

National Association for Business Teacher Education

Research Conference Abstracts



April 20, 2011

**New Orleans Marriott Hotel
New Orleans, Louisiana**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR BUSINESS TEACHER EDUCATION
Research Conference Schedule
April 20, 2011

BALCONY J (4TH Floor)

| <i>Time</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Presenter(s)</i> | <i>Coordinator</i> |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| 8:30 a.m. | Gatekeeper Perceptions of Interpersonal Skills Learned in Postsecondary Online Degree Programs: Recommendations for Teaching Interpersonal Skills Online | Vesta R. Whisler <i>Valdosta State University</i> | Christal C. Pritchett <i>Auburn University</i> |
| 9:00 a.m. | Understanding Professional Development Motivators, Barriers, and Preferred Delivery Modalities of Idaho Business Educators | Allen Kitchel <i>University of Idaho</i> | |
| 9:30 a.m. | An Analysis of Business Educators' Perceptions of Mobile Phones in the Classroom Based on Academic Rank | Ronda G. Henderson <i>Middle Tennessee State University</i> Betty Foust Chapman <i>North Carolina A&T University</i> | |
| 10:00 a.m. | Using Twitter to Enhance Student Performance of Content Knowledge in a Business Education Course: An Exploratory Study | Loreen Powell Margaret O'Conner Ann Kieser Dennis Gehris <i>Bloomsburg University</i> | |

BALCONY K (4TH Floor)

| <i>Time</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Presenter(s)</i> | <i>Coordinator</i> |
|-------------|--|--|--|
| 8:30 a.m. | Emphasis or De-Emphasis on Written Communications in Secondary Schools | Nancy Hite <i>Emporia State University</i> | Geana W. Mitchell <i>Alabama A&M University</i> |
| 9:00 a.m. | A Model Curriculum for Financial Literacy in High Schools in Pennsylvania | Donna L. Cellante Linda J. Kavanaugh Marci L. Klinger <i>Robert Morris University</i> | |
| 9.30 a.m. | The State of Business Education in the State of Texas | Ann Wilson Betty Johnson <i>Stephen F. Austin University</i> | |
| 10:00 a.m. | Financial Decision Making in Group Situations: A Study of Simulated Board Room Decision-Making Dynamics | William Wilhelm <i>Indiana State University</i> | |

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UNDERSTANDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MOTIVATORS, BARRIERS, AND PREFERRED DELIVERY MODALITIES OF IDAHO BUSINESS EDUCATORS

Allen Kitchel
University of Idaho

Involvement with professional development is an essential aspect of school reform and improved educational practices (Knapp, 2003). The purpose of this study was to describe factors that influence Idaho secondary business teachers' involvement with professional development. Specifically, research objectives focused on motivational influences, barriers to participation, and preferred delivery methods. The study builds upon the work of Shumack and Forde (2008).

The study used a descriptive research design with the online survey method and targeted a census population of Idaho secondary business teachers employed during the spring of 2009 ($N=233$). In all, 146 (62.7%) teachers completed the survey instrument. The instrument contained 11 "motivator" items, and eight "barrier" items related to professional development. Respondents ranked each on a 5-point Likert scale (1=*Strongly Disagree*, ..., 5=*Strongly Agree*). The survey also contained ten delivery modalities, which were rank ordered by preference (1 = most preferred, 2 = second preferred, and so forth).

The findings concerning motivation indicated that as a group, business educators felt motivated to participate in professional development based around four themes; intrinsic motivation to be a better teacher, desire to keep up with changing technology, opportunity to network with colleagues, and need to meet recertification requirements.

Teachers reported various degrees of barriers to their participation with professional development. Primary barriers were "time" ($M = 3.44, SD = 1.20$), "money" ($M = 3.29, SD = 1.30$), "travel" ($M = 3.23, SD = 1.21$), "proximity of learning resources" ($M = 3.23, SD = 1.13$), and "lack of financial support" ($M = 3.12, SD = 1.34$).

The findings also provide insight into preferred professional development delivery modalities. In order of preference, the top three were "2-3 hour seminar/workshops during the school year," "sessions at the state CTE summer conference," and "web-based during the summer."

Idaho business educators perceive themselves as intrinsically motivated to participate in professional development. Although the extrinsic reward of "financial incentives" may represent a weak form of motivation, the second largest barrier to participation is a financial matter, specifically "money". Reasonably, we can conclude that teachers need financial support to help offset the cost of professional development, but additional monetary rewards are not necessary.

