a Community of Inquiry over time in an online course: Understanding the progression and integration of social, cognitive and teaching presence. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 12(3), 3–22. Retrieved from <http://olj.onlinelearningconsortium.org/index.php/jaln/article/view/66>
- Arbaugh, J. B., Cleveland-Innes, M., Diaz, S. R., Garrison, D. R., Ice, P., Richardson, J. C., & Swan, K. P. (2008). Internet and Higher Education Developing a community of inquiry instrument: Testing a measure of the Community of Inquiry

- framework using a multi-institutional sample. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 11(3-4), 133–136.
- Baker, C. (2010). The impact of instructor immediacy and presence for online student affective learning, cognition, and motivation. *The Journal of Educators Online*, 7(1), 1-30.
- Boston, W., Diaz, S. R., Gibson, A. M., Ice, P., Richardson, J., & Swan, K. (2014). An exploration of the relationship between indicators of the community of inquiry framework and retention in online programs. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 13(3), 67–83.
- Dunlap, J.C., & Lowenthal, P.R. (2014). The power of presence: Our quest for the right mix of social presence in online courses. In A.P. Mizell & A. A. Piña (Eds.) *Real life distance education: Case studies in practice*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (2000). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2(2-3): 87-105.
- Price, K., & Baker, S. N. (2012). Measuring Students' Engagement on College Campuses: Is the NSSE an Appropriate Measure of Adult Students' Engagement? *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 60(July 2015), 20–32.
- Richardson, J. C., & Swan, K. (2003). Examining social presence in online courses in relation to students' perceived learning and satisfaction. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Network*, 7(1), 68–88.
- Tu, C. H., & McIssac, M. S. (2002). An examination of social presence to increase interaction in online classes. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 16(2), 131-150.

DESIGNING DISCUSSION FORUMS TO ENHANCE COGNITIVE PRESENCE IN AN ONLINE ENTREPRENEURSHIP COURSE

THOMAS A. MAYS

Miami University Regionals, Middletown, OH

Keywords: Online learning, Community of Inquiry, discussion forums, instructional design

Background: While discussion forums are often used to increase engagement and presence in online courses, poor design and facilitation can lead to less than desired results (DeNoyelles et al., 2014). Furthermore, students can treat discussion forums as mechanical and prescribed, resulting in less presence and a lack of community in online classrooms (Mays, 2016). Since research suggests that higher levels of presence in online courses correlate with academic success factors (Akyol & Garrison, 2008; Baker, 2010; Boston et al., 2009; Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2014), further study in the design and facilitation of discussion forums is needed, specifically in business courses as communicating in asynchronous online environments is a key 21st century skill.

A common approach to discussion forums is the structured approach that involves a prompt, response, and reply. This approach can lead to students submitting forum posts that lack substance (Darabi et al. 2011). To address this, the author developed a discussion forum design tool based on the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework. The framework includes three forms of presence: social, teaching, and cognitive (Garrison et al., 2000). The tool was used to develop forums in an undergraduate entrepreneurship course.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to apply an instructional design tool used for developing discussion forums in an upper-level undergraduate entrepreneurship course. Many students have the expectation that online learning is an individualized activity. Additionally, some students often describe discussion forums as mechanical or prescribed (Mays, 2016). This could be due in part to how forums are structured and executed. Darabi et al. (2011) note that a common problem in discussion forums is that they often follow a structured approach involving a prompt, response, and reply. This can lead to shallow learning and a lack of cognitive presence.

As described by Garrison et al. (2000), cognitive presence involves four phases: trigger, exploration, integration, and resolution. An outcome of the discussion forum design tool is to create multiple interactions as well as encourage and support students through all four phases of cognitive presence. This process can be iterative as, for example, students may move between the exploration and integration, or the integration and resolution phases. Relying on peers and the instructor can help the student through the process, creating what Darabi et al. (2011) describe as a scaffolded forum design.

Research Design: The researcher used a descriptive research design as well as qualitative content analysis of the course discussion forums.

Data Collection Procedures and Analysis: The discussion forum design tool was used to develop forums for an online upper-level entrepreneurship course offered by the regional campuses of a Midwestern public university. Of the 14 weekly forums in the course, eight were developed using the tool. At the end of the Fall 2016 semester, students enrolled in the course for each semester were invited to complete the Col survey developed by Arbaugh et al. (2008). The instrument also included items on participant discussion forum experiences, course satisfaction, and perceived learning. Nine students out of a total of the 14 enrolled in the course participated in the study (n=9).

