

Experimental Methods of Teaching Business Studies: Practical Approaches beyond Lecturing

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Abstract

The pragmatic nature of employment in dynamic business world and the modern business education system in higher education has opened up new vistas of practical teaching methodologies for the teachers in business studies. The usual method of teaching in higher education is lecturing method. But to teach nuts and bolts of dynamic nature of business concepts, the only lecturing method is not sufficient, and the modern students prefer the teachers who are following both lecturing and non-lecturing methods of teaching to make them understand the concepts in a clear way. This paper is an attempt to attempt to through light on some of the practical methods of teaching business studies courses which are widely used in the academic circles of world class business schools, it emphasize on using Case Study, Role play , Simulation and business games, Research based individual/group projects, Peer tutoring, Learning in communities (Team learning), Hands on learning and Internships, Class room group discussions and brainstorming, Industry visits, Dummy money, Films and audio visual methods teaching with digital edge, Problem based learning (PBL) , Business Quiz, Workshops and conferences and Short written exercises. This article also focuses on art of teaching to make class room learning lively.

Keywords: Lecturing, Case Stuies, Role Play, Problem Based Learning

1. Introduction

1.1. The difference between Learning and Memorization?

From psychologist point of view Learning is a cognitive process of acquiring skill or knowledge that change behavior permanently and the change in behavior must be reflected in actions, we learn from observations and by practices in life. It is a process of progressive change from

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ignorance to knowledge, from inability to competence, and from indifference to understanding. For proper learning of student require suitable teaching methodology where there is chance for student to acquire knowledge or skill and apply this to face the problems and challenges of real world situations. The main difference between learning and memorization is "Learning" is how you acquire new information about the world, and memorization is how you store that information over time. The objective of any teaching method should be to harness learning not memorization.

1.2. The problems with lecturing method of Teaching:

Traditionally we have been using lecturing method in teaching business courses which is useful to make students understand the concept in direct logical manner but this method make students passive because of its one way nature of communication, learning is difficult to gauge, no participation of audience, takes more time and most importantly its not pragmatic method of teaching it can't present realistic picture of a "real world" situations of business, there is need of to think differently from lecturing methods of teaching to make students understand intricacies of business from a practical angle, this is where non lecturing methods are handy.

1.3 How Business Education is different from other fields:

In Modern Business environment change is the way of life, The industry requires business graduates who possess good personality with professional etiquettes, good team work abilities and leadership skills, good communication skills with very good public relations, problem identification, solving ability and analytical skills. Our business education should concentrate on imparting these skills to students to face real dynamic business world rather than memorization of concepts and theories, to do this we need to adopt more practical approaches in teaching.

1.4 Teaching methodologies at world class Business Schools:

Before going into length and breadth of practical methods of teaching business studies courses, let's see the teaching methods adopted by world class business schools:

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Table-1: Teaching methodologies adopted by world class business schools

Rank	Top business schools	Case Study	Lecture	Experiential Learning	Simulations	* Other
1	U. of Pennsylvania (Wharton)	55%	30%	15%		
2	Northwestern (Kellogg)	33%	33%			34%
3	Harvard	80%	15%			5%
4	MIT (Sloan)	45%	30%		10%	15%
5	Duke (Fuqua)	40%	45%		15%	
6	Michigan	40%	40%	20%		
7	Columbia	40%	40%			20%
8	Cornell (Johnson)	40%	25%			35%
9	Virginia (Darden)	70%	15%		5%	10%
10	Chicago	25%	50%		5%	20%
11	Stanford	55%	30%		10%	5%
12	UCLA (Anderson)	30%	50%			20%
13	NYU (Stern)	37%	38%			25%
14	Carnegie Mellon	30%	60%			10%
15	UNC -- Chapel Hill	40%	35%		10%	15%
16	Dartmouth (Tuck)	40%	30%	10%	10%	10%
17	Texas -- Austin (McCombs)	35%	45%		5%	15%
18	UC -- Berkeley (Haas)	50%	30%			20%
19	Yale	35%	60%	5%		
20	Indiana (Kelley)	40%	30%			30%
21	Rochester (Simon)	30%	50%			20%
22	Vanderbilt (Owen)	30%	50%			20%
23	Washington U. (Olin)	45%	25%	10%	10%	10%
24	USC (Marshall)	30%	50%	20%		
25	Purdue (Krannert)	50%	25%	25%		

