AN INNOVATIVE MBA CLASS IN ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

ABSEL's emphasis on experiential learning (EL) provides a vehicle for discussing a wide array of pedagogical practices, from specific tools to broader approaches. In this article, we present a pedagogy, or more appropriately an andragogy, that thematically drives a graduate class in organizational behavior (OB). This course systematically integrates a wide array of experiential aspects such as self-assessment, reflection, skills application planning, execution of skills plans inside and especially outside the classroom, evaluation of skills planning, and case analysis, following Whetten's (2020) text Developing Management Skills. While each of these activities are common EL tools, their overarching integration in one MBA curriculum's OB class is discussed here. The class design is described, related to experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984), whole person learning (Hoover et al., 2010), and Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956), then concludes with three different instructor reflections on the approach's benefits and some practical limitations and implications.

Keywords: experiential learning, organizational behavior, whole person learning, management skills

INTRODUCTION

Organizational behavior (OB) is an important staple of an MBA education, whether taught as part of a general management class or as a standalone subject. Oftentimes, OB is stigmatized by business students (Rynes, Trank, Lawson, & Ilies, 2003). Students often feel that the 'softer' concepts and skills taught in OB are common sense or lack the cachet of the 'hard' quant, analytical, or technical skills emphasized in accounting, finance, analytics, information systems, and related coursework. More concerning, students tend to be over-confident in their personal and interpersonal skills, which contributes to devaluation of the need for courses in OB. However, the importance of such skills is central to personal and organizational success; a 1997 study (Huselid & Becker, 1997) found shareholder wealth $41,000 higher per employee in companies demonstrating strong people management skills, which would translate to approximately $70,000 per employee in 2021. Indeed, research finds that emotional intelligence is more important than IQ and technical expertise (Goleman, 1998) in predicting success, and the primary factor in determining general success (Clarke, 2010) and leadership emergence (Cote et al., 2010).

The great irony of OB education is the dilemma of teaching a domain whose focus is the concepts and behaviors associated with these skills, which are clearly crucial for personal and organizational effectiveness but are simultaneously stigmatized by many of the students themselves (Rynes et al., 2003). This creates a wide gap between actual vs. perceived relevance and need in the mind of many an MBA student and can thus be considered similar to a generalized manifestation of the Dunning-Kruger effect (1999). The Dunning-Kruger effect stipulates that individuals who lack a skill are often highly overconfident in their skill level, and thus fail to be motivated to learn about or improve in that skill area. By not attending to such learning, such individuals further lack the skills to identify or process environmental feedback that could alert them to their deficiency and motivate effort to learn, creating an almost perverse vicious cycle exacerbating the gap between affected individuals versus other, more self-aware students. Perhaps ironically, the latter category of students benefits from a virtuous cycle of perceiving the need for and seeking out opportunities for growth, resulting in development of more complex mental frameworks of needed knowledge and skills, eventual integration into a personal skill repertoire, and ultimately becoming better equipped to identify ongoing personal shortcomings and areas for improvement.

In this essay, we will discuss an innovative pedagogy - we will employ the term *andragogy* throughout, as it is the more correct term for teaching self-aware and self-motivated adult learners - of our MBA program's OB class, which is designed to confront and dispel the aforementioned irony of OB education, generate student buy-in, and provide a rich and well-organized array of student learning opportunities fundamental to experientially-based, whole person learning. First, we will describe the history and andragogy of this class generally, followed by a brief discussion of the class' content areas. Second, we will similarly map the class' design to experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and a variant called Whole Person Learning (Hoover, Giambatista, Bommer, & Sorenson, 2010), and pedagogical classification schemes such as Bloom's (Bloom et al., 1956) taxonomy. Third, we will critically assess the strengths and areas for improvement of the class itself. We will then conclude with practical implications and recommendations for educators interested in applying this pedagogy or variations on it.

