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ASSESSING BUSINESS PEDAGOGY

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ABSTRACT

The theme of the 1992 ABSEL Convention, "Total Quality in Management of Business Pedagogy," provides an opportunity to gain ideas on how to improve the measurements essential to improving the quality of management of business pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

The overall decline in the competitiveness of U.S. organizations in the world market has been well documented. Recent criticisms call for drastic improvements in pedagogy (Gray, 1990). Education can no longer be evaluated in terms of courses attempted or programs or degrees completed (Zoffer, 1987). Universities have been criticized for failure to provide an opportunity for full development of students beyond their chosen academic area (Edwards & Brannen, 1990). Literacy, managerial and analytical skills have all been criticized as businesses create educational programs to enhance these skills (McGee, 1989). Critics say that measurement of the results of the pedagogy, not its inputs, is essential for improving its effectiveness (Evangelauf, 1989, Aper & Hinkle, 1991).

DISCUSSION

Assessment by measuring success in the placement of students in business organizations and their subsequent success may be the best way to evaluate business pedagogy (Edwards & Brannen, 1990). This assessment method implies the school's mission is to provide marketable skills and knowledge to its students. A carefully developed curriculum and placement program can improve the success. The long-term aspect of consistent feedback from the organizations and alumni provides the vital information for program adjustment to meet the changing needs of the marketplace (McClain, 1987).

Although the marketplace can provide assessment of the overall results, quality management of the pedagogy requires continued evaluation and selection of curriculum, methods and individuals, Tong, 1987). Many competencies can be assessed with the traditional testing such as the National Uniform Certified Public Accountant Examination commonly used for accounting majors. Recognizing the need for other skills not evaluated by national examinations, many schools are changing their content and evaluation methods to include competencies in human resource management and communication as well as analytical skills. The Accounting Education Change Commission, for example, suggests four research areas to impact positively the skills of accounting graduates: (1) identifying the competencies graduates should possess upon entry into the profession, (2) designing a curriculum and pedagogy which imbues students with these competencies, (3) implementing the newly designed curriculum and pedagogy, and (4) measuring its effectiveness.

The quality of a business pedagogy depends on management's success in making the most effective use of its resources. Improved evaluation of curriculum, teaching methods and individual faculty members can play an important role. Good measurements are essential in

achieving accurate evaluations, yet the final judgement is usually at least partially subjective and can vary widely between individuals. Consequently, accuracy is a problem. There are a few principles that can help improve accuracy (Zikmund, 1991, Kesling & Cleveland, 1992):

Numerical models often do not appropriately weight all factors. Increasing the number of individual sources tends to improve reliability. Increasing the number of factors in the measurement from each source also tends to improve reliability. Increasing the range of possible scores tends to improve sensitivity. These principles, of course, must be limited in practical applications.

The model used to combine measurements can also impact the evaluation. Ranking by the average of several factors, for example, may produce different results than setting minimal requirements for these factors (Kesling & Cleveland, 1992).

CONCLUSION

Assessment, however difficult, is essential to improving the quality of business pedagogy, and requires continued assessment of the assessment methods.

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