Source: www.businessschooladmission.com

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*Other teaching methods include Industry visits, Individual/group projects, role plays, business games, brainstorming sessions, discussions with expert's panels and guest speakers from industry

As we see from above table most of world class universities and business schools are adopting more practical methods of teaching in combination with lecturing method.

2. Practical Approaches to Teach Business Studies Courses

To produce creative business graduates across colleges of technology in Oman, we can adopt following practical methods in teaching business studies courses to enrich and enhance learning experience to our students. Following is the list of practical teaching methods of teaching business courses at colleges of technologies in Oman:

1. Case Study
2. Role play
3. Simulation and business games
4. Research based individual/group projects
5. Peer tutoring
6. Learning in communities(Team learning)
7. Hands on learning and Internships
8. Class room group discussions and brainstorming
9. Industry visits
10. Dummy money
11. Films and audio visual methods teaching with digital edge
12. Problem based learning(PBL)
13. Quiz
14. Workshops and conferences
15. Short written exercise

16. Mind Map

2.1 Case study:



This is one of the oldest practices from Harvard school. All the management students learn the practical business situations from the various business case studies of all the global companies. In Harvard business school on an average 3000 cases are being discussed and analyzed in the classroom. This gives the clear knowledge about the Business tactics needed when the student goes to the field. The cases will likely be assigned ahead of time to allow the students a chance to read through the materials and be prepared with their analyses for the class discussion. The teacher will then lead the class discussion and encourage debate between the

students.

2.2 Role-play:



This is also one of the modern techniques used to inculcate the real Internalization of the character and situation. Stepping into one's shoes and acting like that will not come easily. But, this role-play method triggers you to act as such in the situation and like the person. The sales training skills are taught in that manner. For example asking student to act as salesman

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and sell product to another student who act as customer.

2.3 Simulations and Business Games:



Student motivation can increase with the use of games to reinforce skills and concepts learned. Games are always fun and exciting for all irrespective of age. The students will learn the concept and theory by funny way. The teacher has to complete by linking the purpose of the game and the concept derived out of it. The involvement from the participants is cent per cent. The games may be played indoor and outdoor. Varieties of games are available from ice

breaking to risk taking.

Games can be designed to teach facts, skills, processes and behaviors as well as problem solving, reasoning and creativity. They can come in the form of single player or multiplayer games, involving complex role-play or simulation. For example: Giving 100 rials to student group as capital to start any business and asking them to make profits by using his entrepreneurial skills

2.4 Research based individual/group based projects:



Project-based learning activities create opportunities for students to work on problems in the real world. Accomplished teachers make the projects relevant to the world outside the classroom, and help the students to see and understand the connections between classroom activities and the world of work. These projects can also build students' abilities to set personal goals and standards of excellence. The interdisciplinary nature of these projects encourages students to widen and explore their personal

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interests while gaining the knowledge they need in core subjects. Projects can be individual and group based.

Before student embark on projects he must be given training in Questionnaire Designing, Sample Survey, Data Analysis and Report Writing

2.5 Peer tutoring



Peer tutoring is the process by which a student with guidance from a teacher, helps one or more students at the same grade level learn a skill or concept. Through this method the students will learn team skills, public relations.

2.6 Learning in communities (Team learning)



Learning in communities (Team learning) Learning with peers, either through collaboration in a group project or through discussion in small-groups provides variety to students' learning experience. Students can improve Social and motivational skills, and they get exposed to Critical thinking ,Team-working and problem solving skills.