BACKGROUND, CLASS DESIGN, AND ANDRAGOGY

Back in the 1980's, our graduate organizational behavior course was taught mostly as a case course. Students were given a textbook of cases and each week teams of students were required to present an overview of a case, along with their analysis. A few years later, a new professor came to campus to teach this course. His master's and doctoral programs employed different modalities of teaching. The master's emphasized strict lecture with very little interaction from the students and professor. On the other hand, the doctoral program was extremely experiential. Here students were encouraged to participate in class activities, discussions, reflections, and writings. The doctoral program opened the eyes of the professor who saw firsthand the benefits of this technique of teaching. He wanted to bring this experiential method of teaching into our organizational behavior class. However, he could find no books to support such a method until he came across the newly released first edition of David Whetten and Kim Cameron's book "*Developing Management Skills*." Our course professor quickly adopted the book. He began teaching the course by lecturing and using the experiential exercises in the first three chapters, along with using music and excerpts from movies. He then turned chapter teaching over to teams of students, who taught a chapter each week for the rest of the term. Lecture and experiential exercises, along with videos and a heavy emphasis on self-reflection, was the standard course design for many years. Meditation was introduced in the chapter on stress. This type of teaching fit very nicely into our Jesuit philosophy of "teaching the whole person" and the Jesuit idea of "self-examination." Our course now gave students the opportunity to experiment, practice, and self-reflect on various theories of OB and apply it to their lives.

The university later hired another professor with a background that included work as a social worker, along other life experiences - including studying spirituality under several teachers, including Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. This professor now wanted to offer meditation and personal development opportunities to our students. He again revised the format of the course and began to place great emphasis on spiritual growth along with meditation. Students were instructed to begin a twenty-minute daily meditation exercise for the eight-week online version of the course. Today, meditation has become one of the cornerstones of our course. More recently, in the life of this course another professor, who also had a strong experiential learning background both in his master's and doctoral program, began to teach this class and continues today to place strong emphasis on students' self-discovery through experiment, practice, reflection and writing and meditation.

The adoption of *Developing Management Skills* represented a key moment in the history of the class. The text presents not only a strong background in OB concepts, it comes with an exceptionally well-developed set of tools to promote self-awareness, skill application, and growth. The text essentially presents the educator with a proposition to incorporate a specific andragogy. Each module begins with the administration of multiple self-assessments. Rather than rely mostly on existing survey instruments, the texts' self-assessments are cleverly developed to identify and have students characterize their level of specific behavioral skills. To help contextualize survey results, the authors keep a large database of students who have taken the class. The book is designed primarily for MBA students, so the comparison cohort is relatively advanced.

The survey-identified skill items are carefully developed to map to the chapter/module content, terminology, and frameworks so that each reinforces the other. This is something of a departure from traditional management and OB texts, because the main standard is to develop around the chapter content and then build add-on exercises and applications – this is self-evident from perusing mainstream principles of management texts such as Jones & George (2018). In our application of *Developing Management Skills*, now authored by Whetten solely (2020), we require students to write a reflection paper for each module where survey results are processed, areas of strength and needed improvement are discussed, and experiences with meditation or related daily practice are documented. This provides reinforcement to the self-assessment and begins to focus thinking on growth and personal application.

At the end of each chapter, there are 3rd person cases for students to analyze with respect to module themes, and a very well-specified "Skills Application Planning and Evaluation" exercise whose template is replicated in each chapter. This innovative technique has students identify an area for skill improvement within a module, typically derived from self-assessment results, and to develop a rigorous and specific plan to apply the module learnings directly on the job. After some time elapses, students then evaluate their attempt(s) at behavioral improvement and tweak plans going forward.

There are eleven modules in the class, and the modules can be administered in one typical week assuming a 14- or 15-week semester. This leaves a few extra weeks for educator discretion to either add different content modules or expand on a few modules deemed of particular importance. The first module is a general introduction to the class, its unique design, and an overall Personal Assessment of Management Skills (PAMS) that subsumes all subsequent modules. PAMS is intended to also be distributed to a few work peers so that students can compare self-assessed skills levels to others' assessments of the target individual.

The first content module focuses on self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and related constructs, and considers at length the problems at the heart of OB education, specifically developing awareness and a comfort in identifying and pursuing areas needing improvement, and not being defensive but open to such feedback. Anecdotally, some students experience discomfort early in the semester, but overwhelmingly, students "buy in" to the concept within a few weeks.

The next few modules discuss, in turn, stress and time management skills; problem solving skills, both analytical and especially creative, emphasizing both individual and collaborative group processes; and communication skills, centering mostly on being supportive of others and skills associated with two-way dialogs as opposed to emphasizing stand-up speaking skills.

From there, modules become somewhat more narrowly focused. The fifth module focuses on developing power and using influence, while module six focuses on skills associated with motivating others. The remaining modules focus on conflict resolution and negotiation skills, creating an environment conducive to empowerment and delegation, skills associated with high performing teammates and teams, and skills associated with a particular perspective on leadership emphasizing positive change in organizations.

