

CREATIVE WAYS TO INTRODUCE HUMAN POTENTIAL IN THE CLASSROOM

Pamela Kay CALDWELL
Jilin University Lambton College
(China)

Debra P. SALSI
Keller Graduate School of Business
DeVry University
(United States of America)

Oluseye David AKINTUNDE
Changchun University of Science and
Technology
(China)

ABSTRACT

Learning business concepts creatively can help to lay the foundation of a deeper understanding of corporate culture in an individual's professional journey. Understanding the significance of human potential within the workplace can be introduced through business concept storytelling. Merging a technique used to assess ESL university business students with some of the fundamental concepts upheld and diagnosed through SEAM (Socio-economic approach to management) methodology, this article will propose a creative method to introduce fundamental concepts of human potential, social and economic performance and hidden costs that plague the workplace.

Keywords: SEAM - Human potential - Social and economic performance - Hidden costs

INTRODUCTION

Globalization is something that is discussed in most business classes. Currently, globalization also is discussed in terms of individuals such as global citizens, study abroad programs, and educational cooperation. When discussing the concept of globalization or even business concepts to ESL students, the instructor needs to understand if the students are grasping the idea. The idea for this article came about when one of the authors, Dr. Pamela K Caldwell, was faced with this issue of teaching business concepts based on the United States system to students in China. The first phase involved coming up with different mediums for homework for students to complete relating to business concepts. The methods needed to inspire the students to think outside of the box and include creativity and innovation with business concepts. This article will first review the purpose of the Sino-foreign cooperation, Jilin University Lambton College, where the case study is being conducted. Secondly, this article will review the setup of the case study, covering how the instructor organizes

assignment categories, the various assignments, and assignment details. Lastly, the article will discuss how to incorporate and introduce SEAM (socio economic approach to management) concepts using this method.

THE SINO-FOREIGN COOPERATION

Sino Foreign Cooperation is a foreign higher education institute partnership that collaborates Chinese local higher education institutes. This is a new initiative by the Chinese government after entering in the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Postiglino, 2009). According to the Chinese laws, a foreign university is not permitted to have an independent campus and must partner with a Chinese education institute. The Sino foreign cooperation is a way for the Chinese government to increase the quality of education, accessing foreign resources, bringing in creativity and innovation into the education (Postiglino, 2009; Zhang, 2014). As of 2014, the number of Sino-Foreign University programs include 2056 partnerships (Zhu,2016).

The higher institutes that are a part of a Sino foreign cooperation follow one of these models: integration, grafting, and relaxed (Zhang, 2014). The integration model is where both universities integrate each other's curriculum. The two schools will also share instructors, giving students the experience of studying abroad without the traveling (Zhang, 2014). The grafting model or also referred to as a "2+2", "3+1", and "3+2". In this model student will study part of the time in China then go abroad to finish the degree. The time studied in both places will depend on the model type. For example, in the 2+1 model, a student will study 2 years in China and 1 year at the partnership school. The relaxed model is where the university in China hire foreign experts to teach at their campus using the curriculum of the Western partner school. This model is one that is widely used within the Sino-Foreign partnerships (Zhang, 2014). Jilin University Lambton College (JULC) used the grafting model, for master level programs and the relaxed model for undergraduate.

The University where this case study is being conducted is a Sino-Foreign Cooperation. Jilin University Lambton College is in partnership with Jilin University and four North American Universities. Northwood University in the United States, and three in Canada which are Lambton College, Memorial University of Newfoundland and The College of the North Atlantic (en.julc.cn, retrieved 2.8.2020). The degrees offered are in the field of Business administration and Information Technology. Students seeking to earn a Business administration degree have three years of coursework with Lambton and 1 year of coursework with Northwood. for Information Technology students include the same set up 3 and 1, with The College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University of Newfoundland respectively (en.julc.cn, retrieved 2.8.2020). For undergraduate courses coursework is completed at JULC campus in Changchun, China.

On the Master Level they have partnership with more of the grafting model (Zhang, 2014). The grafting model is a program where each school has

their own teaching model, and usually is considered a split program, “2+2”, or “2+1”. In this type of model, the students will do 1 year at the University in China then move abroad to finish out the study. This model is used at the Master level, where students can study abroad in schools located in the United States or Australia. Student do have the opportunity to move onto graduate studies, studying 1 year in Changchun, and 1 year in at the partnership campus in the States. The partner school for Graduate level degrees is Central Michigan University.

TEACHING BUSINESS CONCEPTS CREATIVELY

As an educator one of the first things that you learn is understanding student learning style and how to cater your lessons and assignments to adhere to all learning styles. The learning style model that we usually use is VARK; visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetics Visual learner, meaning they prefer to learn information in forms of visual layout. These layouts could be in the form of graphs, charts, and flow diagrams (Fleming, 1995; Espinoza et al.2019). Auditory learners, also referred to as people that can learn by ear. These learners prefer to receive information in the form of speech. Reading and Writing learners preference for learning through printed or written information. Kinesthetics learners, learn best when the information is presented through life application (Fleming, 1995; Zapalska & Dabb, 2002). As an instructor, you try and present all content in the form of VARK, to reach each student. You may assignments that will cover each of the VARK learning styles.