Descriptive statistics and correlations from the survey data are reported. Relationships were tested using Pearson's rank order correlations in SPSS. Additionally, content analysis was completed to determine if student forum posts met any of the cognitive presence phases. An approach similar to Darabi et al.'s (2011) content analysis process based on Park's (2009) cognitive presence rubric was used. Park's (2009) rubric includes 16 items for determining the phases of cognitive presence.

Findings: The discussion forum design tool integrates a scaffolding approach to discussion forum design. According to Darabi et al. (2011), the scaffolding approach involves multiple phases or layers in the discussion process, and it includes instructor and/or peer interaction through the use of comments, critiques, and follow-up questions. This compares to the traditionally structured forum that follows a forum response and reply format. The design tool emphasizes iteration of the exploration and integration phases that is supported through providing specific instructions and guidance to students.

The following is a simple example of how the tool can organize discussion forum activities based on each phase of cognitive presence. The tool utilizes a grid format appropriate for planning purposes.

- **Forum Purpose:** Create a hiring philosophy for your business
 - **Trigger:** Read example philosophies and post your own.
 - **Exploration:** Read philosophies posted by other students.
 - **Integration:** Find at least two things in the other student posts that will improve or enhance your philosophy. Reply to that student with what you are borrowing and why.
 - **Resolution:** Post a revised philosophy, citing the student from whom who borrowed.

The forums created using the design tool had an average of 34.8 replies compared to 24.4 replies in the other forums. Additionally, the forums created using the design tool had an average of 112.5 words per post compared to 67.0 words per post for the other forums. The replies included multiple interactions among the students.

The content analysis showed that the quality and depth of student responses was high, and in most cases reflected most or all phases of cognitive presence. Using Park's (2009) 16-item rubric, evidence of cognitive presence in the phases of exploration, integration, and resolution were higher in the forums that were designed

using the tool. Evidence of the exploration phases included student use of personal narration and stating opinions. Evidence of the integration phase included supported agreement or disagreement statements, and augmentation on existing student statements. Evidence of the resolution phase included thought experiments, summaries, and applications of material learned in the forum.

The Col survey results show that cognitive presence scored high (4.5 on a 5.0 scale). Furthermore, all five items on the survey that ask about specific discussion forum experiences scored above 4.0 on a 5.0 scale. With a score of 4.8 out of 5.0, the highest rated survey item pertaining to discussion forums was “The instructor helped to focus discussion on relevant issues in a way that helped me to learn.” Student feedback on the open-ended survey item was positive, with students commenting that the forums were beneficial in their understanding of the material as well as helpful in connecting with both the instructor and peers.

Regarding the design process, the author found that the tool was helpful in the forum design process by helping keep focus on each phase of cognitive presence was addressed. The tool also helped to ensure that both peer and instructor engagement was present in the forum.

Conclusions/Recommendations: The focus on cognitive presence in discussion forum design appears to have led to positive student experiences. With the use of scaffolded forums specifically focused on developing cognitive presence, a stronger form of classroom community seems to have developed in part due to enhanced student engagement. The results of the Col survey as well as the completed content analysis may confirm these initial observations.

Another issue that the design tool can help address is the lack of authentic interaction among students. Instead of asking students to reply to other students' posts directly, a specific task is given to students to complete while reviewing and responding to others' posts. This also serves as a method to support scaffolding in the forum.

The discussion forum design tool should be further tested in other business courses. In the studied course, the balance of the discussion forums will be redesigned using the tool and tested during the next course iteration.

References

- Akyol, Z. & Garrison, D. R. (2008). The development of a community of inquiry over time in an online course: Understanding the progression and integration of social, cognitive, and teaching presence. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 12(3-4), 3-22.
- Baker, C. (2010). The impact of instructor immediacy and presence for online student affective learning, cognition, and motivation. *The Journal of Educators Online*, 7(1), 1-30.
- Boston, W., Diaz, S., Gibson, A., Ice, P., Richardson, J., & Swan, K. (2009). An exploration of the relationship between indicators of the community of inquiry

