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## Experiential Exercises for Courses From Introduction to Business Through Business Strategy

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## TEACHING & LEARNING

# Experiential Exercises for Courses From Introduction to Business Through Business Strategy

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Whether we are teaching an introductory business course, a cross-cultural management course, or a senior capstone course, many of us continually look for new experiential learning approaches that actively engage students in the learning process. In this issue of *OMJ*, the Teaching & Learning section offers three articles that will be of interest to faculty members who seek to renew or reframe their courses using innovative experiential exercises or experiential based projects.

The first article focuses on national cultural differences that can impact the success of global expansion strategies. “Windows on the World: An Experiential Exercise” is designed to increase student awareness of cultural differences and the influence of culture on management practice. Through consultant–client role-plays, students develop suggestions for the cultural modification of home-country managerial practices in Brazil or China. In the exercise, the consultant teams develop recommendations for culturally appropriate management practices related to leadership, organizational structure, decision making, communication, motivation, dispute resolution, and ethics. Authors Mary Garlington Trefry and Valerie Labun Christian highlight the importance of cultural due diligence in the success of cross-border business expansion.

In addition to the challenges posed by the globalization of business, rapidly changing technology has influenced not only the conduct of business but student learning. “Digital natives” entering our classrooms are adept at navigating digital and mobile devices. Although they appear to be masters of online search, how discerning are these students in assessing the integrity and nuances of digital content? In researching and analyzing business problems, how familiar are they with relevant and appropriate online resources? Anne Walsh and Susan C. Borkowski, authors of “Linking Teams With Technology: Integrating Databases in Experiential Exercises in

an Introductory Business Course,” present a project with learning modules that use hyperlinks to expose students to useful business databases. Used in an interdisciplinary introductory business course, the exercises are designed to connect students to a variety of cross-functional databases through the use of hyperlinks as they research and design a business plan. Not only does this approach align with student learning styles, but also this introductory business course exposes students to relevant databases that will be important for research throughout their business-school education.

While the article just described is designed for introductory business courses, “Learning Through Collaboration and Competition: Incorporating Problem-Based Learning and Competition-Based Learning in a Capstone Course” is appropriate for an integrative senior-level capstone business experience. Authors Ashay Desai, Michael Tippins, and J. B. Arbaugh offer a live capstone experience in which students serve as consultants to local businesses. Student teams work with the client organizations to identify cross-functional problems or strategic issues and develop recommendations for the top managers of those organizations. A problem-based learning approach in which real-life organizational issues are addressed affords rich opportunities for student learning and business experience. The authors add a competitive twist to the course design as student teams propose competing recommendations to clients in a format similar to the television show *The Apprentice*. This competitive consulting model also fosters intergroup collaboration as team members work together to provide clients with the best solutions and recommendations.

Together these three articles offer ideas for introductory through senior-level business courses. They provide opportunities for in-class learning as well as experiences and interactions with business organizations. The authors not only afford opportunities to reflect on the challenges of international cultural differences, technological change, and competitive problem solving, but also offer experiential approaches to improve student understanding of these challenges.

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