In this case study research, the idea of adjusting assignments to fit each of the learning styles in VARK was completed at the undergraduate level for business courses. The assignment also included storytelling to gain feedback to assess if the students were learning these concepts. The setting was presented in undergraduate classes covering general business, accounting, and technology. The students were all ESL students from Asia (China, Indonesia, and Malaysia). The location was Jilin Univeristy Lambton, College, a Sino-Foreign cooperation. The types of assignments included: comic strip, photo book and video, for sophomore, junior and senior level college students. The courses included subjects in business, accounting, and technology. These assignments have been given by the instructor for the last 2 years of teaching at JULC.

USING STORYTELLING FOR TEACHING

The last decade brought about additional focus on technology into the classroom. Technology has changed in both personal and business areas. In personal life, social media has flourished, and includes keeping up with friends, family and reconnecting the past associates. Regarding business, it has changed how large, small and the entrepreneur conduct business. From advertising, promoting to gaining clients and customers, whatever way technology is and have been used, there is a story that is part of the technology usage. The usage of

technology is like adding another type of storytelling with increased usage of technology.

Technology has not been the only push in the last decade for additions in the classroom. Innovation and Creativity has been pushed as well, along with the application of knowledge. Storytelling can be a way to include innovation, creativity, and application of knowledge to the classroom, for student learning. It may seem that storytelling is a new approach, however it has been known as being one of the earliest ways of human communication (Walters, et al. 2018, Cherry, 2017). Research has shown that “storytelling was a common practice among American teachers and librarians from the mid-1800s through the 1930’s” (Scatt & Ryan,2015). However, with the coming of the industrial age, storytelling changed to more of an industrial model (Scatt & Ryan,2015). Such examples include using storytelling in classrooms ads, critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity, known as the four C’s (Walters, et al. 2018, Cherry, 2017, Rezzonico et al., 2016). These skills are listed by National Education Association as 21st century skills, which can all be achieved in storytelling (Rezzonico, et al., 2016).

When teaching ESL (English Second Language) students, storytelling can be a way to gauge their understanding on the content (Geres, 2016, Rezzonico, et al, 2016). The use of storytelling can engage the different types of learners. When teaching ESL students their English fluency depends on their environment, how often are they speaking the language, and their exposure to native speakers (Rezzonico, et al, 2016). Within a classroom with various levels of English fluency, storytelling assignments can be a true engagement of their understanding of the content and fluency of the English language content (Geres, 2016, Rezzonico, et al, 2016).

Teaching business in China, the instructor began to realize interaction can be limited due to the culture and previous educational experience. At JULC, the administration understands the background education of the students, however desires for the foreign teachers, to implement Western style teaching methods. These Western style methods are to add more discussion, and life application type of assignments. The lesson planning is a mixture of requirement from the school as well as input from the teaching instructor. The author, decided to add her own crafted assignments, to encompass all the styles of learning. These style of teaching and assignments are different for the Asian students because their previous education mostly included lecture, limited discussion as well as limited life application type assignments. However, even with the different education background and introducing them to a new style of teaching, storytelling can be seen in each situation. Therefore, using storytelling can provide a way for a relationship between student and instructor to commence. Much of the research discusses storytelling in the form of oral communication, however storytelling can be in the form of written text, or digital (Boje, 1991). The use of storytelling for this case study will be in the form of written text and digital. The written text storytelling will be in the form of comic strip or picture book and digital in the form of video.

Phase I of the project included assignments and exercises that reach all the neurological learning styles. Comic strips and picture books and videos appeal to the visual learner. Even in China, the use of comic strips can be seen in the daily newspaper, online and even in advertisements. The objective of this assignment is to gauge if students can use business concepts, to teach peers, using the use of storytelling. The instructions for the comic strip are to select a topic from the course and create a story using images and text. The story is used to teach the topic to peers, or others who are not familiar with the topic. The auditory learner is incorporated in various exercises that involve oral explanation. "Creation Corner" category includes all group assignments. These assignments are a way for the student to use knowledge obtained in the class to create something such as a lunch and learn series, a workshop for a conference, a business plan or any type of group assignment that the instructor used in the course.

INTRODUCING HUMAN POTENTIAL THROUGH BUSINESS STORYTELLING

The first step for personal development and leadership effectiveness begins with self-awareness of brain strengths of yourself and others. Using practical neuroscience is a powerful way to unleash and grow potential and productivity. It allows a person to leverage their strengths and uphold those of people being led. By expanding the awareness and use of neuroscience leadership skills, the human potential can gain greater potential and functioning of brainpower. Clear and accurate thinking, accelerated learning, problem-solving, making decisions, communication and influential leadership are all results of such exercise.

