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Journal for Advancing Business Education

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

Caused by the Pandemic, in September 2021 and the months following a record number of over 17 million Americans (about twelve percent of the U.S. workforce) left their respective jobs. With reference to another historical, economic event, The Great Depression, people started calling this conspicuous phenomenon and the ensuing labor shortage The Great Resignation. However, this phenomenon was not only confined to certain industries. As of lately, more and more people in the academic world quit their jobs for various reasons, such as they want to change their personal life or look for a more rewarding professional experience; and this wave of academic departures contributed and contributes to this resignation movement.

The Pandemic triggered a transformation in how academics engage with work and think about their work-life balance. The academic community seems to have shifted its focus away from a highly work-oriented life to a life more focused on personal well-being.

Some of the main reasons for this development are as follows:

- Academics are looking for better pay and working conditions.
- University workers reevaluating their family priorities.
- Academic baby boomers are retiring.
- Faculty compete for a decreasing number of permanent and tenure-trek posts at universities.
- Workforce reductions are taking place at financially battered institutions.
- Massive workloads are assigned to administrators and faculty (e.g., duties that go far beyond the classroom).
- University mismanagement plagues the higher education sector due to institutional politics and bureaucracy.
- The private sector offers more and more attractive job opportunities for university employees which encourages them to switch from the college to the private sector.
- Women and people of color seem to be disproportionally disadvantaged.

It will be interesting to see how this resignation movement evolves over the coming months and years and how it reshapes the professional operation of the University.

Thank you!

Christian Gilde
Managing Editor

Journal for Advancing Business Education

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

DIVERSITY, MULTICULTURALISM, AND INCLUSIVITY: THE SAMURAI WAY

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to understand the College of Business seniors' perceptions regarding diversity practices. It examines Bushido's Seven Virtues in multicultural higher education contexts. Students expressed that racial or ethnic diversity in the classroom allows for a wider variety of experiences to be shared. Further, they reported awareness of the programs to increase respect for diversity. Contrary to these findings, students indicated less awareness of services addressing the needs of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals. Future studies are needed to determine the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy in business education classrooms.

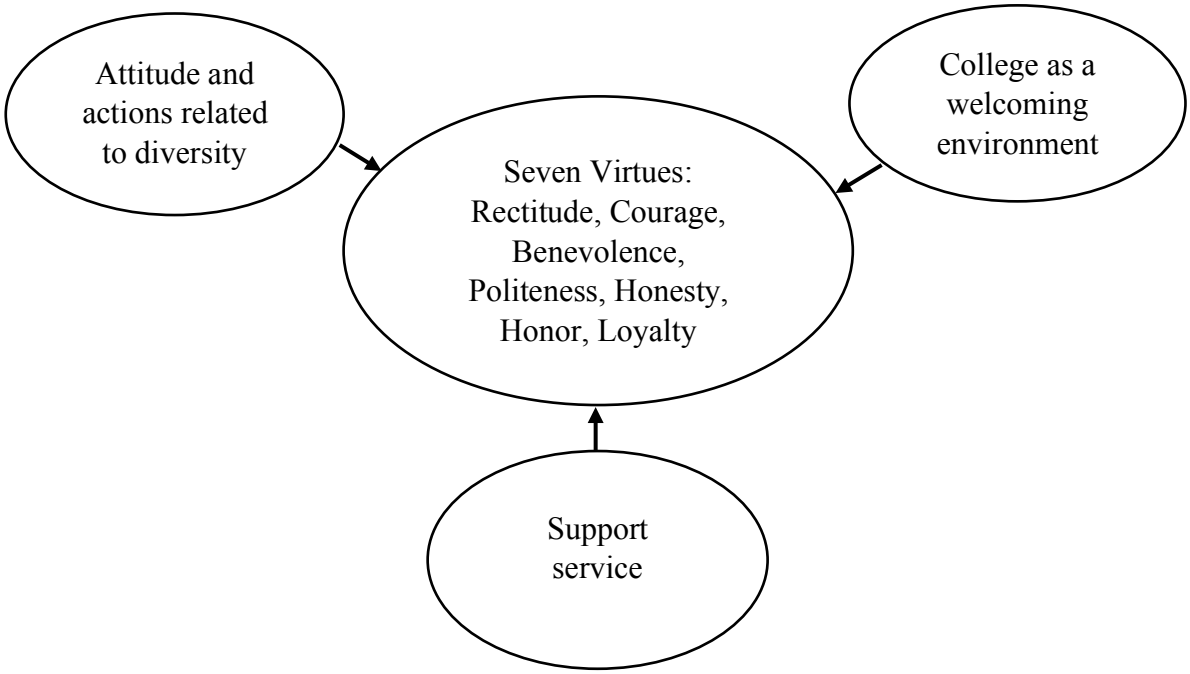
Although multicultural and diversity topics have been intensely studied in the last two decades, it is essential to assess the current campus practice of multiculturalism and diversity appropriately. Today's employers demand employees who can operate in an increasingly multicultural environment. To prepare college students to meet these expectations, higher education institutions need to leverage all the resources and skills available at their disposal to attain a diverse campus climate. A rich body of literature has demonstrated that a diverse campus provides opportunities for students to immerse themselves in dynamic environments and experiment with novel ideas and new relationships with parties with different backgrounds (Gurin et al., 2002). It is essential to recognize that a diverse campus climate is an idealized goal that requires commitment from the university administration, faculty, and students.

Let's explore the Way of the Samurai/Warrior. Bushido consists of bushi, a social class later called Samurai, and do (the way) means "way of the samurai/warrior." The earliest appearance of the word bushido as a philosophy of war does not go back to before the seventeenth century (Benesch, 2011, p. 6). During the next two to three centuries, Bushido evolved from a warrior's mindset to a Confucian way of life, based on loyalty, faith, and righteousness (Takeda, 2021, p. 4). In the late nineteenth century, Inazo Nitobe, in his highly influential book (Nitobe, 1900), infused bushido moral values with a public spirit and listed several virtues of Bushido (Yamamoto, 2019, p. 14). In sequence, the 'Seven Virtues' Samurai adhered to are rectitude (*gi*), courage (*yu*), benevolence (*jin*), politeness (*rei*), honesty (*sei*), honor (*meiyo*), and loyalty (*chugi*). Bushido thus teaches the values of a person who should stand out as a role model above the people (Takeda, 2021).

Utilized by Samurai to expedite mastery of self-control and discipline, the virtues lie at the heart of modern perceptions regarding Samurai practices. Using Bushido's seven virtues, the Samurai code has been renewed to develop personal and social awareness, communication skills, intra- and interpersonal relationships, and sources of empowerment needed within society (Pambianchi-Gold, 2019).

The study was conducted at an AACSB-International accredited comprehensive regional higher education institution publicly supporting diversity in its strategic plan, core values, and diversity action plan. In addition, the commitment to diversity for the College of Business is evident in its mission, values, and student learning outcomes. However, students' perspectives on diversity within the College of Business have not been investigated. This research provides an analysis based on the College of Business Diversity, Multiculturalism, and Inclusivity survey. The study aims to identify the College of Business seniors' attitudes, behaviors, and experiences regarding diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusivity. The study explores the students' perceptions of campus diversity practices in terms of (1) students' attitudes and actions related to diversity, (2) students' views about the College of Business as a welcoming environment, and (3) students' perceived support services. Figure 1 presents the research framework.

Figure 1
Research Framework



Below are the Seven Virtues in detail:

1. Rectitude, righteousness, or justice. Rectitude (*gi*) is considered the most fundamental virtue of the samurai. Nitobe (2017) defines it as "a power of resolution – rectitude is the power of deciding upon a certain course of conduct according to reason, without wavering" (as cited in Watahiki et al., 2020, p. 153) Rectitude means acting justly and being trustworthy in dealing with people. Righteousness begins with oneself and requires responsibility for one's decisions and actions (Watahiki et al., 2020, p. 152).

2. Courage (*yu*) is the equivalent of determination, fearlessness, and confidence (as cited in Watahiki et al., 2020). It represents the aptitude to carry oneself without hesitation and is based on intelligence and strength (Nitobe, 2017). Simply put, courage refers to doing what is right in the face of danger.

3. Benevolence or compassion (*jin*) is the notion of exercising strength through deep preparation and practice to accomplish noble goals and support fellow human beings (Watahiki et al., 2020, p. 153). It is recognized as the highest of all the traits of the human soul.

4. Politeness or respect (*rei*) is defined as respectful regard for the feelings of others, the attitude, and the visible display of altruism and goodwill (Watahiki et al., 2020, p. 153).

5. Honesty (*sei*) exhibits strength in esteem and self-esteem. The deep belief is that speaking and doing have the same meaning; nothing will prevent one from fulfilling the required task (Nitobe, 2017).

6. Honor (*meiyo*) is recognized as the ultimate pursuit of goodness. Choices and resolutions reflect a person's identity and integrity (Watahiki et al., 2020, p. 153). Embarrassment and disgrace are the biggest stigmas a samurai could suffer (Nitobe, 2017, as cited in Watahiki et al., 2020, p. 154).

