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Organisation Studies and Human Resource Management: An Educator's Handbook

Developing Entrepreneurial Talent through Pedagogical Innovations: Insights from Three International Case studies¹

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Rationale

If universities are to succeed in preparing students to meet contemporary challenges they need to redesign and upgrade their teaching approaches and curricula (Bailey et al., 2018; OECD, 2018; Pearce, Harney, Zupan, and Stalker 2019). This requirement is driven by multiple pressures. First, there is growing recognition of the limitations of existing pedagogy which often remains rooted in a functional, transmission focused mind-set (Bunch, 2019; Cunningham and Harney, 2012). When students do engage in problem solving approaches there tends to be a pre-occupation with reaching a fixed solution whereby students ‘make assumptions rather than examine them’ (Bridgman, McLaughlin, and Cummings, 2018, p. 447). Second is the changing expectations of so called ‘new learners’, including the means by which they access, evaluate and disseminate knowledge (Thompson, 2013). Here it is suggested that universities frequently lag behind the practical requirements mandated in the new world of work (Bailey, Harney and Pearce, 2019). Third, is the demand from employers for 21st century skills-sets such as active learning, global awareness and entrepreneurial skills including creativity, problem solving, and critical thinking (World Economic Forum, 2018). For those in the OHRM domain these challenge take on additional significance. As ‘practitioners in training’ (Aguinis, Ramani, Alabduljader, Bailey, and Lee, 2018), students risk being left ill-equipped when they have to directly manage people and development. In this way OHRM education can fall short in providing students with the experiences, insights and infrastructure to cope with, and navigate, the dilemmas, tensions and paradoxes characteristic of their everyday management practice (Mintzberg, 2009; Ng, 2015; Starkey and Tempest, 2009). Arguably many of these challenges have been accentuated by the Covid-19 epidemic (Brammer and Clark, 2020).

Innovations in OHRM Pedagogy: Necessity and meaning

There is growing awareness of the negative impact of narrow, technical and impenetrable OHRM research (Tourish, 2019), coupled with the risk of standardisation pressures imposed by professional accreditations and business school rankings (Mingers and Wilmott, 2013). While the financial crisis dramatically exposed the limits of much business school teaching, this ultimately resulted in limited substantive change (Harney, 2009). Some also point to the limited impact of OHRM research and teaching in directly informing and improving practice (Rynes, Colbert, and Brown, 2002; Rynes, Giluk, and Brown, 2007). Our purpose in this chapter is not to rehearse the deficiencies of existing approaches to OHRM education. These are increasingly recognized, and form the catalyst for this handbook ([ref Intro/Chapter 1](#)). Instead we recognize the inherent value and potential of education to ‘open up the walls of the classroom in new directions’ (Adler, 2015, p. 189) by fostering critical and creative mind-sets amongst those we are privileged to learn with and from. Our contribution to this task involves presenting three in-depth examples of innovations in OHRM pedagogy focused on developing entrepreneurial capacity amongst students across a variety of international contexts. This includes modules focused on enhancing engagement with industry, fostering global awareness and embracing new modes of learning. Entrepreneurial in this sense does not imply a narrow focus on new venture creation or private value creation, but instead refers to entrepreneurial skills as manifest in creativity, exploration and critical thinking.

While there is much debate about the precise meanings of innovation in pedagogy (OECD, 2018) for the present purposes we use the following identifying criteria: *a*) that the approach is novel in the context of traditional OHRM pedagogy; *b*) that it focuses on formative learning whereby students take a more active role in their learning (Dziewanowska, 2018); and, *c*)

includes an objective to develop entrepreneurial skills such as creativity, problem solving, critical thinking and global awareness (WEF, 2018). In the following section we provide an overview of three evaluations of pedagogical innovations. These innovations were designed, delivered and evaluated by a multidisciplinary team working internationally as part of the EU RISE Global Entrepreneurial Talent Management 3 (GETM3) project. This evaluation is an attempt to bring an evidence base to bear to explore the value and impact of innovations in OHRM pedagogy (Gubbins, Harney, van der Werff, and Rousseau, 2018). In presenting the examples, we take a broad view of OHRM, focusing on OHRM related skills-sets.

