The Experiential Classroom: Challenges of Addressing the Millennial Generation as they Prepare for the Modern Day Workforce

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Challenges of Addressing the Millennial Generation as they Prepare for the Modern Day Workforce
Let’s begin with a bit of history. It’s nice to know from whence we have come.
A Bit of History

- Fall of 2010 Russ Kershaw joined the Byrum School
  - He shared the subject of a book he read that academic disciples, including business, does not translate well to the workforce
  - He said that most business curricula is the same.
- Businesses are not particularly pleased with the product of the business schools. The graduates know the pieces and parts of business education but not the integrated understanding of business.
- This was confirmed with feedback from the Board of Visitors
- The one year plan to investigate and come with a new and compelling curriculum
OK, so who are our students and what is important to them?

- Born between 1996 and 2000 - between 17 and 21
  - That makes them late millennials or early iGen (Generation Z)
  - Here are some characteristics of Millenials/Generation Y (Tulgan, B. & Martin, C. *Managing Generation Y* (HRD Press, 2001), page 63.
    - Challenging work that really matters
    - balance clearly delegated assignments with freedom and flexibility
    - offer increasing responsibility as a reward for accomplishments
    - spend time getting to know staff members and their capabilities
    - provide ongoing training and learning opportunities
    - establish mentoring relationships
OK, so who are our students and what is important to them?

Here are some characteristics of Millennials/Generation Y (Tulgan, B. & Martin, C. *Managing Generation Y* (HRD Press, 2001), page 63.

- create a comfortable, low-stress environment
- allow some flexibility in scheduling
- focus on work, but be personable and have a sense of humor
- balance the roles of “boss” and “team player”
- treat others as colleagues, not as interns or lesser employees
- be respectful, and call forth respect in return
- consistently provide constructive feedback
- reward others when they’ve done a good job
What is important to our student?

- They like a collegial environment
- They like to solve problems
- They like feedback
- They like to “give it one more go at the problem”
The Design

- We quickly found that the easy thing to do was nothing.
- We looked at the 21st Century skills demanded by society and businesses
  - This is called the enGauge Model
    - Digital Age Literacy
    - Inventive Thinking
    - Effective Communication
    - High Productivity
The 21st Century Skills; What are they and are business schools addressing them?
What is important to our student?

What are the most important skills/qualities organizations value in a new college graduate?

- Ability to work in a team
- Leadership
- Communication skills
- Problem solving/Analytical skills
- Strong work ethic/Professionalism

(National Association of Colleges and Employers Job Outlook Survey)
Percent of recent college grads rated as good-excellent:

- Problem solving skills 25%
- Oral communication 25%
- Professionalism/Work ethic 18%
- Teamwork 29%
- Written communication 18%

(National Association of Colleges and Employers Job Outlook Survey)
The Byrum School at Marian University

- A Business Curriculum like no other
  - All business students complete the core experience
  - 70% of core credits are team-taught
  - Experiential components designed for integration
  - 92% of core credits involve working with external businesses and/or business people.
  - Experiential components become lines of business experience on every student’s resume.
The Core; BUS 109 Business Plan Competition

• BUS 109; The business competition (intro to business), principles of economics, principles of accounting – 9 credit hours team-taught
• Suggested/required in the first (fall) semester of the freshman year
• Couched in the concept of the business plan competition: a variation of Shark Tank
• Featured skills
  • Communication, teamwork, project development
• Takeaways
  • Competition – basic business paradigm
  • Working with others of different skills and abilities
  • Communication and teamwork
  • Opportunity to execute the business in the following semester
The Core; BUS 209 Quantitative Analysis of Business

- BUS 209 – Quantitative Analysis of Business 9 credit hours team-taught; featuring Principles of Management, Principles of Marketing, Statistics
- Suggested/required in the first (fall) semester of the sophomore year
- Real business sharing a real engagement
  - Includes data to gather, analyze, and conclude
  - Real objectives with real value-added deliverables
- Featured skills
  - Teamwork and communication
  - Project management
  - Data acquisition and analysis
  - Report management
    - Hard copy deliverable – report
    - Business presentation – oral report
The Core; BUS 309 Quantitative Analysis of Business

- BSU 309 Comprehensive Analysis of Business – 9 hours team taught featuring Business Strategy, Managerial Finance, Business Law
- Suggested in any semester of the junior or senior year; most students will take this class in their junior year.
- “Real simulation” experience
  - Real company of relatively large size; of recent experience we have used Eli Lilly and Company and Cummins.
  - Use all publically available information
  - Receive the support of the company with class visits from upper management
  - Using relevant data the students will select a business strategy based on actual financial position within the legal limits of business conduct.
The Core; BUS 309 Quantitative Analysis of Business

- Featured Skills
  - Teamwork and communication
  - Strategic Project management
  - Financial data analysis
  - Analysis of legal limitations and proprieties
  - Report management
    - Hard copy deliverable – report
    - Business presentation – oral report
- Required internship
  - Required of all students
  - Accounting students; full semester, no classes or extracurricular activities
    - 40+ hours per week
    - Paid internships; expected to earn more than $10,000 in the semester
- Required Elective Business Experience – menu choices
  - Additional internship
  - Advertising competition
  - Student venture fund
  - Student Consulting, The A-Team
  - Business Plan Implementation
The Outcomes

- The true outcomes will be the feedback from employers
  - Our first fully engaged new curricula students graduated in May, 2016
  - Capturing data to judge how effective the curriculum is
- 97.5% Byrum School Placement rate 6 months after graduation - Full time, professional employment requiring a college degree.
- 100% of Accounting students in the past 6 years employed at graduation in full time accounting positions.