- framework and retention in online programs. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 13(3), 67-83.
- Darabi, A., Arrastia, M. C., Nelson, D. W., Cornille, T., & Liang, X. (2011). Cognitive presence in asynchronous online learning: A comparison of four discussion strategies. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 27(3), 216–227.
- DeNoyelles, A., Zydney, J., & Chen, B. (2014). Strategies for Creating a Community of Inquiry through Online Asynchronous Discussions. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 10(1), 153–165.
- Dunlap, J. & Lowenthal, P. (2014). The power of presence: Our quest for the right mix of social presence in online courses. In A. Pina & A. Mizell (Eds.), *Real life distance education: Case studies in practice*. Charlotte: Information Age Publishing.
- Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (2000). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2(2-3): 87-105.
- Mays, T. (2016). Social Capital in online Courses. *Mid-Western Educational Researcher*, 28(2), 162-186
- Park, C. L. (2009). Replicating the Use of a Cognitive Presence Measurement Tool. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning*, 8(2), 140–155. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=EJ938826>

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM COORDINATORS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES

KATHY J. MOUNTJOY
ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY, Bloomington, IL

Keywords: Career and Technical education; Cooperative education program coordinators; Professional requirements for cooperative education teacher-coordinator

Background: At the center of all cooperative education programs is the teacher-coordinator. That person performs a multitude of duties and has the responsibility of ensuring the safety and well-being of the students. Some of the duties of the teacher-coordinator include developing curriculum and course materials, keeping up-to-date on labor and wage regulations and laws, recruiting, placing and evaluating students, and acting as a liaison between employers and the school. Because individual states are responsible for educating their citizens, teacher licensure requirements vary among the states.

Purpose: The objective of this study was to determine the requirements for becoming a cooperative education teacher-coordinator in secondary career and technical education programs in the United States.

Research Design: A qualitative research method was chosen for this study. Specifically, a case study was used in order to examine the similarities and differences in state requirements for becoming a teacher-coordinator in the field of career and technical education in secondary schools in the United States. The specific research questions were as follows:

1. How many states have cooperative education programs in secondary schools?
2. What is the job title of the person who is coordinating the cooperative education program in the secondary schools in each state?
3. Is the teacher-coordinator required to have prior teaching experience?
4. Is the teacher-coordinator required to have non-teaching work experience?
5. Is the teacher-coordinator required to complete college coursework related to cooperative education?
6. What type of license, endorsement, or credential is required to be a cooperative education teacher-coordinator?

Findings: Most states require that the cooperative education coordinator be a certified classroom teacher. However, two states also allow guidance counselors to coordinate cooperative education programs. In addition to having a teaching license, some states require an additional credential, endorsement, or certificate as part of the requirements to be qualified as a cooperative education teacher-coordinator. Other states do not require any additional credentials or endorsements. Some states also require specific college coursework be completed in order to be qualified as a teacher-coordinator. Seven states require the teacher-coordinator to have prior

classroom teaching experience. Twenty-one states require completion of non-teaching work experience—work experience outside of education that is directly related to teaching field. The number of work-experience hours required varies by state and ranges from 40 to 4,000.

Conclusions/Recommendations: Considerable variation in the professional requirements to coordinate a cooperative education program was present. One of the most pressing concerns is the legal issues associated with cooperative education. Both state and federal laws and guidelines on child labor exist, and a teacher-coordinator must be well versed in this area. Policies, rules, and regulations that are officially adopted by state boards of education and by local boards of education have the same effect on cooperative education operations as do the federal, state, and local laws. All of these have been established to ensure the well-being and safety of teenagers. Cooperative education teacher-coordinators have a moral and professional responsibility to know these laws and the special provisions that apply to the employment of young people. A teacher-coordinator who has not completed any coursework in the area of coordinating a cooperative education program may not be aware of the specific laws associated with child labor. Not only could this be dangerous for the students in the cooperative education program but it could also cause legal problems for the teacher-coordinator, the school, and the district. Cooperative education in secondary schools in the United States has been a part of the secondary education curriculum for a little over a hundred years. The constant has been the role of the teacher-coordinator and the responsibilities involved in coordinating a program that provides value-added learning experiences for students. Having such a smorgasbord of professional requirements for cooperative education teacher-coordinators signals a need for recommendations and guidance from a professional organization.

REINVIGORATING BUSINESS EDUCATION

MARCEL M. ROBLES
EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY, Richmond, KY

Keywords: business education programs, curriculum, business colleges, schools of business, teaching methods, business education teaching

Background: Current K-12 education does not lay the groundwork for students to be able to succeed in future collegiate business education programs. As a result of this lack of preparation, business colleges are receiving fewer applicants than in previous years and are graduating a smaller proportion of students once they are enrolled in the business education program. Students are no longer motivated by general business education and are seeking more specialized degrees. Business education curriculum must be adapted for the needs of the business world as well as the educational institution.