Engaging with SMEs to enhance learning of Strategy and HRM

Overview

Faculty on the MSc in HRM at Dublin City University Business School have continuously worked to embed linkages with industry into the curriculum. In 2017, a new module ‘Organisational Analysis’ was introduced including a mini-practicum whereby students conduct a strategic analysis of a local small to medium sized enterprise (SMEs). This mode of experiential learning serves to develop many competencies simultaneously (Daniel, Remedios, Alremaiti, and Shaw, 2018), while following inquiry based principles prepares students to address uncertainty and real-world, complex challenges (OECD, 2018). ‘Organisational Analysis’ involves a novel format of extended lectures, workshops, interviews with SME owner managers, and guest lectures. Students obtain formative feedback throughout the process, culminating in a final report and the presentation of three strategic recommendations back to the SME owner manager. This module helps student appreciate the employment opportunities and challenges confronted by SMEs, firms which form the socio-economic bedrock to all economies (Harney and Alkhalaf, 2021). It is suggested that SMEs are especially likely to benefit from external perspectives to aid decision making, while a ‘live’ case study facilitates in dealing with the limits of traditional case-based teaching (Andrew, 2018).

Methodology

In order to assess the merits of the SME mini-practicum analysis a threefold approach was undertaken

- Student reflections - Each student was asked to complete a one-page reflective piece on the value of the analysis including ‘General reflections on the assignment’, ‘Three key learning outcomes for you’, ‘Unexpected Outcomes/Benefits/Insights’ and ‘Suggestions for changes and improvements’. This allowed for a student voice moving beyond an assessment of desired learning outcomes (as officially stated on the module outline) (Brabrand and Dahl, 2009).
- Interviews and informal feedback - The module lecturer was interviewed to explore the process of SME engagement and also feedback from participant SME managers.
- A post-module survey – this enabled an assessment of the experiences and satisfaction of students.

Reflections on ‘Organisational Analysis’ of SMEs

The Organisational Analysis module was first introduced as a means to bridge the connection between the core business areas of strategy and human resource management. It is delivered via the novel format of three hour workshops which take the form of extended lectures, interviews with SME owner managers, in-class demonstration and application of tools and industry-guest lectures. In 2018 25 students took the module (five of whom were international students). Students were allocated to five groups and each assigned a client organisation to work with. Module learning outcomes include that students will gain an ability to:

- Synthesise theory and practice to assess the efficacy of organisational analysis models and frameworks in specific contexts
- Identify central issues in complex cross-functional organisational problems and strategic change and present well supported, considered diagnoses and recommendations.
- Demonstrate a critical, analytical, flexible and creative mind set which assesses and challenges mainstream thinking.

As part of the end of module reflection students were asked to highlight three key areas of learning from conducting the analysis. Thematically, the most identified learnings related to the importance of applying theory and models, appreciating the significance of strategy and analysis, creative thinking and teamwork. General reflections on the practicum experience referenced the approach which was “*different to other modules*”, “*took me out of my comfort zone quite a bit*”. Students spoke of “*The wider benefit of acting like a consultant approaching and interacting with the company was very useful*” and allied to this “*the professional nature of the assignment- not your typical academic assignment*”. Comments also related to the nature of the SME engagement in that students got to “*see how the company operates and problems they may be faced with*”, in addition to exposure to the SME context “*Exploring a different industry has added to my knowledge of types of organisations that exist*” (for a detailed overview see Harney, 2018).