7. Loyalty (*chugi*) is the allegiance to the one higher up within the chain of command. Immense devotion to those in one's care and all the people to one is accountable (Mukaisho, 2016, as cited in Watahiki et al., 2020, p. 154). In other words, in contrast to the individualism of the West, the Japanese value loyalty (*chugi*) to the needs and interests of the group.

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

The role and impact of diversity in higher education have greatly attracted researchers' and university administrators' attention. Enyeart Smith et al. (2017) conducted a study to analyze perceptions of self-reflection and attitudes among students, faculty, and staff and identify strategies to increase opportunities for improved cultural competence in the higher education academic environment. This study reported positive comments about faculty efforts regarding cultural competency. However, students did provide suggestions to help faculty continue cultural competency efforts. Some of those suggestions included "work[ing] with international students and diverse local populations to increase understanding of cultural backgrounds, customs and practice" (Enyeart Smith et al., 2017, p. 30). It was interesting to note that students "recognized that diversity is not just race or ethnicity and understood diversity to include many other factors, such as sexual orientation, learning abilities, and physical and mental skills" (Enyeart Smith et al., 2017, p. 30). Besides, students indicated that faculty members should approach cultural competency through students' perceptions, such as volunteer and service opportunities.

Similarly, Harpalani (2017) provided a comprehensive analysis of safe spaces and the importance of diversity. He stated, "Through supporting students of color and providing unique educational opportunities for all students, safe spaces play an important role in achieving and maintaining these benefits" (Harpalani, 2017, p. 166). He spent much time focusing on safe spaces for minority students. Also, he provided an analysis from the minority student perspective. Often, teaching about diversity is focused on making White students comfortable learning about their privilege. However, while it is crucial to have White students feel comfortable talking about these issues, educators should not mainly focus their attention on White students. Instead, the focus should bridge relationships between White students and students of color.

Mitchell and Vandergrift (2014) explored how faculty members can increase White students' engagement in issues related to diversity and multiculturalism. They cautioned about students being "color-blind." It is essential for faculty to support students' soft skill development to prevent color blindness in the classroom. By helping students recognize their differences, faculty will support students' interpersonal development by understanding each other's perspectives. This could be a foundational aspect of implementing diversity discussions to encourage diversity work in the classroom.

More recently, Good et al. (2020) researched "The impact of classroom diversity philosophies on the STEM performance of undergraduate students of color." They experimentally tested if instructors' use of diversity philosophies (such as Color-Blind, Multicultural, or Control) impacts students of color and white students' performance in a STEM environment and learning STEM content (Good et al., 2020, p. 2). The study showed that the Multicultural diversity philosophy signals inclusion for groups marginalized racially and ethnically compared to the Color-Blind diversity philosophy (Good et al., 2020, p. 6). The researchers concluded that when Multicultural, compared to Color-Blind language, is implemented by the instructor, participants of color experienced better results in chemistry, math, or physics (Good et al., 2020, p. 7). The current literature review suggests that more studies are needed to investigate diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusivity issues from students' perspectives.

In a study to determine how culturally responsive pedagogy can address the instructional needs of a diverse student population, Shey and Fangwi (2020) found that culturally responsive pedagogy is a critical concept for preparing teachers to understand different cultures. They posited that multicultural competence comprises multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills (pp. 59-61). Further, Janakiraman et al. (2019) studied the importance of multicultural education in developing positive multicultural attitudes. The study examined how Professor Jane (pseudonym) conducted her class on multicultural education, educational equality and multicultural attitudes among the students. From the qualitative case study, it was learned that Professor Jane's education, personal attitudes, experiences, and exposure to different cultures enabled her to have the appropriate attitude to conduct the topic of multiculturalism (p. 312).

Notably, Grapin and Pereiras (2019) conducted a study describing a Multicultural Organizational Development (MOD) model and its application to higher education. The authors defined MOD as the process of organizations eliminating bias. For graduate programs to implement the multicultural model, the institution must work towards cultural relevance, pluralist teaching approach, learning, and scholarship. The authors specified two types of multicultural education: (1) Multicultural course interventions and (2) Service-learning programs to promote the reduction of cultural bias in higher education (Grapin & Pereiras, 2019, pp. 308-311).

Nitobe explains that there are two kinds of human relationships: vertical and horizontal. The vertical relationship is between an individual and something higher than the person, such as God. The horizontal relationship is one among people. Though Nitobe teaches people to bear something higher than themselves in mind, he does not encourage them to train themselves by living in seclusion. Nitobe thought that people could satisfy human nature only when they were in society. He calls such human desire for coexistence "sociality" (oshiarichii) and links it to respect or politeness (*rei*). (Yamamoto, 2019, p. 22). What relevance does the Samurai of medieval Japan have to how we live in a multicultural, diverse society? Notably, the virtues followed by those warriors are transferable in the life of this century. The Bushido code was a guiding principle for Japanese Samurai to help them "become" better people.

METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken to understand an AACSB-accredited College of Business seniors' perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and experiences regarding diversity and multiculturalism at a comprehensive regional institution of higher education in the USA.

The survey instrument consisted of demographic inquiries (gender, sexual identity, race, and age) and a baseline question on the first generation, enrollment, residency, and whether students were registered with disability access services.

Respondents completed 65 inquiries about diversity perceptions and multiculturalism experiences. A five (5) point Likert scale was provided for responses. The survey included self-selection questions on courses that strengthened and improved students' understanding of and awareness of diversity, informal interactional venues that increased diversity awareness, and a two (2) point Likert scale on their awareness of the university's support programs and services.

Three hundred and seventy-two seniors (N=372) were identified and invited to participate in the study by completing a web survey sent through an email invitation. One hundred and twenty-four seniors responded to the survey, with a response rate of 33 percent. Their demographics are presented in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Demographics

Table 1

Respondent Characteristics – Gender, Sexual Identity, Ethnicity, and Age

N = 124

Category	Subcategories	Number	Percent
Gender[a]			
	Female	66	53.66
	Male	55	44.72
	Transgender	0	0
	Other	2	1.62
Sexual Identity			
	Heterosexual	118	95.16
	Bisexual	3	2.41
	Gay	1	0.81
	Lesbian	1	0.81
	Other	0	0
	Prefer not to respond to this question	1	0.81
Race	White/Caucasian	107	86.29
	Black/African American	5	4.03
	Two or more races/ethnicities	5	4.03
	Asian or Pacific Islander	2	1.61
	Hispanic or Latino	3	2.42
	Middle Eastern	1	0.81
	Other	1	0.81
Age			
	18-24	109	87.90
	25-34	9	7.26
	35-44	4	3.23
	45-54	2	1.61

Note. [a] n = 123. One participant did not answer the question.

This studied university is located in a college town in the southeastern region of the United States, and White/Caucasian students (86.29%) contribute a majority of the university population. Most of the respondents were female (53.66%), heterosexual (95.16%), and traditionally aged college students aged 18-24 years (87.90%).

Table 2
First Generation, Enrollment, Residence, and Registered with Disability Access Services
N = 124

Category	Subcategories	Number	Percent
First Generation			
	Not first-generation	85	68.55
	First-generation	39	31.45
Enrollment			
	Full-time	116	93.55
	Part-time	8	6.45
Residence[b]			
	Living off-campus	98	79.67
	Living on campus	25	20.33
Registered with Disability Access Services			
	No	116	93.55
	Yes	8	6.45

Note. [b] n = 123. One participant did not answer the question.

The majority reported that they were not first-generation college students. As expected, the majority of students enrolled full-time and lived off-campus. Only a few students were registered with the Disability Access Services.

RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

The analysis of student perceived diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusivity issues has been divided into the following three categories: (a) student attitudes and actions related to diversity, (b) student perception of college as a welcoming environment, and (c) student perception of support services.

Student Attitudes and Actions Related to Diversity

Students (42.37 %) indicated that the College of Business classroom's climate accepts who they are. They (44.83 %) expressed that racial/ethnic diversity in the classroom allows for a

wider variety of experiences to be shared. Likewise, students (35.90 %) reported that the faculty creates an environment conducive to the free and open expression of opinions and beliefs. Students (30.51 %) confirmed that the College has visible leadership in fostering respect for diversity. Further, students (35.34%) reported that the faculty encourages students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds to participate equally in classroom discussion and learning. Over 38% of students indicated that having racially/ethnically diverse peers has increased their learning. They (33.33%) agreed that the interaction among students of different racial/ethnic backgrounds exposes them to perspectives they disagree with or do not understand.

Students indicated politeness (*rei*) virtue regarding being respectful of the feelings of others in the College of Business environment, as presented in Table 3. These responses supported the Samurai virtues of rectitude (*gi*), the way of thinking, deciding, and behaving following reason, without wavering in the College. Further, the benevolence (*jin*) virtue displays the concepts of love, sympathy, and pity for others (Watahiki et al., 2020).