Perhaps because of their familiarity with business technology, business teachers consider distance learning a viable option for professional development. This supports Policy Statement 87 from the Policies Commission for Business and Economic Education, which states that “stakeholders in the educational community have a responsibility to embrace, participate in, and provide virtual learning activities” (PCBEE, 2010).

The creation of professional development opportunities that tap into intrinsic motivation, while helping to overcome barriers to participation, should be a priority for those involved with the development of such learning opportunities. Online delivery is one delivery modality that may serve to accomplish this goal. To this end, school districts, state staff, teacher educators, and others involved with professional development should investigate, identify and seek resources that can inform and support efforts to deliver and facilitate virtual professional development learning experiences.

PERCEPTION DIFFERENCES OF BUSINESS EDUCATORS’ REGARDING MOBILE PHONE DISTRACTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM BASED ON PROFESSIONAL RANK

Ronda G. Henderson

Middle Tennessee State University

Betty Foust Chapman

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

Student accessibility to the wireless Internet through pocket-sized mobile phones has increased the potential for distractions in the classroom. Thus, it is important to determine how a business educator’s professional rank impacts their perception concerning mobile phone distractions in the classroom. The aim of this study was to identify the perceptions of business educators regarding the use of mobile phones in the classroom based on their professional rank. A quantitative descriptive research design was used to determine the perceptions of 642 business educators regarding mobile phone utilization in the classroom. A total of 195 participants completed the survey resulting in a 30.3% response rate. Statistical analyses revealed a statistically significant difference concerning a policy against mobile phones ringing during class. Specifically, associate professors saw the need for a university policy against phones ringing in class more than those educators holding other titles such as middle school, high school, and community college educators. However, associate professors disagreed concerning the need for a university policy against mobile phone activities such as talking and texting in class more than the other educators who had no opinion. More research should be conducted to determine factors contributing to business educators’ perceptions of mobile phones being disruptive or distracting technology. In addition, determining ways mobile phones in the classroom can be beneficial to business educators and students should be explored.

DAZZLING POWERPOINTS VERSUS TEDIOUS TERM PAPERS: WHICH ONES ARE DOMINATING COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS?

Nancy Groneman Hite
Emporia State University

Purpose and Objectives

This exploratory study was designed to answer the question “Are teachers de-emphasizing written essay assignments by replacing them with PowerPoint assignments?” As indicators of such a de-emphasis on writing at the high school level, changes in the number and length of essay and PowerPoint assignments over the last five years as well as grading criteria for those types of assignments were analyzed.

Methodology

A survey was administered to secondary school business, history, and English teachers in a mid-western state. The findings are based on completed surveys from 288 teachers representing 30 different schools of varying sizes and geographic areas including 126 English teachers, 82 history teachers, and 80 business teachers.

Findings and Results

Of the respondents to the survey, 75% (216) assign essays to their students and 58% (167) assign PowerPoint presentations. Of those surveyed, 91% assign essays of less than 1,500 words; 8% assign essays between 1,500-3,000 words; and only 1% assign essays over 5,000 words in length.

Forty-four percent of the respondents kept the length of their essay assignments the same over the last five years, 25% have decreased the length, and 24% have increased the length. More English teachers increased the length than history or business teachers. While 28% of the teachers decreased the number of essays assigned, 20% increased the number.

For PowerPoint presentations, 59% increased the number of PowerPoint presentations assigned, less than 12% had decreased them, and 29% kept the same number.

The importance of various grading criteria is presented in the table below:

Importance of Various Criteria for Grading Essays & PowerPoint Presentations

| Grading Criteria | Mean Score for Grading Essays N=216 | Mean Score for Grading PowerPoint Presentations N=216 |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Relevant content | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| Clear and understandable content | 2.2 | 2.1 |
| Logical organization of content | 2.8 | 2.3 |
| Keep the audience's attention | NA | 3.2 |
| Grammar | 3.9 | 3.7 |
| Punctuation | 5.0 | 4.7 |
| Spelling | 5.1 | 4.3 |

Note. * Mean scores based on a 6-point scale with 1 = most important and 6 = least important. NA indicates not applicable.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Written communication skills appear to have been de-emphasized over the last five years. However, results are mixed because nearly one-fourth of the teachers increased the length of essays. At the same time, about one-fourth of the teachers surveyed increased the length of essays assigned. More teachers decreased the number of essays assigned than increased the number assigned. None of the three groups of teachers (business, English, or history teachers) accounted for the increase or the decrease in the number and length of essays.