Finally, students were asked to detail some unexpected outcomes/benefits beyond what was prescribed in module learning outcomes (Brabrand, and Dahl, 2009). Here comments focused on the key insights obtained and confidence gained as a result of the process:

“I didn’t think I would gain the insight or to ever get the opportunity to give advise to an already high-performing business – It made me feel like I’d been taken seriously in the workplace”

In the overall module survey, 85% of students indicated that module was either excellent or very good. In 2020 this curriculum innovation was internationally recognized via an Academy of Management HR Division Innovative Teaching award. The overall experience was captured by one student:

“I loved how this module was part of the course. It directly addresses what is perceived in the HR field to be a deficiency. An understanding of business processes and analysis is crucial to anyone with ambition to work and grow within a corporate environment. It was excellently presented”

Global awareness and cross-cultural understanding at Ljubljana Summer School

Overview

The international summer school is run by the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana. The summer school takes place over three weeks as a residential programme where students take a maximum of two modules, thereby providing the scope for in-depth learning. Delivered by over 30 lecturers from 16 countries the school now attracts some 600 students. The summer school is underpinned by an ethos of fun and collaboration bridging the academic, cultural and social. Careful attention is paid to the infrastructure which for students includes study rooms, group areas, library access, on-campus accommodation, and optional programme of tours. A dedicated Professor’s room allows for faculty networking and discussion. As one faculty

member interviewed notes: “*Good practices and resources are shared openly, and I have gained many valuable insights about techniques for teaching students of different nationalities from colleagues*”.

Methodology

The methodology for assessing an innovation in pedagogy in the context of the summer school involved a purposeful phased design over a two-year period.

Stage 1 (2017) involved direct observation of the summer school activities, including induction day and auditing of modules. This was complemented by interviews and meetings with faculty and university management. An international faculty member noted: “*Learning in this environment provides students with an ideal opportunity to prepare to operate effectively in a global economy; feedback suggests that they fully understand this and value it very highly*”. One key outcomes of this first stage was the identification of modules and approaches which purposefully developed this global understanding.

Stage 2 (2018) involved in-depth exploration and evaluation of the module ‘*Interactive international marketing strategy*’. This module was identified in step 1 as exemplary in fostering cross-cultural understanding, teamwork and student reflection. Specifically, the module is one where teams are purposefully distributed internationally. The pedagogical approach emphasises on on-going formative learning and feedback, and international interaction and comparison form part of the assessment. Notably, the module includes reflective component, whereby students are afforded the opportunity to extend their thinking about their own role, identity and cultural biases (Barnett and O’Mahony, 2006; Land, Rattray, and Vivian, 2014), specifically exploring the lessons and challenges of operating in international teams on an international assignment. This in turn engenders cognitive disruption and enhanced self-awareness as students “comprehend and compare the familiar with the unfamiliar in new situations” (Lindsay, Jack, and Ambrosini, 2018, p. 238). Such reflection is seen to be especially significant when working with students across cultures.

Reflections on Learning in International teams

The Interactive International Marketing Module is delivered over a three-week period. As well as understanding theory and application the module learning outcomes include that students will:

- Have practised combining analyses with research to develop a consistent strategy
- Have experienced working together in an international team to achieve an ambitious objective

Students are divided into international teams and asked to select a product popular in one of their countries so as to launch it in another country where it is unknown. In a formative mode of learning, students are coached over the three-week period to work together to develop an international launch strategy. Teams work independently with support from the faculty adviser to analyse their target international environments using the taught models and to establish their basis of strategic suitability. Students must learn to defend and justify their marketing decisions. Teams then present at the end of the day to receive formative feedback on their work and ideas from fellow students and the faculty adviser. In 2018 a total of 50 students, representing 14 different countries, registered for the Interactive International Marketing Module.

Evaluation: Pre-module analysis

Students were surveyed as to why they elected to study this particular module. Over half of the students (55%) indicated that their home institution does not offer a similar type of module. 77% of students took the module to gain new knowledge, while 74% took the module as a means to enhance their employability.