Table 3
College and Classroom Environments Supported Inclusivity
N = 118

Criteria	SA	A	D	SD	NS/DN	Rating Average
			%			
1. The climate in the classroom is accepting of who I am	42.37	53.39	2.54	0.85	0.85	4.36
2. Racial/ethnic diversity in the classroom allows for a wider variety of experiences to be shared	44.83	44.83	6.90	0.85	2.59	4.28
3. Faculty create an environment in the classroom that is conducive to free and open expression of opinions and beliefs	35.90	53.85	7.69	0.85	1.71	4.21
4. The College has visible leadership in fostering respect for diversity	30.51	63.56	1.69	0.00	4.24	4.16
5. Students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds participate equally in the classroom discussion and learning	35.34	50.86	9.48	1.72	2.60	4.15
6. Having racially/ethnically diverse peers increases my learning	38.14	41.52	15.25	0.85	4.24	4.08
7. Interaction among students of different racial/ethnic backgrounds in the classroom exposes students to	33.33	47.01	11.97	0.00	7.69	3.98

perspective with which they disagree or do not understand

Note. SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; NS/DN = Not Sure/Don't know

Students were asked questions about their effort to stop prejudices/discrimination against other ethnicities. Generally, 51.72 % of students would get to know people from different cultures and groups as individuals, and 62.71 % reported they would refuse to forward email messages with comments or jokes derogatory to any group or culture, or sex. When a discriminatory or stereotypical comment is made, only 28.81 % of students indicated they challenge those who commented. Further, over 21% reported that they would take action to have offensive graffiti removed, reflecting rectitude (*gi*), benevolence (*jin*), and courage (*yu*) virtues.

The notion of rectitude (*gi*) can be seen in the concept of social justice. In addition, the courage (*yu*) virtue championed that righteous action speaks louder than words. For bushido, courage means a samurai must rise above the crowd to face the world's injustices. They stood up for what they believed in and did what they felt was right because it was the right thing to do. The findings agreed with these virtues, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Attitudes and Reactions Related to Diversity
N = 118

Criteria	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Somewhat Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Not Sure/ Don't Know	Rating Average
	%					
1. Get to know people from different cultures and groups as individuals	51.72	42.25	5.17	0.86	0.00	4.45
2. Refuse to forward email messages with comments or jokes that are derogatory to any group or culture, or sex	62.71	22.03	9.32	5.08	0.85	4.41
3. Challenge others when they make racial/ethnic/sexually derogatory comments	28.81	41.53	13.56	8.47	7.63	3.75
4. Take action to have offensive graffiti removed	21.74	35.65	26.09	11.30	5.22	3.57

Student Perception of College as a Welcoming Environment

Students (43.36 %) strongly agreed they felt a sense of acceptance and belongingness at this College of Business. They (42.48%) reported that the faculty respected people of different religions, and (41.23%) strongly agreed that staff members were respectful of people of different religions, indicating benevolence (*jin*) and politeness or respect (*rei*). Over 36% of students were generally satisfied with their experience and environment regarding diversity. Students (31.58 %) strongly agreed that students at this College respect people of different religions, while (29.82%) reported that students are respectful of different races and cultures and supported the politeness or respect (*rei*) virtue that inspired a samurai to be kind and courteous even to their enemies. Students (33.33 %) noted that the College environment encourages them to appreciate diversity, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5
College Embraced Diversity
N = 114

Criteria	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rating Average
	%					
1. I feel a sense of acceptance and belonging at this College	43.36	45.13	9.73	1.77	0.00	4.30
2. The faculty here are respectful of people of different religions	42.48	46.02	9.73	1.77	0.00	4.29
3. The staff here are respectful of people of different religions	41.23	45.56	12.28	0.88	0.00	4.27
4. I am satisfied with my experience/environment regarding diversity at this College	36.84	49.12	11.40	2.63	0.00	4.20
5. The students here are respectful of people of different religions	31.58	53.51	10.53	3.51	0.88	4.11
6. The students here are respectful of people of different races and cultures	29.82	56.14	8.77	3.51	1.75	4.09
7. The environment here encourages students to develop an appreciation for diversity	33.33	47.37	14.91	2.63	1.75	4.08

The survey also asked which classes have broadened student understanding of diversity. Students reported that the following pre- and business core courses have helped them learn the most about diversity: Marketing (66.33%), Management (65.31%), Managerial Reports (56.12%), Legal and Ethical Environments of Business (48.31%), and Business Strategy (46.94%), as shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Pre- or Business Core Classes Strengthened Student's Understanding of Diversity
N = 98

Pre- or Business Core Courses	Percentage
1. Principles of Marketing	66.33
2. Principles of Management	65.31
3. Managerial Reports	56.12
4. Legal and Ethical Environments of Business	48.31
5. Business Strategy	46.94
6. Operations Management	40.28
7. Business Finance I	23.47
8. Management Information Systems	16.33

These major courses have helped students become more aware of diversity: International Marketing (37.08%), Introduction to Business (35.96%), International Business (25.84%), and Personal Selling (25.84%), presented in Table 7.

Table 7
Major Courses Improved Diversity Awareness
N = 89

Major Courses	Percentage
1. International Marketing	37.08
2. Introduction to Business	35.96
3. International Business	25.84
4. Personal Selling	25.84
5. Human Resource Management	14.61
6. International Management	11.24
7. International Business Communication	11.24
8. Organization Theory	4.49
9. Professional Communication	3.37

The top-rated venues where students reported learning about or becoming more aware of diversity were their friends (72.48%), at work (71.56%), talking with friends (66.97%), their family (61.47%), and campus involvement (48.62%), as presented in Table 8.

Table 8
Informal Interactional Venues Increased Diversity Awareness
N = 109

Venues	Percentage
1. From my friends	72.48
2. At work	71.56
3. Talking with friends	66.97
4. From my family	61.47
5. Campus involvement (example: events)	48.62
6. Speakers, movies, or other campus events	44.95
7. From traveling outside of the United States	42.20
8. Living in the residence hall with others	40.37
9. In workshops	13.76
10. From studying abroad	11.93
11. Other	4.16

The majority of students indicated that they had made exceptional/moderate progress in each of the twelve areas (ranging from 89.23 % to 99.12 %) of Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions related to working in diverse and multicultural workforces since first entering the College of Business. The top-rated progress was their ability to function effectively in a diverse team environment (44.74%), apply critical thinking strategies to analyze diversity-related issues in business (40.35%), and develop cultural competency and respect for people from different backgrounds (41.59%). Further, demonstrating acceptance and appreciation of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives for an inclusive environment (39.29%) was crucial in their multicultural dispositions presented in Table 9.

Table 9
Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions in Diverse and Multicultural Workforces
N = 114

Criteria	Exceptional Progress	Moderate Progress	No Apparent Progress	Weaker Now	Rating Average
	%				
1. Function effectively in a diverse team environment	44.74	51.75	3.51	0.00	3.41
2. Apply critical thinking strategies to analyze diversity-related issues in business	40.35	58.77	0.88	0.00	3.39
3. Develop cultural competency and respect for people from different backgrounds	41.59	56.65	0.88	0.88	3.39
4. Demonstrate acceptance and appreciation of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives for an inclusive environment	39.29	58.04	2.67	0.00	3.37
5. Evaluate opportunities and challenges for working in diverse and multicultural workforce environments and teams	35.09	63.16	1.75	0.00	3.33
6. Develop an awareness of diversity-related issues and be able to make ethically sound decisions	35.09	59.65	5.26	0.00	3.30
7. Examine country-specific dress, behavior, taboos, and other business and social customs as they relate to conducting business with persons from other cultures	38.60	52.63	8.77	0.00	3.30
8. Understand your own culture so that you recognize its influences on your communication habits	33.33	61.41	5.26	0.00	3.28
9. Examine the role of managing cultural synergy within the global	35.71	56.25	8.04	0.00	3.28

business environment					
10. Manage a diverse workforce and compete in a global marketplace	32.46	62.28	5.26	0.00	3.27
11. Study other cultures so that you can appreciate cultural variations	34.21	58.77	7.02	0.00	3.27
12. Apply cultural intelligence skills to professional situations in a global environment	31.58	64.03	3.51	0.88	3.26

Student Perception of Support Services

The majority of students reported being aware of the programs to increase awareness (83.93 %), opportunities to relate and interact with diverse persons on campus (82.14 %), respect for diversity (81.08 %), and services addressing the needs of persons with disabilities (80.36 %). Contrary to these findings, students indicated less awareness of services addressing the needs of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals (57.14 %) presented in Table 10.

Table 10
Programs and Services Awareness

N = 112

Criteria	Aware	Not Aware	Rating Average
1. Programs to increase diversity awareness (examples: Black History Month's Executive Guest Speakers, Mix-up Lunch, Executive Speaker Series, Mentoring, etc.)	83.93	16.07	1.84
2. Opportunities for me to relate and interact with diverse persons on campus (for example, Multicultural events, etc.)	82.14	17.86	1.82
3. Programs to increase respect for diverse cultures (examples: Latino Heritage Month, International Student Association's Annual Dinner Banquet, Visiting Scholars' Lectures, etc.)	81.08	18.92	1.81
4. Services addressing the needs of persons with disabilities (examples: note-taking services, equipment loans, etc.)	80.36	19.64	1.80
5. Services addressing the needs of individuals of diverse races and cultures	79.46	20.54	1.79
6. Services addressing the needs of international individuals (for example, the International Ambassador program, etc.)	72.32	27.68	1.72
7. Services addressing the needs of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals	57.14	42.86	1.57

This research shows that diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusivity efforts require planning and commitment from the administration, faculty, and students. Such efforts support the virtues of rectitude (*gi*), benevolence (*jin*), and politeness or respect (*rei*). In a higher education setting, rectitude (*gi*) guides the university and staff to provide services for others as they align with the notion of altruism. Further, the concept of benevolence (*jin*) is expressed as love and empathy for others. Simultaneously, politeness or respect (*rei*) shows self-respect, acknowledge diverse needs, experiences, and opinions, and respect the feeling of others demonstrated in the findings. While limitations and biases are innate in such endeavors, the study encourages a necessary dialogue from the viewpoints of different cultures, given the pace of global education landscapes. The study has deduced areas of opportunity within the program to meet better students' needs concerning diversity in today's higher education.