One of the beauties of the class' design is that the book is relentlessly formulaic and consistent in its approach to each module. Thus, by the third or fourth module, nearly all students become well-versed in the routine (take self-assessments, read and reflect on the chapter, write a reflection paper, analyze cases, develop a plan for behavioral improvement, and enact that plan). While educators have some leeway on what to assign, and complete flexibility regarding class sessions, the overall design is so tightly integrated that it really doesn't make much sense to depart very far from the tools the authors put in place and how to use those tools as instructors.

Whetten and Clark (1996) laid out the pedagogy and its rationale in detail, and that article presaged the text design quite well. The authors spoke of alternate inductive and deductive approaches that begin with previous experiences and relate them to principles to enrich an initial understanding, then use classroom experiences to begin to practice them in a safe environment the instructor can facilitate, then pivot to a plan to apply in the student's professional or work life, then implement and evaluate this plan, again with the instructor serving as a resource and even a coach/counselor. They accurately describe the model as an open system with one cycle coming into the classroom-as-system from real world practice, then using the classroom experience as a springboard into the second cycle back to real world application. Thus, the student's previous experiences and self-characterizations of their skill levels (often through, but not limited to, self-assessment) serve as key inputs, the classroom as a transformational process, and post-class application and reporting as the outputs. Throughout, a key element of this design is its expansion outside the classroom; day-to-day working and personal experiences are integrated into the class's design, greatly enhancing the robustness and impact of the text and course.

MAPPING ANDRAGOGY TO EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND WPL

Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory described four primary mechanisms for learning via experience. These are abstract conceptualization (AC), reflective observation (RO), concrete experience (CE), and active experimentation (AE). The activities associated with each module cover all four mechanisms, allowing for rich and varied opportunities for experiential learning. For example, the main body of each chapter reads like an advanced, graduate-level OB text. The key theories and principles that management educators are familiar with presenting in undergrad and survey management/OB classes are mostly present, and the authors provide a great deal of evidence to support the principles that serve as a foundation for the authors' identified skill sets. At other times, evidence-based literature that focuses directly on skills and their value in the workplace is also presented. All this content is characteristic of AC learning.

The Skills Application planning and evaluation exercises do an excellent job of spanning CE and AE. In these core components of the text design, students develop and implement behavioral plans stemming from identified needs and desired areas for improvement. If they are jobholders, this is ideally performed directly on the job but can also take place in their personal or more broadly defined working (e.g., student) lives. The plan provides a specific behavioral blueprint intended to motivate and define the specific behaviors the student will engage in, thus concretizing the behavior. In the evaluation stage, students not only assess the efficacy of their implementation, but also provide possible modifications for subsequent experiences. Thus, these components provide a sort of ongoing, dynamic natural laboratory for student growth and development – fulfilling AE learning. Further, engagement with the instructor can provide feedback for modifications as well to further support AE, and this can also be achieved through regular reflection papers and feedback. Instructors can also provide some advice to help define skills application plans themselves, which becomes the CE component in practice.

The famous saying, "the unexamined life is not worth living" is attributed to Socrates, and this dictum is an important pillar of the text's and class' andragogy as well. The weekly self-assessments are intended to highlight possible areas for growth, and to spur personal reflection in the background and also through regular reflection paper submissions. Thus, RO is achieved first by personal reflective observation. However, there is another component that supports RO, and that is the cases at the end of each module. In these cases, conceptually similar to the classic Harvard Case paradigm, students are put in a vicarious learning perspective (Hoover, Giambatista, & Belkin, 2012) which in turn derives from social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). Scenarios are presented in the text such that students can imagine themselves observing problem scenarios in human behavior in the workplace and apply the various concepts and skills to help resolve these problems through written or oral assignments.

In addition to the text-based applications of experiential learning, instructors have ample opportunities, particularly in the traditional classroom applications of the class, to incorporate EL principles in the classroom to augment the existing set of activities. Instructors not only can provide direct lecture (AC) support but integrate their own cases and examples that can provide opportunities for observation and experience. Video clips, for example, are great examples for RO, and role plays provide opportunities for both CE and AE; in the latter case, students can experiment with new approaches to situations because the classroom is a safe, low-stakes environment. Classroom discussion can be facilitated so that student inputs are portrayed as a sort of natural laboratory, with different strategies leading to different outcomes, facilitating AE. Fishbowl style role plays also serve an RO purpose for the audience in observing peers in the front of the room, who themselves gain CE experience while engaging in the simulation directly.