Evaluation: During module analysis

In the first session students analysed their team and its individual members using theories of cross-cultural understanding in order to establish principles or guidelines to guide their work. This ensures that students reflection on cultural factors as part of the early team-forming stage. Students have internalised course content and theory (e.g. mono-chronic collectivism, cultural mind-sets) and applied it directly to understand their own circumstances and team dynamics. Indicative group principles devised by students included discussion, communication, respect, dedication to task, fair distribution, planning and delegation. These are captured in the following examples:

“Three principles we made are; dividing work equally, having discussions before making decisions, and making plans ahead time. All of these are made based on cultural differences in our team including monochronic, high-context, and collectivism”

“We set three main guidelines which are communication, respect, and dedication to our project, it was a way to deal with the diversity”

Evaluation: Post module analysis

An end of module quantitative evaluation moved beyond a traditional narrow assessment of student satisfaction and engagement (Molesworth, Nixon, and Scullion, 2009), to explore aspects of pedagogy and learning including as related to ‘expected learning outcomes’, and ‘new learning outcomes’, mix of nationalities and capabilities of the professor. The module scored highly on all counts averaging 8.5/10. This was complemented by a qualitative reflection as students on the overall teamwork experience, learnings and an ‘agenda for change’ i.e. what they would do differently next time. In terms of the benefits of cross-cultural teams students stressed the diversity of experiences, understanding of individual strengths and weaknesses and differences in cultural attributes e.g. uncertainty avoidance.

“At beginning of the course, I was a little bit scared to work in an international team with people from other countries and cultures, now I can say that was one of the best experiences in the time I have been studying”.

“We had a lot of differing ideologies- we are programmed to see and do things uniquely, and it actually challenged us to think in new ways and perform better”.

Students also noted key challenges as related to not wanting to offend others, passivity once decisions were made and differing mind-sets (cultural and work related). In terms of key learnings it is clear that students engaged in greater self-reflection and purposeful efforts create inclusion.

“because our main difference was that half our group was really private with their opinions, and the other half were really good at sharing them, we found out it was important that the people that were more expressive incentivised the others to talk by asking questions and delegating some research and development of ideas”

Students also indicated that there were united and driven by common objectives. Students were also provided with the opportunity to highlight recommendations for change. These included suggestions to be more efficient in their use of class time (e.g. avoid procrastination, delegate roles), to communicate better (including using technology e.g. Trello or Podio but also the physical layout used in meetings) and to improve the disseminations of ideas through visual aids. Other ideas were to get external feedback on their ideas or to get a group member to play ‘devil’s advocate’; “*this would enable us to have to think critically and have evidence as to why we should or should not follow through with an idea*”. A number of groups also suggested that they should spend more time together beyond the confines of the class for the purpose of the assessment, but also to “*bond in a non-working environment to increase tacit understanding*”. This serves as a recognition and enforcement of the ethos and cultural appreciation developed through the module.

Applying Blended and Flipped Learning Techniques in Korea

Overview

While blended learning and the flipped classroom receive much attention, they are concepts which are ‘struggling to catch on’, in a higher education pre-Corona virus context at least (Bothwell, 2018). According to a recent study by the European University Association (EUA) the flipped classroom is found to be ‘fully useful’ in only 15% of institutions, with fewer than half of institutions experimenting in such techniques (Gaebel and Zhang, 2018). Blended learning means partial replacement of traditional face-to-face (F2F) teaching by a technology-based teaching medium. Flipped learning means, not only the involvement of technology in teaching, but also that traditional lectures happen outside of the classroom (via different materials, including videos) (Keene, 2013). Thus flipped learning courses generally follow a basic concept: web-based technologies outside of the classroom and instructor-student interaction during class time. That said, there is no wide-spread consensus on the precise nature of the concept or methodology (Zainuddin and Halili, 2016) or how it may transfer across cultures (Doyle, Shapiro, Rebay, Gillespie, and Szappanyos, 2018).

This evaluation of one of the first flipped learning courses examined in South Korea is timely in the context of efforts to enhance the quality and cost-effectiveness of education in South Korea (Chan and Lo, 2008). It also reflects growing demand for native English speaking faculty to deliver such approaches in an Asian context (Byun and Kim, 2011).