Conclusions and Implications for Business Education Classrooms

Student responses provide clear evidence of attention paid to most of the 'Seven Virtues' shown in Figure 1. Many students feel that College leadership is visible and fosters respect for diversity. Specific courses offered positively contributed to the student population's awareness of diversity and inclusivity. These, in turn, support improving personal and social awareness,

communication skills, and intra- and interpersonal relationships, as indicated by Pambianchi-Gold (2019). Thus, Bushido's Seven Virtues provided a context for how higher education cultures may be shaped by the cultural values held by members within the institution, the institution's values and missions, and to recognize opportunities and pitfalls, and skills to develop cultural fluency to navigate between and across cultures fluidly and responsively (Chin & Trimble, 2014).

The following limitation should be noted for this study: White/Caucasian and traditionally aged college students (18-24 years of age) were overrepresented in the respondent sample. Therefore, data were broadly generalizable to the studied College of Business students. However, when considering specific populations of students, these results most directly reflect the experiences of undergraduate, senior students, and traditionally aged college students due to their overrepresentation in the respondent sample.

Recommendation for Further Research

While dimensions of diversity are explored for seniors in the College of Business, future studies are needed to:

1. Compare how the concepts of diversity change as students progress through the program,
2. Determine the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy in online undergraduate and graduate courses, and
3. Implement course-embedded assessments in those courses identified as enriching students' diverse experiences.

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EXAMINING THE ISSUES AND CONSEQUENCES ASSOCIATED WITH GRADE DISTRIBUTION CHANGES

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the meaning and purpose of grades and how grade distributions have changed. It also examines how the various stakeholders have influenced the problem, and what, if anything, should be done about it. We take the stance that shrinking grade distributions result from consumerism and are leading to a negative outcome for all stakeholders. We argue that an intermediate step to reverse distribution problems is by increasing the number of grading categories used in our grading scale. We illustrate the grade distribution problem by examining the validity of college grades predicting job performance.

INTRODUCTION

The long history of research and discussion on the topic of grades ranges from what they mean, what they measure, and what they are might predict**.** More recently, the discussion has moved to grade distribution issues. Currently, we are in a time of severely compressed distributions, a problem that some schools are trying to address by altering policy on the number of 'A' grades that can be awarded in a class (Butcher, McEwan & Weerapana, 2014). However, some scholars argue about the negative aspects of 'forced curves' (Grant, 2016) while others contend that higher grade distributions are not a problem, but simply the result of a move from modern to postmodern ways of learning and teaching (Bilimoria, 1995). The disagreement might stem from the fact this is an important issue where everyone involved has a stake in the outcome, and those stakes may not align toward the same outcome. For example, the traditional view of education was that students came to universities to 'learn to learn' as education was viewed as a public service to educate in a general manner in order to improve society. Currently, most students desire high grades to appease parents and to help them get a good job. For the most part, educators simply want grades to reflect what was learned across the student's education, as long as that leads to sufficiently high enrollment and teaching evaluations. Finally, employers are very interested in grades since the vast majority of them use GPA as a predictor of future job performance as they consider which students to hire (Benson, Finegold, & Mohrman, 2004). Given this range of desired outcomes across stakeholders, the current study will explore some of the reasons for changes in grades, how these changes impact the ability of grades to predict important outcomes related to both academics and organizations, and whether the upward movement of grades will result in intended outcomes in the long-run.

What is the Meaning and Purpose of Grades?

Grading refers to the symbols assigned to individual pieces of student work or to composite measures of student performance (Brookhart, Guskey, Bowers, McMillan, Smith, Smith, Stevens & Welsh, 2016). At the most basic level, grades are used to indicate the degree to which a student has mastered course materials, while the sum of grades is used to indicate whether a student meets the requirements to earn a degree. Indeed, the main purpose of the GPA to provide a universally understood statistic that compares students across all contexts (Beatty, 2004). Once recorded, grades communicate student achievement levels to others who use them in making informed decisions about a student's future (Allen, 2005). When faculty create a scale from which students earn letter grades based on performance, the meaning is quite clear: grades form a competitive ranking system. However, this ranking system creates a competitive environment that often drives behavior to award grades (and to achieve grades) away from a set of expected behaviors into wide variations. This practice can result in disagreement over the validity of grades as a record of achievement (Allen, 2005) where what one professor values in a student's effort to achieve a grade, another does not. Nonetheless, the overall meaning of grades should be clear to faculty, but the assignment of them can be tricky based on competing forces.

One such competing force is the rejection, by some, of the ideology that drives the traditional, competitive nature of grades. Could it be that post-modernism has taken over the meaning of grades? If so, the relationship among students in a learning environment will shift from competition for scarce resources to an environment of cooperation in the learning process

(Bilimoria, 1995). In this case, the question to ask is will students break the competitive mold of modernism to become cooperative as indicated by post-modernism? Clearly, cultural differences would impact whether cooperation among students can replace competitive tendencies. In cultures inspired by capitalism, moving away from competition seems unlikely given that students, and other stakeholders, may see grades as money (Beatty, 2004).

Metaphorically viewing grades as money puts the meaning and goals of education directly into a business atmosphere. Money reflects differences in value of goods while grades reflect differences in performance (Beatty, 2004). More money can purchase more, higher quality goods whereas more (higher) grades can purchase a higher quality job. Such a change in the view of grades, from one where students come to learn generally in order to contribute more to society to the view that grades can be used to 'buy' a job, is a fundamental change that could have drastic effects on intrinsic motivation. When extrinsic rewards of grades exceed intrinsic motivation to learn, students are motivated to learn only in order to obtain rewards (Beatty, 2004). In this case, education becomes a commodity to be purchased in the way that a consumer who buys a car looking to get the 'bigger bang for the buck.' Even President Obama, nicknamed the 'higher education president' (Lederman & Fain, 2017), advocated that institutions of higher education be rated to establish their value thus allowing students and taxpayers to get a bigger bang for their buck (Fain, 2015). Clearly, using the market metaphor in education where grades are viewed as currency has blurred the meaning of grades with its focus on extrinsic motivation. As Beatty (2004) states, "The values of this model contradict the nonmaterial and nonquantifiable objectives we wish to embrace in management education. This contradiction in values is especially salient now in light of the ethical scandals that have so shaken confidence in the business community" (p. 193). How did higher education end up in a situation where it must try to avoid conflation with business and its capitalist goals? An examination of the behavior of the main stakeholders in education illuminates how and why the meaning of grades has changed.

THE CASE THAT GRADES HAVE CHANGED: THREE CONTRIBUTORS

Student Behavior

At the college level, grades have gradually risen for decades. In the 1940s, the mode for grades was C, but the mode is now A (Rojstaczer & Healy, 2012). Reasons are plentiful and arguable. For example, in the 1960s, full-time male college students did not have to enter the military draft so during the Vietnam War, there was an abrupt rise in grades. The unpopular war seems to have resulted in many professors giving higher grades to male students to keep them from failing out of school, and thus, to avoid the war (Jacobs, 2013). Rojstaczer and Healy (2012) graphically illustrate that the trend to higher grades began in the 1960s, when A's were the third highest grade given, to the 2000s when A is the most prevalent grade given. In 2008, 75% of grades were A's and B's whereas in 1960, less than 50% of grades were A's and B's. There is no denying that grades have risen, yet there is little evidence that higher grades reflect higher academic achievement, as evidenced by literacy rates not rising over time and by recent college graduates reading only at an intermediate level (Baer, Cook & Baldi, 2006).

If grades are not related to higher achievement, students may come to expect higher grades without the requisite effort to earn them. "There is evidence that inflated grades

contribute to the tolerance of underachievement and reinforce some students' impression that they do not need to exert effort to learn or succeed academically" (Pearce, 2016, p.37). With this perception, study habits have changed. In the early 1960s, full-time college students devoted 40 hours per week to academics, but this rate dropped to about 27 hours per week by 2004 (Babcock & Marks, 2010). More recent surveys reveal that full-time students are now spending 2.76 hours per day on their studies to total 19.3 hours per week (Burke, Hall, & Reim, 2016). Moreover, this includes time spent in class. Using the old rule of thumb that students should spend three hours per week per credit hour of classes, a full-time course load of 12 hours would yield 48 hours per week spent on class attendance and studying. This is approximately the amount of time students spent on school in the early 1960s; but over the next 50-plus years, that estimate of study time has dropped over 60%. If students are spending only 19.3 hours on everything education, that means that a full-time student taking 12 hours of courses is spending less than eight hours per week studying, writing papers, etc. It is difficult to understand how spending less time on studies can lead to higher achievement leaving one to wonder why grades have risen during this period. Perhaps technological advances or other factors have decreased the amount of time needed to study successfully, a point that would indicate that the reduction in time spent by students is not a negative change. The time to research articles at a library, or even go to a library, has likely decreased with the advent of digital libraries available on the internet. However, given that validity estimates on grades predicting job performance are lower since 1961 (Roth et al., 1996), that point seems doubtful. If technological advances allow students to study less, but still learn the material to earn good grades, it is likely that the correlation between grades and job performance would have stayed the same. It seems the dramatic reduction in time spent on studies parallels the shift in rising grade distributions that began with the Vietnam war.