In 2010, Hoover et al. advanced a related learning theory for graduate management education they coined Whole Person Learning (WPL). The term derives from Carl Rogers (1980:6), who placed "the whole person, visceral reactions and feelings as well as thoughts and words" as central to learning and growth. In practice, WPL often looks very similar to a well-rounded approach to applying EL in the classroom. However, WPL comes at these issues from a differently motivated perspective. WPL is student-centered and begins with the question of how to simultaneously, or nearly simultaneously, co-activate emotional, intellectual, and behavioral aspects of learning. In other words, educators are charged with attending to emotional arousal, intellectual stimulation, and behavioral integration from both a macro and micro perspective. By macro, we are speaking of elements like syllabus and module construction, and by micro, we are speaking of classroom activities and moments as well as engagement and activities outside the classroom. The most unique aspect of WPL is its placement of emotional arousal in the forefront of the model.

Behavioral simulations are central to this approach, and a preceding model (Hunt & Sorenson, 2001) coined the term "microskills" in that role play and similar exercises were developed to identify very specific behaviors, such as using reflecting verbals in an active listening exercise, and repeated in an environment where everyone participated in a "fishbowl" style sequentially. There was an almost militaristic, drill-like aspect to it; students often worked from behavioral sheets generated by faculty indicating approximately 10 specific behaviors, and peers would check off the presence of such behaviors and provide peer feedback. Subsequent practitioners in this paradigm drifted away from its drill qualities based on decidedly mixed student feedback. WPL as practiced by Hoover et al. (2010, 2012) led to more open-ended and free-flowing experiential content, whether role play or general behavioral simulations.

The Whetten approach allows for faculty autonomy in the classroom and implies that faculty should mix some formal, lecture-based content with some experiential content. However, the approach relies heavily on students' engagement with the skills in their working/personal lives. The expectation is that students will practice these skills not merely in in-class simulated situations, but real situations, and reporting mechanisms are built into the class to develop plans to engage in such real-time skill building and analyze their implementation of such engagement. We have found this to be a very powerful and transformative tool, but it does have some limitations, which will be discussed shortly.

MAPPING ANDRAGOGY TO BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

Here we will apply Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956) to Whetten's approach with Bloom's cognitive and affect domain levels in italics. The textbook authors' proposed learning cycles begin with self-assessment, and this has both a cognitive and affective component. The self-assessments draw attention to skill domains and facilitate *knowledge* of what those domains are. From an affective standpoint, more advanced emotions such as *valuing and organizing* are common. That is, simply seeing the skills articulated in the self-assessment tends to create a sense of importance towards the skill, then mapping the articulated skills to their own intuitive and implicit models of skills. Evidence for this can be seen in reflection papers when students affirm or challenge their scores and relate them to their own personal experiences.

The next step, reading the text, results in a different reading experience than a traditional course. This is because the self-assessments prime attention before reading and students will *value* the content more, resulting in greater *knowledge and comprehension* than they would otherwise glean from the readings. Thus, students are typically comparing the formal content to both the self-assessments and previous personal experience and mental models (schemas) of the skill domain area.

The classroom experience, which is typically next, can reinforce the knowledge and comprehension piece through formal presentation, but typically goes beyond this by introducing experiential exercises to apply the module concepts in a shared learning environment, providing examples/stories to facilitate *application, analyzing* cases, situations, and behavioral simulations to provide *analysis*. These in turn facilitate higher affective domains such as *valuing, organizing, and characterizing*.

The written paper step, at the end of the module, combines reflections and skills application plans, thus taking the cognitive level well into the *application and analysis* levels to develop a personalized plan and more aware self-concept. It also provides *evaluation* of self. The higher affective domains, because of the learner's high stakes in the process, help motivate and drive performance here.

Later on, the student analyzes efforts at skill improvement, and it is here that the highest cognitive objectives are realized. In addition to reinforcing previous learning objectives, the real-time application of the learning concepts and writeup of this application requires *analysis, synthesis, and evaluation*. Students typically see, through trial and error, cause-and-effect relationships between behaviors and outcomes in a highly personal and high-stakes manner. Thus, students can synthesize a learned set of behaviors and raise their behavioral skill repertoire a quantum level. Personal integration of these skills is commonly achieved.