Purpose: Business educators at all levels should equip themselves with versatility, diversity, and benchmarks of proven practices to drive a healthy, and perhaps flourishing, business education curriculum. This presentation focuses on successful methods in teaching business education that encompasses real examples and active application to spark student interest as well as to prepare them for the future.

Business research can help with business lesson plans, instructional strategies, and business education programs. Equipping oneself with versatility, diversity, and benchmarks of proven practices drive a successful business education curriculum.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What methods are appropriate in business education teaching and research?
2. How can these methods be applied to teaching students at all K-16 levels?

Research Design: Both secondary and primary research are being conducted. A literature review and questionnaire of business education instructors is in process.

Data Collection Procedures and Analysis: A massive literature review is under scrutiny regarding the evolution of business education and today's status of the discipline.

Additionally, professors of business education courses are being surveyed regarding their perspectives of the reality of the field today versus the ideals of business education programs, curriculum, and instruction. The completed paper is still a work-in-progress so findings and conclusions are limited at this time. The completed paper should be finished by December.

Findings: Research-In-Progress (findings thus far): Business education has and always will be in a constant state of evolution. Higher education institutions across the nation have the obligation to provide students with a comprehensive learning experience where they learn the foundational skills of the business world, as well as the emerging trends that are helping to shape the industry for the future. However, the responsibility of setting students up for success does not just fall to higher education.

Business education now holds a fraction of its former prestige. Business education teachers must try efficient methods of teaching business concepts, while considering the future career paths of students. Using several methods that increase the effectiveness of various learning styles, real-world decision-making, problem-based scenarios, and ethical behaviors will help business education thrive. For example, students must be educated on how to use current and emerging technology so that they are capable of understanding the technological evolutions of the future. The importance of primary and secondary education plays a significant role in making these changes possible.

Conclusions/Recommendations: Research-In-Progress (some conclusions foreseen thus far): In order to reinvigorate the field, an investment must be made in all levels of education, from primary and secondary to post-secondary instruction. Students who are exposed to business education at an early age are more likely to be capable in their later years and more eager to pursue business education in the future. Continuous learning must be instilled in both students and faculty so that they stay abreast of the field. Most of all, a teacher must realize that he or she has the strength and control in the classroom to ensure that every student grows in their own way.

Each of the teaching methods described in the completed paper will be applicable for elementary, middle, high school, and college educational systems.

CORE AND NONCORE TEACHERS: PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING APPLICATION OF STUDENT-CENTERED-LEARNING INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

LINDSAY ROCK

The University of Georgia, Athens, GA

ELAINE ADAMS

The University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Keywords: Student-Centered Learning Instructional Strategies; Instructional Strategies; High School Teachers; Perception; Core Teachers (English Language Arts and Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies); Non-Core Teachers (Fine Arts, Health Education, Physical Education, Modern Languages and Latin, and Career Technical Education)

Background: Society and the economy are becoming more global. Both are overloaded with information, knowledge, and skills that must be learned and then relearned quickly as things change (Afterschool Alliance, 2011; Belton & Scott, 1998; Jobs for the Future, 2012). Day (1998) stated that “learning in the twenty-first century [is] a requirement” (p. 420). In addition, people must become more “self-reliant in the process of learning” (Belton & Scott, 1998, p. 900). People should not depend only on education and formal schooling to acquire new knowledge and skills for their daily and work-related lives, but should know how to learn. People should have the ability to acquire new knowledge and skills through self-taught methods (Afterschool Alliance, 2011; Goldberg, Traiman, Molnar, & Stevens, 2001). Faced with a rapidly changing world and the need for lifelong learning, teachers are in a position to help learners become more independent in how they learn (Jobs for the Future, 2012; Raya & Fernandez, 2002; Smart, Witt, & Scott, 2012). Today’s fast-paced world requires teachers to employ student-centered learning instructional strategies.