Education Institutional Behavior

Another reason that grade distributions have risen is that the view of students by higher education institutions has shifted over time. Before 1960, only about 20% of high school graduates went on to college, and there was little competition for students among institutions (Kinzie, Palmer, Hayek, Hossler, Jacob, & Cummings, 2004). More recently, the increase in marketing by colleges and the emphasis on college rankings in the popular media have fueled beliefs that institutional status and college prestige are very important for success (Kinzie et al., 2004). The change from not competing for students to the current, very competitive environment has pushed the view that students are customers rather than knowledge seekers, though many faculty members are reluctant to think of students as customers with the perception that if students are considered as customers, academic rigor declines (Guilbault, 2016). But with post-secondary institutions experiencing problems with retention rates, increased competition, and increased expenses in acquiring new students, administrations in these institutions have moved to year-round marketing efforts to recruit and retain students (Guilbault, 2016). Applying marketing principles in the field of education can be a slippery slope, potentially resulting in this fundamental change in how students are viewed. While it might seem like good business to view students as tools for income generation, treating students as consumers to whom a degree is sold diminishes knowledge as the purpose of higher education (Harrison, & Risler, 2015). Very little marketing was needed when students came to institutions to open their minds to learning while gaining knowledge from sages to earn a degree. But as the view changed to 'customers are

always right,' a shift occurred toward institutions working to gain students' satisfaction. For many students, satisfaction from education comes not from knowledge, but from high grades to which they feel that are entitled (Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farruggia, 2008). To complicate the issue further, the manner in which those grades are attained has blurred. As savvy consumers, students play the 'I am your customer' card to their advantage to attain the goal of higher grades in a less onerous manner (Greenberger et al., 2008). Educational institutions now encourage satisfying the customer (students) to keep enrollment high and state funding coming in. Shifts in attitudes have contributed to the issue of grade distribution, and those shifts have resulted in lower usage of the entire grading scale.

Faculty Behavior

Any discussion of changing grade distributions must include faculty since they have the final say in how grades are posted. Since grade distributions have risen, faculty practices are the direct reason for the change. How are grades earned in the current environment? A critical examination of how grades are earned leads to many debates, one of which is the type of testing mechanisms used by faculty today. There was a day when students had to illustrate their knowledge with written responses to questions, or perhaps they were required to write research papers. However, rising section sizes have led to multiple choice testing burgeoning in place of more thorough written exams. Though a well-written multiple-choice test can certainly discern between high and low achievers to some degree, this type of test has many problems (Little, Bjork, Bjork, & Angello, 2012). Test banks that are created by publishers are often just regurgitation of facts from the text that can be relatively easily memorized. To combat this flaw, test questions are written to make the test more difficult, which in turn, helps to distribute grades across the entire scale. Questions became a confusing mixture of 'none of the above,' 'all of the above,' 'only A and B,' and more variations as a result. However, this type of answer only frustrates the reader and usually measures logic ability rather than knowledge of the subject in the question. If students perceive that tests are not good assessments of their knowledge, they may not take them seriously or put in the necessary effort to learn (Pearce, 2016). When students believe that the test itself is unfair, they may resort to cheating and other forms of deviant behavior. Cheating has grown dramatically from 'only' 23% in 1941 (Marx & Longer, 1986) to 95% in 2015 (Simmons, 2018). So, while this issue seems to be about student behavior, the design of testing instruments by faculty may have partly driven this problem.

There are other factors that have led to faculty inflating grades. The use of student evaluations of teaching performance has caused many faculty members to give higher grades to insure higher evaluations (Harrison & Risler, 2015). Students who are not happy with their grade often haggle with the professor, or their parents pressure faculty to raise grades for their child by calling department heads and deans (Peterson & Peterson, 2016). The constant pressure has surely caused some faculty members to throw up their hands in surrender to the pressure. Afterall, it is easy to rationalize that grades are somewhat meaningless, and if raising them makes everyone happy, just give in and do it. Regardless, the beginning of the upward trend in average course grades evidenced over the past few decades can be traced to the Vietnam war draft. Perhaps altering grades to allow students to avoid the war got faculty thinking about how and why grades are assigned which led to questioning the efficacy of grades and the goals of education.

On the other hand, rising grade distributions could be the result of postmodern challenges to our traditional academic standards (Bilimoria, 1995). We could be witnessing a natural change to a postmodernist view of grades that is driven by a wider band of acceptable interpretations of course concepts (Bilimoria, 1995). Bilimoria (1995) argues that the increasing impact of postmodern thinking on pedagogical practices will contribute to higher grade distributions. When combined with technological advances that enhance a student's ability to study more efficiently, rising grades could be a viewed as a natural occurrence. Though plausible, when all factors are considered, the postmodern explanation seems to be an excuse to support a change to assigning higher grades, whether earned or not. It seems more likely that the war draft avoidance began the era of lack of academic rigor driving grades and could have been the touchstone for consumerism to take hold in higher education.

Result: Educational Consumerism

The behavior of all higher education constituents – students and their parents, education institutions, and faculty -- has contributed to higher grade distributions. As we search for a common, explanatory theme that encapsulates these behaviors, we find the concept of consumerism. Consumerism is defined as the protection or promotion of the interests of consumers (Oxford Dictionary). Though the term is more commonly used to describe the increasing consumption of consumer goods, it has become a driver of higher education change (Sandeen, 2014). The 'brand and positioning' of universities has taken hold similar to how a consumer goods company would position and market its brand of running shoes. Such marketing is typically performed in the interests of consumers who may not know of your products, but whose dollars are wooed against the backdrop of fierce competition as companies try to satisfy the voracious appetite of the consumer in order to satisfy their own interests for profit. Applied to education, consumers seek out brand information as they make choices on which university to attend. In response, educational institutions have become obliged to develop and market their brands. Thus, the business model reflected in consumerism has crept into education. Unfortunately, while the currency used in economic business exchanges is money, grades have become education's metaphorical currency. If grades are viewed as currency, stakeholders will see them as market-driven (Beatty, 2004). The implication is that when one pays tuition, a customer relationship has opened between the student and the educational institution, and the customer satisfaction cycle has begun. As agents for those institutions, faculty are pushed to give higher grades since this is the product that has been purchased, a product that becomes currency to be used by students as they seek jobs.

Overall, when students, and their parents, saw an opening to get higher grades without intense work, the pressure on faculty and administration began to mount to satisfy the 'customers.' Though there remain some faculty who balk at caving into this pressure, the fact that grades are rising indicates that this resistance is waning. An attitude of 'if you can't beat them, join them' may contribute to decreased resistance to giving higher, and often, unearned grades. Afterall, higher grades lead to satisfied students who give higher teaching evaluations. University administrators then face an easier task of keeping enrollment high when students are satisfied. The process described here is what we call 'educational consumerism.'

We argue that educational consumerism is a clumsy attempt to adapt the educational process to a business process. The forces to adapt education to a business process are so strong

that the ultimate outcome of consumerism in education will quickly disappear due to an enormous flaw in the logic of educational consumerism. The theoretical result of consumerism in education is that students use the currency they earned (their grades) to get good jobs. To land those jobs, employers recruit the 'best and brightest' students to work in their firms using GPAs as an estimate of intelligence, and predictor, of their future performance. GPA has been shown to correlate strongly with intelligence (Roth, Becker, Romeyke, Shafer, Domnick, & Spinath (2015) and also with job performance (Roth, BeVier, Switzer, & Schippmann, 1996). However, consumerism in education causes grades to rise. When grades rise, the variability in GPA is reduced. Since all students will have high GPAs, employers will not use GPA as an indicator of future success because the correlation between GPA and job performance will disappear since there will be no variation in GPA. The fact of the matter is that employers want grades to be distributed across the entire scale in order to be able to use GPA as a screening tool (Roth et al., 1996). It may seem odd that the most obvious consumer of our students --businesses-- prefer that we stop following a consumerism model since this will lead to losing their preferred method of screening potential new hires: GPA. Grades are as important as intelligence in predicting socio-economic success (Strenze, 2007) so businesses want grades to be a reliable predictor of success, especially since GPA is easy to procure.

Summary. To this point, we have discussed the meaning of grades and how this meaning is changing along with what has led to these changes. The fallout is grade inflation, and though this is a metaphor from business and such metaphors may not belong in education (Beatty, 2004), grade inflation is different from its counterpart in business (price inflation) since there is a cap to which grades can inflate. Prices have no ceiling, but grades do: the grade of A. With this ceiling as a limit to grade inflation, one must ask if we are comfortable with grades reaching this ceiling. Will this not diminish the meaning of grades? Back to business, how can companies use grades as a screening tool when inflation has driven all grades to the top of the scale resulting in no variation among students on this measure? Clearly, companies cannot use grades if everyone has an A average. Even though the use of grades to screen job applicants seems like a form of consumerism, the metaphor does not hold causing us to reject the idea of a business reason for changing grade distributions.