Interestingly, Bloom (Bloom et al., 1956) differs from Hoover et al (2010) in that Bloom focuses on cognition and affect, whereas Hoover et al. include a separate behavioral dimension. While a Bloom proponent might argue that behavior could represent a cognitive domain, a WPL proponent would argue that the behavioral piece is important and unique enough to merit a separate dimension. An individual could have an extremely high level of cognitive understanding of an important phenomenon yet lack the behavioral self-awareness and skill to transfer that understanding into successful behavioral practice in the moment. Or, to put it more simply, a person could have sufficient cognitive mastery to write a best-selling book on leadership and still not be an effective leader personally.

ASSESSMENT

In this section, we provide personal reflections by the instructors who frequently teach the course themselves as well as selected but typical student feedback examples:

Instructor 1

I teach the course in the traditional classroom as well as online. Our student demography differs considerably across the two learning environments; in the former, we have high proportions of 5-year dual degree (BS/MBA) students who are typically 4th or 5th year traditionally-aged students as well as a high number of international students. In the latter program, we have a profile more typical of a 'classical' MBA program – full-time employees, professionals, or managers. In this latter program, ages range greatly with a rich mix of twentysomethings through forty-somethings and beyond. In the former program, however, a plurality of students are around 21-23 years old, with the international students varying in age, and a few traditional MBA students mixed in.

This is an important distinction because it affects the effectiveness of the class. In the online MBA program, and I apologize for departing from typical academic sobriety of prose, the class is borderline miraculous. This is because the students have more maturity, very high stakes in their learning because they are working, and the work provides rich, daily opportunities to practice the skills with immediacy and repeatedly. This particular cohort doesn't even feature in-depth lecture videos currently, though the platform does provide for discussion forums and weekly reflection papers that, because of the nature of the template, constitute nearly the entirety of faculty workload which creates a space in time for very rich one-on-one feedback that often takes on a coaching/counseling character.

The traditional class is somewhat more of a mixed bag, though still a very positive overall experience. Compared to the online MBA, a great advantage of this program is the face time. Not only is the time valuable to present material, the instructor can use this face time to offset some of the demographic challenges of the cohort. The international students benefit from time spent discussing the unique nature of the class and its assignments; most of our internationals come from nations that favor traditional, lecture-based teaching with assignments that don't allow for personal reflection. Thus, it can be frame-breaking for these students, and they typically need more support to wrap their minds around the approach. The classroom also provides a space in time to counter some of the limitations of the cohort – behavioral simulations and 3rd party observation of behavior provide shared experiences to connect skills to behavioral and consequential specifics. This promotes dialog and learning.

On the other hand, the younger 5-year cohort are typically students with little professional experience and many have either no job or a very low-level part time job to get them through school. Thus, they are much more impoverished in being able to implement skills plans on the job and in real time and must instead rely on friends and roommates with greater frequency. These experiences often, but not always, provide less richness and less opportunity for transformative skill development. Another issue is student buy-in. A 22-year-old 5-year accounting or finance student seems much more likely than most MBA students to fall prey to the Dunning-Kruger effect (1999) and have both overconfidence and lack of knowledge or motivation regarding interpersonal skills. Further, though it takes some skill, a student can more or less fake their way through the assignments. Some students don't engage much with the material in practice and may exaggerate their behavioral improvement attempts in their writeups, and while sometimes I can catch such exaggeration, other times students can craft their prose in a way that makes it difficult or impossible to discern. Finally, a few students express discomfort with taking the surveys either directly or indirectly by repeatedly challenging results they don't agree with, but with coaching, discussion, and repetition, this discomfort typically dissipates a few weeks into term. Other 5-years respond tremendously well to the andragogy, however, and overall the on-campus version of class is mostly successful for the majority of students.

Instructor 2

I teach this course strictly in the online format. I have worked with previous instructors who helped build this online course. Over the years their advice, and guidance has been welcome and very helpful. We have had many discussions about the merits of each of the chapters and talked about the best ways to offer these topics in the online format. What we do today in this class is the result of years of trial and error, providing us a course that has been well tested, studied and evaluated. One of the things I enjoy most about teaching the course is that I am less of an instructor and more of a coach. We have no exams. So, I am free to spend my time reading and responding to posted self-assessments assignments and reflection papers. If anything, I can become a mentor to the students as they travel across our 8-week program. By sharing my personal work experiences/advice and insight (and not the "right" answers) with the students gives the class a more relaxed environment for study and self-reflection.