Purpose: Educational philosophers like Dewey, Rogers, Piaget, Knowles, and Froebel have contributed to professional thought surrounding student-centered-learning instructional strategies (McDonald, 2012). This study’s purpose was to determine high school teachers’ perceptions of their application of student-centered-learning instructional strategies. Theory of reasoned action was used to support and guide research (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

Independent variables were gender (man or woman), primary subject area (core subjects: English Language Arts and Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies or non-core subjects: Fine Arts, Health Education, Physical Education, Modern Languages and Latin, and Career Technical Education), and education level (undergraduate or graduate degree). Dependent variable was high school teachers’ perceptions of their application of student-centered-learning instructional strategies. Teachers’ perceptions of their application of student-centered-learning instructional strategies was defined as beliefs and behaviors teachers have about their own use of instructional strategies that support the tenets of student-centered learning (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Andrews & Brown, 2015; Merç, 2015).

Questions addressed in this survey research study included the following:

1. What are the perceptions of high school teachers concerning their application of student-centered-learning instructional strategies?
2. Is there statistically significant differences in the perceptions of high school teachers concerning their application of student-centered-learning instructional strategies based on gender, primary subject area, and education level?
3. What are the correlations between teachers' perceptions of their application of student-centered-learning instructional strategies and perceived school administration and fellow teachers' support of these same strategies?

Research Design: A convenience sample including all high school teachers in 13 public school districts in a southern state was used in this survey research. An original survey was developed. Cronbach alpha for the overall instrument was .94, which suggested strong reliability and internal consistency.

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, variance, and range) were used to describe high school teachers' perceptions of application of student-centered-learning instructional strategies. One-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) were used to compare teachers' perceptions of application of student-centered-learning instructional strategies based on their gender, primary subject area, and education level. Assumptions (independence, normality, and homogeneity of variance) required for ANOVA analyses to be deemed credible were met. Pearson correlations between teachers' perceptions of their application of student-centered-learning instructional strategies and perceived school administration and fellow teachers' support of these same strategies were obtained to determine strength and direction of relationships. An alpha level of .05 was applied and effect sizes were calculated.

Data Collection Procedures and Analysis: Data collection transpired during one month in spring 2016. A list of 1,030 (768 core and 262 non-core) high school teachers' email addresses was compiled from school web sites. The list was used for coding and follow-up purposes. Coding allowed participants to be anonymous; confidentiality was maintained.

All 1,030 teachers on the list were sent an email that invited them to participate in the study. Directions for completion and a link to the survey were provided again (Couper, Traugott, & Lamias, 2001; Dillman, Smith, & Christian, 2009; Wood, Noska, Desmarais, Ross, & Irvine, 2006). Teachers were also sent a consent letter in the initial email. When surveys were completed, participants were identified as respondents. After a one-week and three-week period from when the initial survey email was sent, reminder emails were sent to nonrespondents (Millar & Dillman, 2011). The emails reminded participants that their responses were important in order for this study to be completed. A total of 470 valid responses were returned, yielding a response rate of 45.6%.

Findings: The perception variable had a possible overall score that ranged from 1 to 5. A score of 1 indicated that teachers perceived they apply student-centered-learning instructional strategies 0% of the time or zero times per week, while a score of 5 indicated that teachers' perceived they apply student-centered-learning instructional strategies 100% of the time or four to five times per week. The mean score of 3.36 indicated that teachers perceived that they sometimes (50% of the time or 2-3 times per week) applied student-centered-learning-instructional strategies.

Descriptive statistics were analyzed for each survey statement to determine which strategies teachers perceived they apply in their classrooms. All but statements 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 24, and 27 had a mean score of 3.01 or higher. The mean and standard deviation for each statement will be displayed in a table for conference paper and presentation.

A one-way ANOVA was performed to determine the relationship between gender and teacher perception. For men, the mean was 3.29 and standard deviation was .55. For women, the mean was 3.34 and standard deviation was .52. Results from the ANOVA, $F(1, 468) = 1.24$, $p = .31$, indicated that differences between gender were not significant at $\alpha = .05$.

A one-way ANOVA was performed to determine the relationship between primary subject area and teacher perception. For core teachers, the mean was 3.11 and standard deviation was .49. For noncore teachers, the mean was 3.44 and standard deviation was .49. Results from the ANOVA, $F(1, 468) = 48.517$, $p = .000$, indicated that differences between primary subject area were significant at $\alpha = .05$.

A one-way ANOVA was performed to determine the relationship between education level and teacher perception. For undergraduate degree, the mean was 3.18 and standard deviation was .46. For graduate degree, the mean was 3.18 and standard deviation was .53. Results from the ANOVA, $F(1, 468) = .005$, $p = .944$, indicated that no differences between education level were significant at $\alpha = .05$.