At the end of the day, faculty assign grades and must own the problem of rising grade distributions. For many reasons, it is difficult to use both sides of the grading scale. However, central limit theorem states that if the sample size is above 30, one will see a normal distribution of scores. While there are very good reasons not to use a forced bell-curve on grades (Grant, 2016), it is very difficult to argue that most students have become 'A' students when considering the points made above. Disbursing grades even minimally across the grading categories could help to resolve many of the resulting problems with grade inflation.

Compounding the problem of the grading scale not being fully utilized is the argument that the A-F scale does not have enough categories in it to allow for differentiation among students based on achievement (Ebel, 1969). Some schools use plus and minus grades to help with increasing the fineness of the scale, which in turn, should increase the variability of grades along the scale. For instance, in a 10-point system with pluses and minuses, an A+ will earn 9 points, a B+ earns 6 points, and a C+ earns 3 points. With this grading scheme, it is much easier to note a difference between 'outstanding' and 'very good' work while spreading out grades. Such a grading scale could work to discourage students from pleading for higher grades similar

to the way that the use of 10,000 points reduces haggling for the next higher grade (Peterson & Peterson, 2016). But no matter how a grading scale is constructed, the only way to rectify the problem of grade inflation is by faculty spreading out grades somewhat over the entire scale.

Current Study. The empirical test in this paper is intended to illustrate that an expanded scale could help distribute grades and reduce grade inflation. This will help to illuminate the fact that even though grades can be viewed as money, which contributes to grade inflation, the resulting consumerism from viewing grades as money will backfire on students as companies will stop using GPA as a screening tool if it has no variability. So if faculty feel that 'if you can't beat them, join them' regarding the push of consumerism, this move will eventually doom the most important outcome for students: a good job that is found by companies using GPA as an employee selection tool. Following the logic of consumerism, or viewing grades as money, if companies do not use GPA to screen potential employees because grades do not help them choose the 'best' candidates, and education has fully embraced consumerism such that all students get A grades, the need for a college degree will be diminished. At that point, are professors and higher education institutions going to say, 'hey come back, we promise to use the entire grading scale' to placate companies and avoid extinction? Thus, the move to educational consumerism will not satisfy the biggest consumer of our 'products' (students): companies want us to use the entire scale and spread-out students based on ability and knowledge to allow them to continue using GPA as a screen. In other words, companies do not value grade inflation any more than we do since they want to use GPA to predict future job performance of applicants.

This discussion has led to the notion that the *use* of the entire range of grading categories has dropped over time which has led to grade inflation. The pressure for grade inflation comes from many corners beginning with the Vietnam war draft. That seems to have opened the floodgates to: 1) allow students to change their behavior toward earning grades, 2) alter the focus of administration in institutions to include marketing of education as a product, and 3) pressure faculty to move grade distributions higher. Therefore, it is important to examine how additional grading categories might help to combat these three broad changes. Would an expanded grading system help mitigate some of these problems? To test this research question, we examine whether post-1961 estimates of the grades – job performance relationship are influenced by a reduction of usable grading categories caused by grade inflation:

> *Hypothesis: Grades will predict job performance better than post-1961 estimates when a standard distribution of grades is achieved by using a scale with more categories.*

To summarize the purpose of this research, though there are many contributing factors that have led to rising grade distributions in higher education, the current argument is that an expanded grading scale will result in a more normal distribution of grades. As such, the empirical portion of this study is intended as an illustration of the negative impact of grade inflation on the grades-job performance relationship. Furthermore, this relationship is predicted to be stronger than what the literature shows from post-1961 studies. This evidence will show that due to the effects of the overall faculty response to grading during the Vietnam War draft, the grades-job performance relationship dropped (Roth et al., 1996). If the hypothesis is supported, and in lieu of extensive changes to the educational system, it could be viewed as an intermediary step toward purposefully spreading out grades along the entire scale.

METHOD

Participants

This study was conducted using 123 MBA students who were enrolled in the cooperative work program at a mid-sized university. Students choose to enroll in this full-time MBA option that has them taking two semesters of course work followed by a summer of work at one of the companies that have partnered with the business college to offer a cooperative work program. The program takes two years (and a final work summer term). Due to missing data, complete data are available for 105 individuals. All questionnaire data was gathered in the orientation meeting at the beginning of the program.

Measures

Job Performance

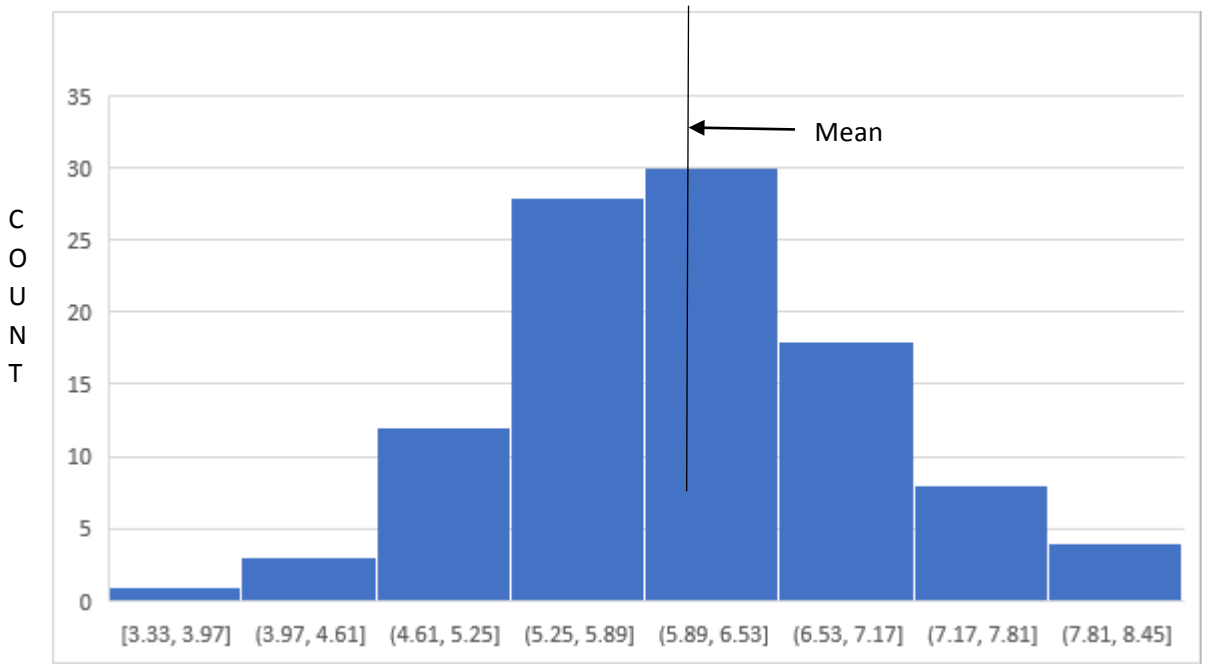
After each work term, the coop office at this university collects performance data that is gathered from direct supervisors using a 10-item scale. This scale was developed based on the work of Stevens and Campion (1994) along with Goodman and Svyantek (1999). Supervisors did not have access to any student data such as GPA when making their evaluations. Though each item was rated with a five-point Likert scale, the anchors were different for some of the items. Therefore, prior to summing the items into a job performance variable, a principal component factor analysis was run with all 10 dimensions to determine if they represented job performance as a group. Seven items loaded (each item > .60) on a main performance factor (eigenvalue = 4.11) and those seven are used in this study as the job performance variable. These seven performance dimensions all were rated from '1=poor' to '5=excellent.' The items that did not load on the main factor had different anchors; they were designed to capture 'encouraging diversity,' 'availability,' and 'attitude.' The seven items retained were 'planning,' 'work management,' 'oral communication,' 'written communication,' 'dependability,' 'decision-making' and 'analytic skills.' Even a face validity test shows that the three items that did not load on the main factor were not strong representations of job performance. Thus, only the seven items that loaded on the main factor are retained as the estimate of job performance. This 7-item scale has an internal consistency estimate of $\alpha = .90$.

Grade Point Average

At the end of the first year of study, and one work term, GPA was recorded for each student. This university uses a grading scale that has ten levels with the following point values: A+ = 9 points, A = 8 points, A- = 7 points, B+ = 6 points, B = 5 points, B- = 4 points, C+ = 3 points, C = 2 points, C- = 1 point, and F = 0 points. The mean for GPA is 6.06 (SD = .86) which equates to a B+ average. The range is 3.03 (C+) to 8.05 (A). Since applicants to the coop program must meet minimum GPA requirements, the sample is range restricted. Therefore, any relationships with grades will be conservative estimates. However, the dispersal of grades is

much closer to a normal distribution than typically seen in MBA grades (see Figure 1). Thus, the sample is suitable to test our hypothesis.