The length of essays assigned has not changed substantially over the last five years. However, most essay assignments are short -- 1,500 words or less. The number of student PowerPoint presentations assigned has increased substantially (59%). In terms of grading essays and PowerPoint presentations, teachers placed little importance on correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

A MODEL CURRICULUM FOR FINANCIAL LITERACY IN HIGH SCHOOLS IN PENNSYLVANIA

Donna Cellante, Linda K. Kavanaugh, and Marci Klinger
Robert Morris University

Our country is at a time of economic hardships, and students who are leaving high school are not equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to survive financially. According to the Jump\$tart Coalition (2008), financial literacy is the ability to use knowledge and skills to manage one's financial resources effectively for a lifetime of financial security, and must be taught by every high school across the United States.

Statement of the Problem

Given the increase of financial illiteracy in the United States, a model curriculum is needed for teaching financial literacy in high schools. This study presents the current status of financial literacy in high schools using these research questions:

- *Question 1:* What financial literacy curricula exist today?
- *Question 2:* What types of learning activities are teachers using in the financial literacy course?
- *Question 3:* What specific content areas should be addressed in a financial literacy course?
- *Question 4:* How much time is devoted to each of the content areas?

Emerging Themes

- Business teachers overwhelmingly believe that Financial Literacy is important and should be taught at the high school level.
- Business teachers believe a course in Financial Literacy should be required from grades 10-12.
- Eight main topics should be taught in a financial literacy course. These topics include financial security, money management, credit, careers, insurance, major purchases, consumer rights and responsibilities, and financial planning.
- All business teachers believe that it is important to use a variety of assessments in a financial literacy course. These include tests, quizzes, handouts, computer activities, and worksheets.
- Exposing students to technology is extremely important to all of the participants.
- Each participant has access to a TV/DVD player or projector and uses it to play DVD's and movies.
- Participants believe that NEFE and FEFE are the best curricula currently available for a financial literacy course.

FINANCIAL DECISION MAKING IN GROUP SITUATIONS: A STUDY OF BOARD ROOM DECISION-MAKING DYNAMICS

William J. Wilhelm
Indiana State University

In individual decision making, personal bias can have profoundly negative effects. In group decision making, organizational heuristics can also play a major role in the resulting economic and ethical correctness of financial decisions. During the Great Recession that began in 2008, many corporate governance decisions involving chief executive officers and boards of directors came into question as to their ethical veracity and fiduciary responsibilities; qualities expected in corporate governance to protect the best interests of stockholders and other stakeholder groups.

This research experiment was designed to address the influence on board members' decision-making abilities of the "obedience to authority" heuristic. Undergraduate business students were put into a series of simulated board room role-plays wherein they were tasked as board members with the responsibility of ensuring that a morally correct decision be made with regard to public disclosure of accurate corporate financial information in order to meet their fiduciary responsibilities to their stockholders and stakeholders.

Utilizing a case study of a prominent mortgage lending institution (the researcher changed the names to fictionalize the company and its chief executive officer) that was a major contributor in the financial crisis, the methodology included a pretest-posttest control-group design utilizing the Defining Issues Test of moral reasoning. Two test-group were given different treatments: one treatment involving supplemental instruction in ethical decision making and another treatment involving a lecture about the potential negative influences of organizational heuristics and biases.

While the "board members" in all sample groups were in agreement about the unethical nature of the proffered financial disclosure statements prior to the board of directors meeting role plays, each group was significantly influenced to diverge from their individual beliefs during the board meeting by a forceful chief executive officer. A local bank president played the role of the President/CEO in each of the three board meeting role-plays. The results seem to indicate that obedience to authority can be a profound influence on individual decision makers to support unethical behavior even when they individually would not support such behavior.

Business educators are charged with the responsibility to teach ethical behavior in business decision making. Educators must also be aware that the decision-making dynamics that influence person-to-person moral decisions can vary greatly in an organizational setting wherein a different set of variables, i.e. organizational heuristics, come into play.