A Pearson correlation was performed to determine the relationship between teachers' perception of their application of student-centered-learning instructional strategies and teachers' perceptions of school administration support of these same strategies. Response data from the two items regarding perception of school administration support were combined to use in this correlation. A statistically significant positive relationship was present at the .01 level ($r = -0.87$, $r^2 = .76$). This indicated strong, positive correlation. This finding of a positive relationship indicated that as teachers' perceptions of school administration support of student-centered-learning instructional strategies increase, teachers' perceptions of application of student-centered-learning instructional strategies also increase.

A Pearson correlation was performed to determine the relationship between teachers' perception of their application of student-centered-learning instructional strategies and teachers' perceptions of fellow teacher support of these same strategies. Response data from the two items regarding perception of fellow teachers' support were combined to use in this correlation. A statistically significant positive relationship was present at the .01 level ($r = 0.26$, $r^2 = .07$). This indicated a weak, positive

correlation. This finding of a positive relationship indicated that as teachers' perceptions of fellow teachers' support of student-centered-learning instructional strategies increase, teachers' perceptions of application of student-centered-learning instructional strategies also increase.

Conclusions/Recommendations: Teachers' daily instructional decisions are based on their beliefs, viewpoints, principles, and opinions of teaching and learning (Merç, 2015; Tarman, 2012). The theory of reasoned action supports the connection between beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. The theory posits a contributory sequence of events where actions come from behavioral intentions. Intentions are consistent with attitudes formed based on accessible beliefs about a behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

This research confirmed findings from previous studies but also uncovered some differences. Consistent findings included

- teachers' perceived level of implementation (Andrews, 2010; Bondie, Gaughran, & Zusho, 2014; Gningue, Peach, & Schroder, 2013; Lawanto, 2011);
- difference between core and noncore teachers (Ripp, 2014; Taylor & Phillips, 2010); and
- positive relationships between teachers' perceptions of their use of student-centered-learning instructional strategies and perceived support from administrators and fellow teachers (Hsieh, Yen, & Kuan, 2014; Omwenga, Nyabero, & Okioma, 2015; Salleh & Laxman, 2015; Talbot & Campbell, 2014).

Findings different from past research findings included differences based on gender (Hayat, Bibi, & Ambreen, 2016; Laird, Garver, & Niskode, 2011) and education (Akbari & Dadvand, 2011; Meeder & Suddreth, 2012; Moore, Jez, Chisholm, & Shulock, 2012; Washbon, 2012).

Recommendations for practice:

1. Teacher education programs should provide courses and practical experiences, along with guidance and feedback, where teachers of all subject areas can learn how to implement student-centered-learning instructional strategies successfully.
2. Professional development opportunities focusing on student-centered-learning instructional strategies should be implemented within local school systems.
3. School administration and fellow teachers should provide support and encouragement to teachers using student-centered-learning instructional strategies

Recommendations for future research:

1. Research that focuses on specific subject areas.
2. Research that examines the influence of years of teaching experience.
3. A qualitative research study that investigates teachers' perceptions and applications of student-centered-learning instructional strategies.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS WITH PURPOSE: SERVICE-LEARNING IN GRADUATE BUSINESS EDUCATION

MOLLY J. WICKAM
BETHEL UNIVERSITY, St. Paul, MN

Keywords: Service-learning; experiential learning; employability skills; MBA; graduate business education; mixed-methods; capstones

Background: Colleges and universities are increasingly asked to align educational programs and their corresponding instructional practices more explicitly with the preparation of graduates who have work place employability skills. John Dewey (1938) believed that genuine learning came through experience; in fact, experience was the starting point of the educational process. Business curriculums typically offer coursework in the various technical functions of business such as marketing, management, accounting, and finance, in anticipation that this knowledge will be useful to students' professional lives and provide needed knowledge and skills to organizations that employ business graduates. In addition to learning the technical aspects of business, many business programs aim to teach employability skills that will be useful at all levels of employment. Overtoom (2000) defined employability skills as, "transferable core skill groups that represent essential functional and enabling knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by the twenty-first century workplace" (p. 1).