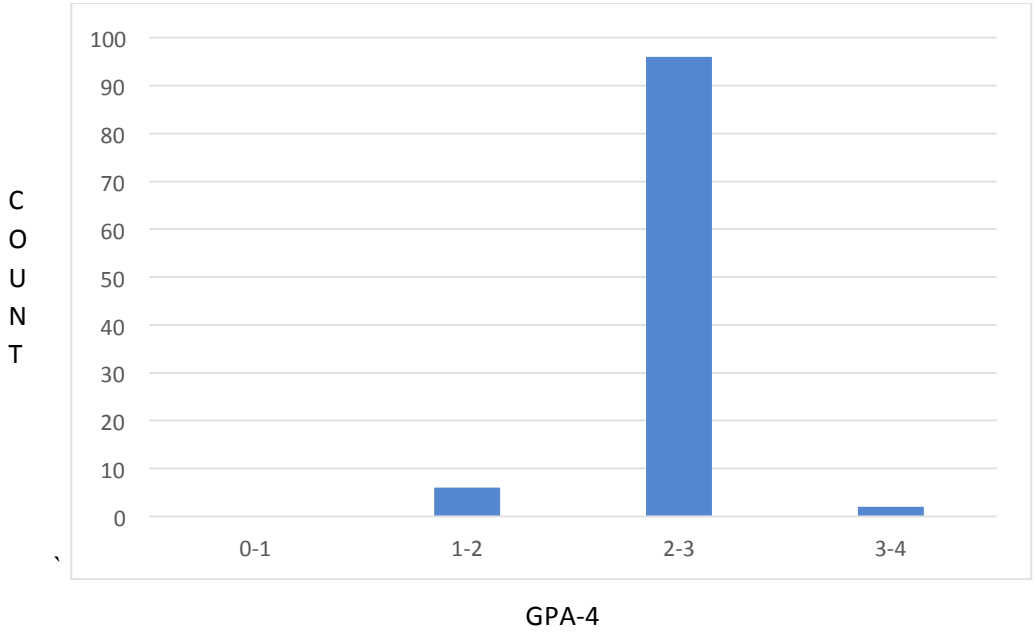
Figure 1: Distribution of GPA



Notes: n = 105; mean = 6.04, SD = .89; GPA is a 0 – 9 scale.

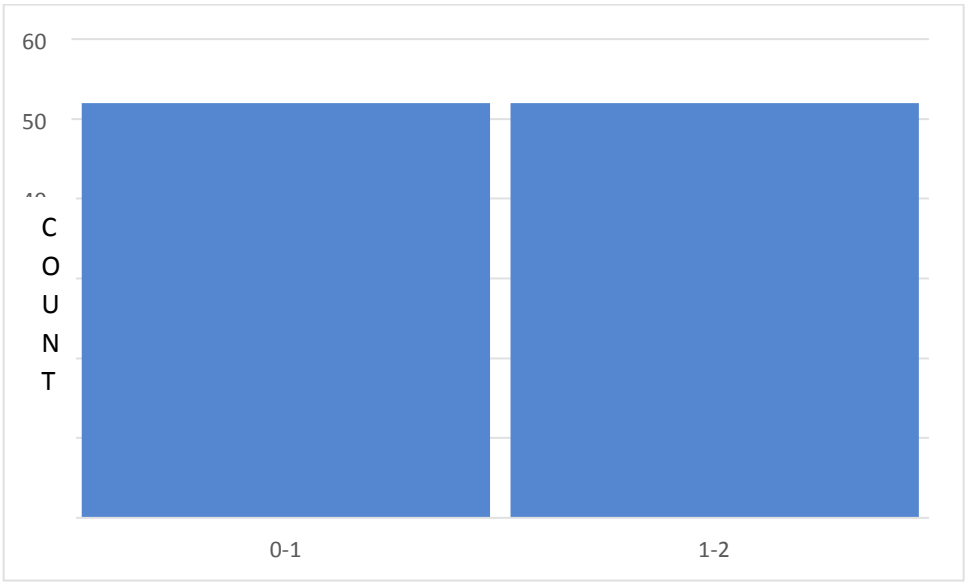
To fully test the hypothesis, GPA is recoded into two new variables. GPA-4 has four grade categories to simulate the traditional 4.0 scale (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0). All grades in the dataset that were A+, A, and A- are coded '4,' B+, B, and B- are coded '3,' C+, C, and C- are coded '2,' and the remainder (less than C-) are coded '1.' The last two categories ('D' = 1 and 'F' = 0) are combined since there were no F students in the program due to program requirements. Similarly, GPA is recoded into the two categories of GPA-2 (A+, A, A-, are coded '2' and all other grades are coded '1'). This scale will simulate the reality of grading in many master's level programs: an A – B continuum. The dispersal of grades for these two new variables is shown in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2: Distribution of GPA Reduced to 4-Points



Notes: $n = 105$; GPA-4 is a 4-point scale.

Figure 3: Distribution of GPA Reduced to 2-Points



Notes: $n = 105$; GPA-2 is a 2-point scale.

Gender

Though gender has not been shown to correlate with grades (Roth et al., 2015), it was recorded (0 = female, 1 = male) solely to use as a control variable. There were 49 females and 56 males in the sample.

RESULTS

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics and correlations among the study variables.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3
1. Job performance	(.91)		
2. GPA	0.333*	--	
3. Gender	0.046	0.109	--
Mean	24.29	6.04	0.53
SD	6.01	0.89	0.50

Note: n = 105; Cronbach reliability estimate on diagonal.

*statistically significant ($p < .01$, 2-tailed).

Hypothesis 1 tests the notion that grade point average predicts job performance when there is a normal distribution of scores on GPA. Figure 1 illustrates that GPA is relatively normally distributed into a bell curve. Thus, the statistically significant correlation (see Table 1) between GPA and job performance ($r = .33$, $p < .05$) supports our hypothesis. This correlation is significantly higher than what the literature shows post-1961 ($r = .14$; Roth et al., 1996). To more thoroughly examine the impact of additional grading categories, further analyses was undertaken to examine the comparative impact of fewer grade categories.

Table 2: Hierarchical Regression Results: Job Performance

		GPA-10	GPA-4	GPA-2
Variable	Step 1	Step 2	Step 2	Step 2
Gender	.046	.010	-.013	.034
GPA	--	.332*	.299*	.246*
R-square	.002	.111*	.088*	.063*

Notes: All entries are standardized regression coefficients; $n = 105$; * $p < .05$.

GPA-10 = 10 grading categories (A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, F)

GPA-4 = 4 categories collapsed from GPA-10 (A, B, C, F)

GPA-2 = 2 categories collapsed from GPA-10 (A, B)

Collapse Grades into Four and Two Categories

While the data in Table 1 illustrate the extent to which GPA predicts job performance with a ten-category grade scale, it does not show that it is more efficient in predicting job performance than GPA scales with fewer categories. To illustrate the impact of fewer grading categories, GPA is collapsed into a four-category scale (GPA-4) to simulate the typical 4.0 GPA scale and also a two-category scale (GPA-2) to simulate the reality of most MBA programs (A-B grade continuum). Three regression equations are calculated repeating Step 2 for each of these new GPA variables (step 1 remains the same). With job performance as the dependent variable, hierarchical regression is used with two steps to isolate the variance explained at each step (see Table 2). In step one, gender is entered into the equation (as a control variable) and it has no impact on job performance ($\beta = .046$, $R^2 = .002$, $p = .639$). In step two, GPA is entered and it is statistically significant ($\beta = .332$, $p < .05$) and the equation explains an additional 10.9% of the variance in job performance ($R^2 = .111$, $p < .05$). As the results in Table 2 show, when GPA-4 is added to the equation in Step 2, the amount of variance explained is reduced by 21% ($R^2 = .088$, $p < .05$) and while statistically significant, the magnitude of the impact of GPA in predicting job performance is lessened ($\beta = .299$, $p < .05$). Step 2 is then repeated with GPA-2 and the same pattern of reduction is found: the amount of variance explained is reduced by 43% ($R^2 = .063$, $p < .05$) and the magnitude of the impact of only GPA in predicting job performance is smaller ($\beta = .246$, $p < .05$). Comparing the results shown in Step 2 of all three equations illustrates that as the number of grade categories drops, so does the explanatory power of GPA in predicting job performance.

DISCUSSION

Grade inflation has crept up through the years to where the most common grade on campus is an A. The view that students are customers, the use of multiple-choice tests, pressure from administrators to keep head count high and not fail students, and educational consumerism, have all combined to create drastic measurement reliability problems as grades bunch at the top of the scale. As grades rise, the range actually used in grading scales drops. The data analyzed illustrates the impact of additional grading categories on predicting job performance. The validity estimate of grades predicting job performance with 10 grading categories is similar to the estimate of validity shown in a meta-analysis of pre-1961 studies (Roth et al., 1996). When the number of grading categories is reduced, we see a validity estimate closer to the post-1961 studies (Roth et al., 1996). We also see grade distributions that are not normally distributed (see Figures 2 and 3). This alone is evidence of grade inflation, and for what it is worth, the impact that inflated grades have on predicting job performance. However, this study tested a hypothesis using data from a university that uses 10 grading categories to illustrate one harmful effect of grade inflation: that grades will be less related to job performance when the entire grading scale is not utilized**.** We argue that educational consumerism has pushed grades higher, but in the end, the demand for higher grades from the 'consumers' flies in the face of the very goal they want to attain. Thus, a discussion of improvements to the grading scales used in higher education is one important goal of the study, but it emanates from the other goal of the study: to discuss the issues leading to grade inflation.