Methodology

The module evaluated was ‘*Cloud Computing Technologies*’. This module was chosen due to its technical emphasis, the expertise of the professor and its track record as a module delivered at the Dublin Institute of Technology. The majority of cases to date have focused on the US, on traditional versus intensive courses, and examined experiences of native English speakers (Jensen, Kummer, and Godoy, 2015). The case explores the effectiveness of blended learning in the context of a non-native English speaking environment in South Korea, specifically Kyungpook National University (KNU). The delivery was compressed into ten daily sessions over a two-week period as part of a summer school. Three hour laboratory sessions were followed by daily pre-prepared video sessions. Recruitment was on an opt-in basis and involved an on-line video to promote the course and a series of overview lectures. The evaluation took a purposeful three stage approach (pre-during-post). The surveys were complemented by two interviews with the module lecturer.

Reflections on blended learning techniques

The module objectives included both technical aspects e.g. demonstrate practical understanding, but equally the ability to reflect and diary learning. Queries were dealt with in the laboratory, with feedback given individually or collectively as required. Assessment was both formative and summative including *a)* online lab reports completed daily included essay style responses to online videos; *b)* In-lab worksheets of increasing difficulty were provided for in-class assessment. Students were able to discuss issues and get feedback as they progressed through the lab sheet. As each day passed, students had access to solutions for previous labs; *c)* a capstone project.

Evaluation: Pre-module analysis

Nine students opted to take the 'Cloud Computing Technologies' module (with one student subsequently dropping out after the first session). Only one student had prior exposure to international lectures. Despite access to the introductory material, none of the students were familiar with the concept of flipped learning. Student motives in taking the module included credits and generally interest, but also that it was delivered in English. The latter reflects the reality that having good English skills is essential for Koreans in the highly competitive job market (Park, 2009). Student expectations for the module outcomes were high including improved English, enhanced job opportunities, communication skills as well receiving applied and practical knowledge.

Evaluation: During module analysis

Students completed a daily survey assessing satisfaction on six dimensions including the video easy to understand?; Was the video sufficiently technical?; Was the worksheet provided easy to follow?; Was the worksheet material sufficiently challenging? In general students were satisfied with the quality and detail of the online material presented, but struggled with the compressed nature of the delivery. Qualitative assessment by the faculty member highlighted that the flipped format and formative assessment enabled such challenges to be more easily addressed in real-time via discussion, student facilitation and altering the pace of sessions during the face to face segment.

Evaluation: Post module analysis

Students expressed their overall satisfaction with the materials and flipped classroom methodology as assessed by: Delivery of the material; Amount of lecturer/student interaction; Pace of course delivery; Quality and suitability of the resources provided. Because the lecturer was not presenting new material in the class, but rather addressing issues and problems raised by students in their feedback, the actual teaching was targeted and relevant. Students overwhelmingly identified the assessment and feedback as being a critical component to the success of the module. Students report that the feedback received was individual, relevant and enhanced their understanding of the problem and was a strong component of the delivery

International Pedagogical Innovation: Discussion and Evaluation

The three pedagogical innovations presented in his chapter represent some of the key clusters of innovative pedagogies identified by the OECD in the form of experiential based learning, global awareness, blended learning. They also diverse in terms of teaching approaches, modes of assessment, methodologies for evaluation, nature of delivery and student level. The table below provides a comparison of each of the innovations across key dimensions, while also highlighting specific implications for OHRM. On reviewing each of the international pedagogical innovations it can be seen that each delivers a specific learning outcomes, including developing skills for engaging with industry, fostering cross-cultural insights, and technical capability. Common to all three innovations is the value of providing greater scope

for student voice and reflection (Bridgman et al., 2018). This aligns with calls for more self-directed learning (Hase and Kenyon, 2013; Deloitte, 2019; Staats, 2019) and is equally reflected in the growing demand from employers for active learning and initiative (World Economic Forum, 2018). In the context of opt-in modules, it is important to understand student motivation for selecting one module over another. Prominent here was the perceived impact on future employability. Students readily engaged with a module which were seen to provide a form of prestige or differentiation (e.g. a module delivered by an English Professor in South Korea). Both the Interactive Marketing and Blended Learning module highlight the significance of fostering greater cross-cultural awareness across both the social and technical interface. Evidently the dynamics of global competition and the ‘death of distance’ (Hamel and Sampler, 1998) as facilitated by technology means organisations are born global. This mandates a skill-set founded on respect, appreciation and global awareness both in terms of working with employees, and also in managing them.