- When a teacher initially puts students into a group, the students are a "group," not a "team."
- As the students begin to trust each other and

develop a commitment to the goals and welfare of the group, they *become* a team.

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- When they become a cohesive team, the team can do things that neither a single individual nor a newly-formed group can do.
- Team-based learning starts with groups and then creates the conditions that enable them to become teams

Team assignments both builds team cohesiveness and rewards students for taking responsibility for their own pre-class preparation.

2.7 Hands-on learning



Hands-on learning provides learning by doing--helping a student to acquire knowledge and skills outside of books and lectures. Learning can occur through work in organizational projects or performing organizational duties practically. Ex: On the Job Training (OJT), Internships.

An internship is a work-related learning experience for individuals who wish to develop hands on work experience in a certain occupational field. Most internships are temporary assignments that last approximately three months up to a year.

2.8 Classroom group discussions



Classroom discussion can be a very powerful tool for student and teacher learning. But teachers need to plan discussions carefully to be sure that goals are met and students interact effectively.

Good discussions start with advance planning. Students know the ground rules for participation and respect each other's contributions. Teachers guide students from

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comprehension and review questions to complex and critical thinking. They keep records of the discussion so that all participants can return to the topics. And, accomplished teachers allow for “wait time“ so that students have time to formulate their answers

Brainstorming is a group creativity technique that was designed to generate a large number of ideas for the solution of a problem. Brainstorming is most effective with groups of 8-12 people and should be performed in a relaxed environment. If participants feel free to relax and joke around, they'll stretch their minds further and therefore produce more creative ideas

Ex: student should be asked to launch a product and brainstorming session must be conducted to know advertising and sales promotion techniques can be used effectively.

Another form of class room discussion is debate - formal debates provide an efficient structure for class presentations when the subject matter easily divides into opposing views or ‘Pro’/‘Con’ considerations. Students are assigned to debate teams, given a position to defend, and then asked to present arguments in support of their position on the presentation day.

2.9 Industry visits:



Students can be taken to nearby companies to make them understand how the company operates, which will give them real world experience

2.10 Problem based learning:



How can I get my students to think?" is a question asked by many faculties, regardless of their

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disciplines. Problem-based learning (PBL) is an instructional method that challenges students to "learn to learn," working cooperatively in groups to seek solutions to real world problems. These problems are used to engage students' curiosity and initiate learning the subject matter. PBL prepares students to think critically and analytically, and to find and use appropriate learning resources.

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a pedagogical strategy of "active learning" often used in higher education, the defining characteristics of PBL are:

- Learning is driven by challenging, open-ended problems.
- Students work in small collaborative groups.
- Teachers take on the role as "facilitators" of learning.

Accordingly, students are encouraged to take responsibility for their group and organize and direct the learning process with support from a tutor or instructor. Advocates of PBL claim it can be used to enhance content knowledge and foster the development of communication, problem-solving, and self-directed learning skill.

2.11 Business Quiz:



Quiz is one of the techniques used to test the student's involvement and excitement in winning prizes. Usually 2-4 members are made as a group and ask oral questions as a group, this technique help students to improve group behavior, leadership skills, communication skills and decision making skills.

After completion of a some units of theory, a quiz is conducted. Students can s also take part as quiz masters for marking scores and monitoring

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times. Question-Answers and Definitions, Jumbled-Words and Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs), Graphs and Flow Diagrams (indicate the missing link), Match the Columns, Clinical Problems, and Rapid-Fire Round.

2.12 Dummy money:



To Measure entrepreneurial and risk taking abilities of the student's dummy currencies are given to them. They invest as real money in new ventures , stocks, commodities and the like, at the end of the game the real risk taking ability of the participant is measured. In some Institutions real money is also given by getting sponsor from corporate.

2.13 Student seminars and workshops



Monthly seminars and workshops on various business subjects are must and all the students are required to participate actively. The best speaker of the seminar from the entire batch is given an award and weight age marks. The awards are given to inculcate a competitive spirit in the students and bring the best out of the students

These seminars and workshops can also be conducted by corporate experts of different subjects.