The demographics for my online course have stayed very constant over the past years. Most of the students are mid-level career professionals with about at least 5 years' work experience. This makes the course easy to conduct as many of the online students are at the stage in their career where topics of stress and well-being, building relationships by communicating supportively, gaining power, dealing with conflict are all important topics to them. Many of these students can easily identify with workplace situations mentioned in the book; they quickly see the need for mastering them as they climb their career ladder. For the instructor and for the student this environment makes the course move very smoothly and rewarding.

However, in addition to the above student profile I will have a few "outliers." These students present more of a teaching challenge. One typical outlier is the unemployed student who is not working and has no current business experience to draw on. The challenge here is how do I get this person to relate to a current business situation? Many times, when it comes to asking for completing a skill building exercise, they can only look to their family members of friends as a resource for practice and reflection.

Another outlier is the 5-year undergrad/grad student who is about to leave campus with their bachelors/master's degree and no full time work experience. The only work experience they draw on is what they have gained from summer internships or part-time jobs. They struggle to keep up with the full-time working professionals in class. When it comes to personal reflection these students labor with being forthright about personal feelings.

I fully concur with instructor 1 about the weakness of these students who lack the opportunity to fully engage with the material in practice. If we accomplish anything with them we are introducing topics/theories they will face in their upcoming work life. This course may offer a bit of a cushion to them in the coming years and serve as a resource.

Permit me to add a note about one outlier who must be one of my eccentric students. This person came to the class as a former jet fighter pilot in the Soviet Airforce. After two weeks of coaching and encouraging him to "trust the process" he withdrew from the class. He appeared to be hostile to any kind of self-assessment and reflection the course offered.

Instructor 3

As with Instructor 1, I teach the course in both the traditional and online setting. The course remains a favorite teaching experience regardless of setting. As an instructor, I relish observing the rapid growth in student skill and emotional development not likely to occur through other courses.

Establishing and maintaining a high level of trust from the outset is priority. Encouraging students' personal expressions require that instructors build psychological safety into the class setting. I tell students in my opening lecture or in my welcome email that we will operate under the premise that, "what happens in class, stays in class," for discussions, face-to-face or in online forums. In addition, students in our course submit all reflection work to confidential digital drop boxes. Instructors assess student work for substantive use of methodology and process, encouraging deeper examination where students limit their examinations, but instructors leave any judgement about what students express in thoughts and feelings to the student. This establishes the instructor in the role of facilitator and the mutual respect established in the confidentiality of that role encourages students to explore for themselves in a fuller way.

Reflection work, submitted with each topic/chapter, invites students into a weekly conversation with themselves about course topics and their integration. Students append and submit a pre-formatted Self-Assessment document each week documenting for themselves through iterative process, their own progress throughout the course. Students discover themselves, their achievements, resistances, and struggles, building confidence and finding means to shore up doubt as they reflect on results of topic-related self-assessments and the progression of their chosen daily mindfulness practice (described earlier in this paper).

Students do all of this within their chosen level of engagement. In the online setting where students' professional experience places them in management quandaries with regularity, students engage quickly and express appreciation for the opportunity to explore topics without outside interference of coworkers or political agendas. Most traditional students see course work as an opportunity for practical application and self-examination not yet available to them, though some remain hesitant about the opportunity for a few weeks before engaging beyond the cursory. Through weekly feedback, incorporating gentle rebuke and guidance when students flounder or resist engaging, an instructor can encourage students to explore reflections about topics more or ask them to provide detail where lacking.

As described earlier in this section, students in the traditional and online setting approach the course material and explore topics from vantage points that vary with professional and life experience. By the course conclusion, students come to similar realizations regarding the importance of course and its material not just to professional success, but to their overall well-being. What follows are samples from student reflection work in the final week of the course:

> …all the activities and exercises I engaged in expressed a different part of myself I never realized before. Throughout the course, I learned more about my strengths and weaknesses, how creative I can be, and what I value most importantly in my life. Although these areas might seem easy to identify on the surface, Organizational Behavior allowed me to look at these areas from a different perspective. This course has given me a variety of tools that are effective for me not just in my personal life but also in my future career. If a managerial role is possible in my future, I now have the ability and confidence to pursue the role successfully. (Spring 2020 on-campus student)