Overall, the pedagogical innovations presented reinforce how students benefit from practical examples and application, whether this is in the form of product launching (Interactive Marketing), laboratory demonstration and discussion (Cloud Computing) or working with local SMEs (Organisational Analysis). The mode of formative and inquiry-led provides a ‘bridge between teaching and learning’ (William, 2010, p. 17) enabling us to move beyond simple measures of student engagement, entertainment or satisfaction to capture deeper learning (Harley, 2019; Molesworth et al., 2009). This greater understanding was enabled by the in-depth and multi-source base used to evaluate each case (Gubbins et al., 2018).

The evaluations also highlight nuances and differences in modes of compressed delivery. One important observation is the risk of isolating teaching innovations from the broader context which has enabled and sustained them. Another critical variable to consider is the approach, style and personality of the lecturer which can have a significant bearing as a driver of student engagement. Teaching itself is a problem-solving process rooted in teacher professionalism (OECD, 2018). Ultimately, innovations are context specific, requiring institutional enablers, alignment with institutional objectives and support from senior leadership. Therefore, while it is possible to identify general principles or clusters of innovation, the specifics are most likely played out in the local context at hand.

Table X

	SME Engagement: Organisational Analysis Module Mini-practicum	Cross-cultural understanding: Interactive International Reflection	Blended and Flipped Learning Techniques in Korea
Innovative pedagogy cluster (OECD, 2018)	<i>Experiential learning</i> (focuses on questions and process of discovery)	<i>Global awareness</i> (situates knowledge in the political and cultural context).	<i>Blended learning</i> (the classroom is seen as the place to apply content and deepen one-to-one interactions)
Dominant pedagogical approach	Problem based	Place based Product orientated	Flipped learning

Institution delivered in	Dublin City University	University of Ljubljana	Kyungpook National University (KNU).
Level	MSc level	Mixed	Undergraduate
Disciplinary focus	Business and non-business students	Business	Computer Science
Module Delivery	Semester 12 x 3 hour workshops	Intense (3 week)	Intense (3 week)
Module selection	Core Module	Opt-in	Opt-in
Formative feedback	Yes	Yes	Yes
International dimension	Peripheral	Core aspect	Core aspect
New Initiative	Yes	Yes	Yes
Methods	Student reflection, faculty interviews, Student evaluation survey.	Independent observation, interviews, survey, student reflection.	Pre-post evaluation survey, faculty interviews, student assessment.
OHRM implications/outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linkage with strategy - Engagement with SMEs - Appreciation of people management challenges in running business - Understanding the challenges and benefits of the process of organisational analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International team working - Reflection - Cross-cultural insight - Working under tight deadlines - Presentation skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding learner demands - Learning new modes of learning - Reflection and diary taking - Compressed delivery

Summary

There is evidently much to be learnt from a comparative analysis of international-wide pedagogical innovations. The approach taken here has focused on breath, illuminating the value and impact of a diverse range of approaches allied with OHRM skills-sets and bridging varying national contexts. Further research might provide more depth, taking a singular example of pedagogical innovation in OHRM and exploring how it translates across varying cultures and student experiences. Overall, by drawing on a wide-range of evaluation materials we are able to provide an evidence-based review highlighting the merits and challenges of three distinct, and novel pedagogical approaches. It is clear from across the three examples that formative and experiential learning can serve to develop multiple competencies simultaneously (Daniel et al., 2018). This is a critical ability for OHRM practitioners of the future to master, as reaffirmed by a recent study of 366,000 people across 197 countries: “To excel in the future, people worldwide believe they will need to be multifaceted so that they can be both good collaborators and critical thinkers” (Kovas-Ondrejovic, Stracck, Antebi, Lopez, and Elizabeth, 2019, p. 7). The current Covid-19 crisis reinforces the need for active engagement with local communities, facilitated reflection and enhanced global awareness and considered approaches to blended and digital learning. We hope the innovations in OHRM teaching presented here serve as a catalyst to further conversation and experimentation.

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