2.14 Films and audio visual methods teaching with digital edge



Opening Classroom Doors to techno based teaching with Digital Edge is the order of the day to bring real effects in teaching, Films and audio tutorial make students understand better and it inculcate self-learning.

2.15 Short written exercise

A short written exercise that is often used is the "one minute paper." In this exercise students are asked to summarize the day's discussion in a short paper to be turned in before the end of class. This is a good way to review materials.

Teaching methods are effective when teacher adopts inspirational approach to the art of teaching. This is covered in next section of this article.

2.16 Brain Map:



It's a graphical way to arrange a topic into a piece of paper, which is used to generate, visualize, structure and classify ideas. Visually it looks very much like a styled 'spider-diagram', but contains more thought.

3. The art of Teaching

Most students are good students, but they can do better. Some seem naturally enthusiastic about learning, but many need or expect their teachers to inspire, challenge and stimulate them. Whatever happens in the classroom can improve or worsen the level of student's motivation. Effective learning in the class room depends on teacher's ability to generate and maintain the student's motivation. The teacher can motivate their students through their art of teaching and

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persona. Teacher need to motivator who pulls students to higher standards rather then going down to the level of students.

3.1 How to conduct a class: Every class need to be objective oriented, we should follow following steps in conducting a class:

- a) ***Recognize Problems:*** First the teacher should make the course topic clearly and problem associated with the topic
- b) ***Reflection of causes of problems:*** The teacher should explain what is the cause of the problem
- c) ***Solutions available:*** The teacher should show different alternative solutions to the problem of the course topic. Here the teacher should explain theoretical aspects that help in problem solving.
- d) ***Discussion of solutions:*** The solutions to the problem can be discussed among students through brainstorming session or group discussion. (Students involvement is a must)
- e) ***Observation/Evaluation of best solutions:*** The teacher need to act as a external agent and observe all students involvement in problem solving and he can be only guide to the students
- f) ***Conclusions:*** Once the problem is solved by the students, the teacher can conclude the class with his final comments.

3.2 Components of an effective teaching: Whatever happens in the classroom can improve or worsen the level of student's motivation, that's why every class need to be objective oriented and should customized according the requirements of students where student's involvement is the priority.

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- a) **Participant Analysis:** Before we start a class we need to know our students psychology, the teacher should try to build rapport through Mutual understanding.
- b) **Delivery of course:** Here problem oriented approach need to be adopted. Teachers should use hard facts as supporting evidences (real time examples). The energy levels, Tone and Commitment level of teacher need to be very high. Authenticity of speech is very important. Let students think independently and solve problems. The visual skills are important indicator of the effective delivery of the course. There are two kinds of visual skills:
- **How the teacher look at students:** it shows whether the teacher is giving individual attention to all students or not. All teachers must use eye contact.
 - **How participants look at teacher:** All students look teacher as role model. Its very important for a teacher to be expert of the subject/topic and he should maintain confidence levels, Positive Attitude, Body language, with very neat and professional attire.
- c) **Body language:** Teachers body language communicates more than his oral communication. Teacher need to be natural with smiling facial expression. To break monotony we can pause. Very confident eye contact is important. Standing near to students can make difference.
- d) **Student Motivation :** To motivate students following techniques can be adopted:
- Conduct class activities of students' interests
 - Include novelty/variety in course material
 - Allow opportunities for students involvement
 - Allow students to analyze theoretical knowledge and solve problems on their own
 - Include simulation in teaching
 - Incorporate games

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- Provide students interaction with their peers
 - Always praise students for their participation
 - Recognize their achievements
 - Peer approval
- e) ***Dealing with trouble makers:*** Teachers come across some “I know type” students who always want recognition. Don’t allow them to hijack you and get them into flow. Ask them what they know? Discuss and let him/her decide, Have full control over class. Don’t get into any once field / Sensitive/Controversial/Religious deliberations. Use politically correct statements.

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