Service-learning is increasingly recognized as a legitimate approach to business education, and researchers argue, "the value of direct, unsimulated experience cannot be overlooked" (Zlotkowski, 1996, p. 8). However, although proven outcomes of service-learning exist, service-learning experiences are used less in the business discipline than other instructional methods. For example, in a study of over 864 capstone courses taught at 707 American colleges and universities that offer upper-division courses, when the course was a business management course, the most frequent instructional component of the capstone (84%) was a major project. These projects, for the most part did not involve any real-world experiences such as service-learning or internships (Henscheid, 2000). In addition, research related to how service-learning affects the employability skills of business students is scarce.

Purpose: Service-learning is increasingly recognized as a legitimate approach to business education. When service is connected to course outcomes, it has proven to be a useful experiential pedagogy that helps students deepen their understanding of course content, provided reflection activities are part of the curriculum (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999). The purpose of this research study was to examine the alignment between the employability skills employers need and the employability skills that graduate business students gain through service-learning in business capstones. While the study contained more research questions, the research questions relevant to these conference proceedings are as follows:

RQ1: Are there differences in employability skills developed between MBA students who participate in capstones that include service-learning and comparable MBA students who participate in capstones that do not include service-learning?

Sub-RQ1: Are there differences among various demographic groups in the extent to how their employability skills were enhanced?

RQ2: Which, if any, essential employability skills, as identified by employers, are enhanced by service-learning experiences in business capstones?

RQ3: Which aspects of service-learning experiences contribute to enhanced employability skills in graduate business students?

Research Design: The research design for this study was a non-experimental, comparative, descriptive study. Specifically, it examined outcomes of students' development of employability skills through their participation in service-learning in MBA capstones. In particular, the study assessed whether capstones that include service-learning influence students' development of employability skills in comparison to capstones that do not include service-learning. There were two groups: Group A consisted of alumni or students who completed a capstone in an MBA program that included a service-learning experience, and Group B consisted of alumni or students who completed a capstone in an MBA program that did not include a service-learning experience. Group A provided perceptions of which, if any, employability skills were enhanced by the service-learning component of the capstone. Group B's data provided perceptions of which, if any, employability skills students believed were influenced by their capstone. The methodology was mixed methods, and incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to offer various forms of data to address the research questions (Creswell, 2009).

Data Collection Procedures and Analysis: The population of interest was graduate business students who completed a capstone experience as part of their MBA program. The sample was MBA students or alumni, and participants were sought through professional electronic mailing lists, and Google Groups and LinkedIn Groups that focus on service-learning in higher education or MBA alumni.

The quantitative method was survey research, conducted in 2015. An existing instrument, based on Tanyel et al. (1999), was used to test which, if any, of the essential employability skills that were identified by employers through a literature review, were enhanced by service-learning experiences. The instrument also tested whether there were differences among various demographic groups in the extent to how their employability skills were enhanced by service-learning. There were 79 useable surveys analyzed using frequency distributions, means and standard deviations, t-tests for independent samples, Mann-Whitney U, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Spearman's rho, and ANCOVA. The second instrument was a semi-structured interview protocol, and participants were obtained by asking survey respondents whether they would be interested in being interviewed. Ten agreed to be interviewed, for a 59 percent response rate. Respondents represented three United States MBA programs from the East coast, West coast, and Midwest. The two methods of qualitative data analysis that were used were the constant comparative method and the content analysis method. Data saturation was achieved after the

seventh interview, and three more interviews were then conducted that revealed no new codes.

Findings: On the survey, respondents were asked to indicate the extent that a given list of 19 employability skills was enhanced during their MBA capstone course. Employability skills were measured from 1 (skill was not enhanced) to 7 (skill was greatly enhanced). The three skills reported to be enhanced the most were decision-making (6.71), presentation skills (6.66), and ability to work in teams (6.65). A Mann-Whitney-U test was then performed for those three skills to see if there were differences between students who had service-learning in their capstones from those who did not. Results revealed that there was a significant difference between the two groups for presentation skills ($p=.003$), but not for decision-making ($p=.212$) or the ability to work in teams ($p=.087$).

The 19 employability skills were analyzed to determine if factors were present using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The EFA showed that four factors existed on the scale. A Mann-Whitney-U test showed that one factor, Collaborative Learning, was significant. Collaborative Learning is enhanced for capstone students who have a service-learning experience more than students whose capstone does not include service-learning.

The research question for the qualitative research was as follows:

Which aspects of service-learning experiences contributed to enhanced employability skills in graduate business students?

Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted, and results revealed the following four themes: 1) Structure and Deliverables of Capstone; 2) Opportunities to Make Decisions; 3) Opportunities to Build Teamwork Skills; and 4) Opportunities to Build Presentation Skills. All ten participants had to complete a capstone project for a community-based organization they called their *client*, and the project was centered on a service-learning experience. Projects were summative in nature, used client-based instructional methods, had strong interactions between professor and students, and included both a written report and multiple oral presentations.

Decision-making was a key skill needed to complete the service-learning. As Participant 1 said, "Decision-making was a huge component for nearly every part of our project, from minor decisions to major ones, individual decisions, group decisions". While participants said some decisions were individual decisions, they agreed that decision-making was team-based and collaborative.

Decision-making is related to teamwork, because working as a small team was a course requirement, and decisions were primarily made collaboratively. The theme Opportunities to Build Teamwork Skills revealed that students progressed through Tuckman's (1965) stages of group development: forming, storming, norming and performing. Teams were able to perform when they shared characteristics of strong team communication, team accountability and a clear definition of roles. Teams recognized the need to hold each other accountable in order to progress and finish their projects.

Presentation skills were a valued skill in the service-learning project. In most teams, everyone participated in working with presentation software, and this helped build teamwork skills. In addition, many participants saw the presentation given to their classmates and professor as the practice for the *real* presentation to their client. The primary benefit of the practice presentations was the feedback given to the presenting team by the class and professor. LaFasto and Larson (2001) found that the ability to give and receive constructive feedback from team members is a key reason why teams succeed or fail.

Conclusions/Recommendations: Administrators and faculty responsible for aligning service-learning curriculum with institutional needs, as well as managers who employ business graduates can be helped by the findings of this study. Colleges and universities have been blamed for failing to educate the future workforce with the skills most needed by employers, and many employers state that graduates are not prepared for the workforce (Tetreault, 1997; Brown, et al., 2003). This study showed there is alignment in the collaborative learning skills needed by employers and those enhanced through service-learning experiences in graduate business capstones, and this should be welcome news to employers. Collaborative learning, according to this study, includes these skills: ability to work in teams; interpersonal; oral communications; persuasive ability; presentation; project management; and, responsibility.

The instructor's role in structuring service-learning experiences in a client-based business capstone course is important. Instructors must consider decisions about whether projects will be team or individual-based, how teams will be chosen, who will find the clients, and how the deliverables will be presented and assessed. Lack of attention to these factors may not lead to successful outcomes for students and/or clients. In addition, since team-based projects can lead to team conflict, students need guidance on how to resolve conflicts. Faculty should not assume that students know how to manage and resolve team conflict; these skills must be taught. Teaching conflict resolution skills would not only help teams be more successful in their project tasks, but may better prepare them to manage workplace conflicts.

The skill of decision-making is enhanced because of service-learning experiences. This is important because employers value the skill of decision-making ("National Association of Colleges," 2014). Instructors should consider teaching various ways of making decisions, such as decision-making by consensus, Robert's Rules of Order or other formal methods of voting on decisions.

References

- Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (1999). Reflection in service-learning: Making meaning of experience. *Educational Horizons*, 179-185.
- Brown, P., Hesketh, A., & Williams, S. (2003). Employability in a knowledge-driven economy. *Journal of Education and Work*, 16(2), 107-126. doi: 10.1080/1363908032000070648.

- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Henscheid, J.M. (2000). *Professing the disciplines: An analysis of senior seminars and capstone courses* (Monograph No. 30). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.
- LaFasto, F., & Larson, C. (2001). *When teams work best: 6,000 team members and leaders tell what it takes to succeed*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- National Association of Colleges and Employers. (2014). *Job outlook 2015*. Bethlehem, PA: National Association of Colleges and Employers.
- Overtoom, C. (2000). *Employability skills: An update*. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Career and Vocational Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED445236).
- Tanyel, F., Mitchell, M.A., & McAlum, H.G. (1999). The skill set for success of new business school graduates: Do prospective employers and university faculty agree? *Journal of Education for Business*, 33-37.
- Tetreault, P. (1997). Preparing students for work. *Adult Learning* 8(4), 8-14.
- Tuckman, B. W. (1965). Developmental sequences in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63, 384-399.
- Zlotkowski, E. (1996, January). Opportunity for all: Linking service-learning and business education. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 15(1), 5-19.