In the last 25 years, neuroscience has illuminated how the brain functions. The findings concerning learning styles have significant implications for new and different approaches to perform at a height of human potential, both professionally and personally. The impact of neuroscience on human development in schools, business, government, organizations, and families is more than a trend. It is a turn toward development of humanity within our working day. By respecting neurological diversity, leaders respect the greater potential. Neuroscience helps to deepen that understanding and the interactions between the human brain and physical actions. The actions may be a combination of voluntary and involuntary human physiology and our resulting behaviors. In all cases, there are millions of cells in our bodies that guide our actions by responding to stimuli or in purposeful sensory and cognitive processes. Leadership and neuroscience begins with an understanding of self. (Miller, et al, p. 4)

Moving people beyond fear and non-productive emotions engages the Neo-Cortex which provides a safe environment for human growth and learning. The Neo-Cortex is where humans are engaged for productive learning, thinking, reasoning and decision-making. To stimulate the Neo-Cortex, activities need to be fun and interesting. When you are intellectually excited and interacting with one another, through struggles and failures, work becomes fun. By aligning people's preferred learning styles stimulates their preferred language of rapport.

The results engage people's strengths and plans toward futuristic thinking. (Miller, et al, p. 4)

The deep underlying essence of organizational behavior comes from providing attention toward the mundane and activities that are generally taken for granted by the individual. Heidegger re-emphasized the state of being-in-the-world, including the mindless everyday practical coping skills, habits, customs and unreflective familiarity were much more significant than mental representation. (Chia and Mackay, p. 230). This crossroad between the state of being and activity provides a key toward the undefined part of the ontological state of the individual with action. Scenario thinking then becomes significant as an everyday occurrence and organizational practice at the micro-level, revealing specific trends of actions in organizational activities. (Sarpong, p 13-14).

According to Savall (2011), silence finds its place among the actor polygon dynamics within socio-economic theory. "The rule of the external intervener is to express it and construe its significance on behalf of the actors." (Savall, in Boje, ed., 2011, p. 375). Although in the case of Dr. Caldwell, she is not an intervener, her role is similar in the intent to the mirror effect within the classroom. The socio-economic approach to management was created to monitor the time needed to transform an enterprise into a new competitive environment because expectations and actual reality always differ. (Savall, p.16) Dr. Caldwell uses her exercises to transform the ontological state of mind within the students toward a more competitive environment within the workplace.

Planning for innovation suggests innovation, venturing and strategic renewal by establishing the contextual conditions that enable immersion into reality and making transformation possible. New knowledge and the support of it will continue to change. Reality is ontologically infinite. (Bunge, 2006) The first support for the ontological dimension lies within the cognitive analysis of knowledge in organizations by referring to individuals within the organization, its groups and the organization as a whole. The second refers to the various contributions of the organization and the economy. (Akehurst, et al, p 184). Interpreting becomes the externalization stage of knowledge that occurs between the ontological group and organizational levels. (Akehurst, et al, p 188)

Quantum storytelling represents the in-between ontology and epistemology. Boje suggests that an individual's potential to shape the future occurs when the models of becoming-spiral and becoming-assemblage meet. When the organizational models' linear and cyclic antenarratives of big business intersect, the assemblage of know-how gets lost. In order to make a change in the wave of shaping the future of business, the linear-cyclic antenarratives have to change and transform, creating a co-positing process of timespacemattering that aligns with becoming. This type of ontological change will direct the change of business ventures. (Boje,2011, p. 9).

CONCLUSION

The first phase of this case study included introducing the study, giving background on Sino-Foreign Institutions, and discussing the medium that will be used for storytelling (ie. Comic strip). The intention was to provide more of an

experience that could stretch the students to think outside of the box, and to include creativity and innovation with business concepts taught in many business courses. The concept of human potential is viewed by various cultures in multiple ways. Using tangible, visual and interactive methods of introducing and discussing concepts taps into the various learning styles and becomes a more effective and ontological experience and understanding.

FUTURE IMPACT

The second phase in this research study will include developing the case study research methods, introducing the fundamentals of SEAM to the students. Because SEAM is a management theory, the SEAM topics will be taught and introduced in related courses of management and leadership. During this part of the case study, a survey will be given to the students to assess the effectiveness of the assignment.

SEAM will be introduced in the following courses: Practice of Management & Leadership, International Management, and Project Management for Technologist. The last course, Project Management, covers human resources and the use of these resources. In this course, the discussion of human potential will be explored in more detail. The time frame for phase 2 of the case study will be conducted during the school year of 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. The results from phase 2, will be collected for a future article and presentation. The future of this project will include introducing various fundamentals of SEAM using storytelling type of assignments.

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