> I very much look forward to becoming a manager and impacting an organization in a positive way. I know that because of this course that I am much more equipped now to enter the workforce than I was before. The skills discussed in this paper are invaluable and all people no matter their occupation should be working to improve upon them every chance they get. I am also very happy that the integrous(sic) Jesuit values talked about in this course and in other courses at the University of Scranton will create great ethical leaders and great people making a difference in the world after they graduate. (Spring 2020 on-campus student)

> I have been extremely proud of myself for sticking with the daily practice (mediation), as I truly believe it has helped. The daily practice is definitely something that I will continue even after this course concludes. I have learned a lot in this course not only about management but about myself as well. I have several key areas of improvement I need to work on and I will use the lessons learned from the text to continue to guide me toward success. In addition, because of this course, I have set myself some ambitious goals and I am anxious to start/continue working toward them. As I move throughout the remainder of the MBA program and my career I will let the principles learned in this course guide me, as I become a better manager, leader and person. (Fall 2018 online student)

> Not only the meditation, but the class and these reflections have helped me to get back on track to being healthy and happy. It forced me to stop and take time for myself. (Fall 2018 online student)

> Overall, I have really enjoyed performing Deep Meditation throughout the past eight weeks. Had this not been an assignment, I would probably never have tried this. I feel that I have really benefited from Deep Meditation. It has helped establish a routine in my evening, helped to relax my thoughts and has helped decrease my stress levels. (Fall 2018 online student)

> As I began to reflect on my introspective journey, I find myself lingering with this theme of conclusions. Here I am at the end of this exercise, this course, and my graduate career. The well-used cliché of focusing on the journey over the destination is the backbone of my understanding. In truth, regardless of what I would have done, I would most likely have found myself in the same position that is, acquiring my degree, and looking for the next stage in my life. However, I cannot help but reflect on my journey and the progress I have made as an individual. This reflection exercise has helped me connect more to the university's focus on cura personalis and how learning can and ought to be a holistic process that involves all aspects of the self. The fallacy of "the destination" lies in the idea of progress being linear, this is not the case. Growth can have its downward turns. This is not to dissuade one for continuing to reach for higher. Often, it is difficult to see where you are headed when you find yourself in these pitfalls. It is only when you are able to overcome life's obstacles that you are able to look back and see the culmination of all that you were capable of and to realize that it is only a portion of what you will be capable of. (Spring 2019 on-campus student)

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we discussed the efficacy of the Developing Management Skills (Whetten, 2020) paradigm for teaching OB in an MBA environment. We endeavored to be honest in pointing out pros and cons, strengths and limitations.

Despite some of the limitations we discussed in applying the paradigm, particularly in our on-campus MBA program, we remain committed to the approach and believe that it remains superior to traditionally-taught, lecture-based coursework, case-heavy coursework, and experientially-based coursework that lacks a tight, overarching all-encompassing design. One of the 3 instructors has worked extensively with WPL as both a researcher and educator, and comparing the two approaches, finds the Whetten and Cameron approach superior to the original andragogy elaborated by Hoover et al. (2010), though the former approach is clearly harmonious with WPL's general emphases of simultaneity or near-simultaneity in activating cognitive, behavior, and emotional learning domains. One of the main benefits of our approach is that it leverages out-of-classroom experiences, which can free up substantial class time for either lecture, case, experiential, or whole-person based learning, so an educator can essentially have the best of both worlds.

We recommend this approach wholeheartedly for online MBA programs, and MBA programs whose cohort typically has substantial full-time work experience. For programs featuring students who are going straight through their bachelor's and master's degree, some thought should be spent on how to use classroom time in lieu of a cohort with more work and life experience. Also, there might be some scaling back of modules that are potentially less relatable to this audience (such as empowering others, e.g.). More time in class to help motivate and orient the reflection work and skills application plans and evaluations is also helpful here.

For MBA programs with many international students, we have found that these students do tend to have work and life experience commensurate with elite or near-elite MBA programs or solid online programs. While that is not an issue, educators thinking about this approach should seriously consider the level of expertise the international cohort has with English and whether the nations the international cohort is drawn from has an 'old school' educational tradition that can cause confusion for these individuals. These concerns, however, would seem to be an issue with any OB class regardless of pedagogy.

Despite the concerns stated above, however, we still strongly recommend the approach even in environments that are less munificent for its application, meaning we recommend it across MBA cohort demography and delivery method, with perhaps some modifications for cohort dynamics.

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