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TEACHING & LEARNING

Experiential Exercises on Goal Setting, Leadership/ Followership, and Workplace Readiness

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The teaching and learning process is enhanced by the utilization of quality experiential exercises and experiences that make course material more relevant to students. This issue of *OMJ* includes three articles in the teaching and learning section that do just that. The first article presents an experiential exercise allowing students to apply common goal-setting concepts to hypothetical workplace scenarios. The second article provides an exercise that demonstrates the important role of followers in successful leadership. The third article in this issue presents an activity where students participate in every phase of the training process to design workplace readiness training for other students.

Goal setting is a common topic in management courses. In “Setting Goals in Different Roles: Applying Key Results From the Goal-Setting Literature,” Lynn E. Miller and Richard M. Weiss review a sample of popular organizational behavior (OB) textbooks in order to discuss the overlap and agreement among authors about important goal-setting findings. They find that discussions related to goal difficulty, goal specificity, participation in goal setting, and feedback are most commonly occurring in these texts. An exercise that allows students to apply these principles to hypothetical scenarios is then presented in order to make these concepts more relevant to a real-life setting.

Much exploration and discussion has occurred related to the teaching of leadership; however, relatively little focus has

been placed on teaching about followership. In “Most Admired Leader/Most Admired Follower,” Susan D. Baker, Erica L. Anthony, and Susan A. Stites-Doe provide an exercise that allows students to contrast the characteristics of good leaders with the characteristics of good followers. Through the discussion of these characteristics, students learn that leaders can be followers and followers can be leaders. Overall, the exercise enables students to see that followers are important to the leadership process and encourages in-depth discussion based on relevant leadership theories.

Finally, Lisa A. Burke-Smalley and Kathleen Wheatley present an experiential activity that is designed to improve workplace readiness skills (part of the college mission) in “Mission-Centric Learning: Developing Students’ Workplace Readiness Skills.” The project is designed to make course concepts concrete by asking students to create a comprehensive training program that exposes other students to skills needed for workplace success. Detailed information is provided so that readers can apply this concept to the classroom.

The articles included in this issue encourage us to explore and experiment with new classroom exercises and approaches to make concepts more relevant to the workplace and to students personally. The activities presented here provide a venue to enhance the teaching of goal setting, leadership, and workplace readiness skills. I encourage you to consider how all of these approaches can augment student experience and preparation.

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