Many of the problems associated with educational consumerism can be viewed as a form of cheating. The cheating culture (Callahan, 2004) has grown to the point where people have a hard time choosing right from wrong. Cheating is rampant in colleges and as Callahan discusses at great length in his book, cheating is rampant everywhere (2004). Correct behavior gets blurred by desire. Take for example the recent scandal involving wealthy parents paying money to a middleman to arrange for their children to have their SAT scores altered and other fraudulent misrepresentations to get into prestigious colleges. A Federal investigation into William Singer's scam to get the children of the rich and famous into elite universities showed that Singer and his staff faked tests and photoshopped non-athlete students' faces onto the bodies of actual athletes (Quintana, 2019).

In one case in this investigation, a mother and father allegedly agreed to pay bribes totaling $500,000 in exchange for getting their two daughters into the University of Southern California as purported crew athletes, even though neither were athletes (Pasquini, 2019). If parents are going to these lengths to cheat for their children, what have the children learned from them? Conceivably, what they have learned is to argue for alternative outcomes when they do not like the outcome given, such as a negative admissions decision or a poor grade. Or perhaps they have learned that outcomes such as grades are negotiable, just like when you buy a car. Educational consumerism is on display here.

Our data supports the idea that graders need more categories to distribute grades. Regardless of the reasons for grade inflation, the fineness of the scale used for grading purposes impacts the accuracy of grades (Ebel, 1969). This study supports that point and the data indicate that the graders from this study actually used most of the scale in disbursing grades since they formed a relatively normal distribution (as shown in Figure 1). A normal distribution of grades

is something that would not occur if grade inflation were taking place to any extent. Judging from the results of this study, graders need more than a 1 – 4 grading scale to reduce grade inflation considering that the variance in job performance explained dropped by 21% when the scale went from ten to four grading categories. This means that many students who were in the B grade range in the ten-category scale became A students in the four-category scale, or vice versa. This increases the number of applicants that companies will consider for employment while decreasing the meaningfulness of being an A student based on accomplishment rather than based on scale construction. This represents an artifact in the grading system, one that does not make distinctions base on accomplishment. As companies partially use grades to hire employees, grades must be normally distributed in order to make them more accurate to help avoid costly mistakes in the hiring process due to artifacts in the grading system. Clearly, a company's needs are not the most important driver of grades, but they have some importance. If companies use GPA to select employees, GPA needs to be related to job performance. Otherwise, companies may not seek graduates from our universities in the manner that they have always used. On-campus job fairs could fade away. If a university degree cannot be shown to be important to companies, the degree itself gets called into question, at least by businesses. Certainly, companies have other ways to examine potential in students for jobs, but those methods (internships, etc.) take much more time, effort, and money than a simple examination of GPA across applicants. Without GPA, education is separated from evaluation and this could be the first step to unbundling education (Currell, 2013).

In his article in *Inside Higher Ed*, Currell (2013) argues that separating education from evaluation could allow students to "spend their college budgets as they see fit – online courses, live tutorials, study abroad and internship experiences, seminar classes or whatever – and test separately for the purpose of showing progress" (Currell, 2013, para. 51). While this concept was unheard of a few decades ago, the advent of the internet, MOOCs, and the overall availability of information through the internet makes the concept more plausible now. If education is to remain 'bundled,' we need to make it worth the high price tag associated with a degree. One way to show the worth is to provide a 'product' that the largest consumer of our output continues to consume. Once businesses stop using GPA as a screen, it could be that the unbundling process begins and institutional education ends.

The important point from this study is that employers are looking for the students with excellent grades; and if we as graders do not use the entire grading scale, those excellent students will be lumped in with students with lower grades. Companies assume that higher grades equate to more knowledge, and thus, are better hires. If companies use GPA as their screening tool even though everyone is an A student, their choice is almost random since grades will not discern differences among students. Companies could avoid using GPAs by focusing on letters of recommendation, references from internships, inbox exercises, and many rounds of interviews; however such methodology of finding students to hire is expensive and time-consuming. Companies like using GPA as an initial screen even though other methods to make final decisions do come into play as the hiring process moves along.

Educational consumerism has created a culture where students expect to be treated as customers, a phenomenon that has potentially resulted in students not actually learning course material. Going back to smaller classes, far less reliance on multiple choice exams, and more overall teaching involvement would better prepare students with knowledge rather than rewards for 'effort.' Many people desperately cling to the notion that trying hard should yield the reward.

In the case of grades, the reward should be for performance and mastery of material, not the amount of effort put into it. Not learning course material, but still getting awarded a high grade, leads to less reliable grades, a problem that some will want laid at the feet of the graders. However, the pressures put upon the graders are fierce and come from many angles. Administrators are under pressure to keep student count high, and those students must progress through their studies or the institution risks losing state funding (Kirp, 2018). Faculty, especially untenured or contract faculty, fear that lower grades will lead to lower teaching evaluations from students (Harrison & Risler, 2015). Since these teaching evaluations are used in performance reviews, grades have risen to keep students happy enough to provide good teaching evaluations. Students do not study much (Burke et al., 2016), but they still expect high grades. Given these issues and outcomes, it is difficult to imagine how consumerism has helped anyone in education.

To combat educational consumerism, recreating an environment that allows faculty to use the entire grading scale is key. Figure 1 illustrates a grade distribution for 105 students that is bell shaped and mostly normally distributed while Figures 2 and 3 illustrate grade distributions based on currently used grading models. To encourage the normal distribution of grades, administration must put in place and support a grading scale that is more refined with the additional categories of plus and minus. Then, faculty members must have the courage to use the entire scale. Both conditions were met in the environment of the sample, but this environment is in the minority within higher education. In most environments, there is no denying the pressure on faculty, especially untenured faculty, to get better evaluations through lenient grading and keeping the classroom comfortably unchallenging (Harrison & Risler, 2015). One slight alteration of the grading scale that could help faculty use the entire scale would be to define the grade of 'C' as average rather than some other designation. One study showed that universities that define a C as 'average' had significantly lower GPAs compared to universities that use some other definition for the C grade (Carter & Lara, 2016). That study implied when a C is defined as 'average,' professors seem to be more likely to grade as if a C is the most common grade given (Carter & Lara, 2016).

Grade inflation is the result of many changes over the years, but it began with faculty altering grades to allow students to avoid the war draft. This singular event seems to have taken the sacredness away from grades and encouraged deviant behavior by many stakeholders that has resulted in increased pressure on faculty to grade more leniently. If the pressure from these stakeholders to inflate grades subsides, faculty would be much more likely to use the entire grade scale when assigning grades. But will it subside? Consumerism is a big driver of the pressure to inflate grades and it is unlikely to subside without a tidal wave of change within institutions. Cuts to state funding for higher education causes colleges to sell themselves like a business to get more students. Access to education diminishes as colleges respond to funding cuts by increasing tuition, reducing faculty, limiting course offerings, and closing campuses (Mitchell, Leachman, Masterson, & Waxman, 2018). The education environment has diminished many aspects of the education system to the point where grades do not entirely reflect their main purpose: to be a mostly accurate measure of academic achievement. Consumerism in higher education must end since teaching and selling are inherently contradictory processes (Harrison & Risler, 2015).

Pedagogical and Practical Implications

One of the pedagogical implications of the findings in this study is that the results fly in the face of post-modern thinking of grades. A postmodernist would argue that since grades now serve as feedback for self-improvement rather than how they once differentiated among accomplishments across students, grade inflation naturally occurs (Bilimoria, 1995). If we believe this to be true, that the issue of learning is gaining importance over the issue of accomplishments and this is altering the traditional ways of teaching, evaluation, and grading (Bilimoria, 1995), we may have already given up on grades having any meaning. A 'pass/fail' grading system will suffice with the postmodern approach. If we as an industry decide that a pass/fail system is not the best approach to a grading system in higher education, then the grading system should include additional categories, or at the least, the usage of all categories in the grading scale.

If we do not face the issue and implications of grade inflation, we run the risk of becoming a system of higher educational institutions that provide workforce education and have open enrollment. Institutions with those characteristics are called community colleges. To remain as different entities than this, universities should take great measures to reverse the negative impact on the sanctity of grades, and the university system in general. However, all institutions within the industry will have act together toward a unified response for such changes to take hold (Butcher et al., 2014). Such unification will have to reject the notion of educational consumerism, and that task will take educating the public about the drawbacks to consumerism. Pointing out drawbacks to consumerism will be a tough sell in capitalistic cultures where demand drives supply of anything and everything. Failure to reverse educational consumerism will, at worst, cause our degrees to become devalued and risk extinction (Currell, 2013). At best, staying the course with the status quo allows us to keep our jobs without considering the need to change, but this course of action ignores that change might be necessary. It is natural to resist change, but to avoid reacting to the changing environment is akin to keeping our heads in the sand until our 'Poloroid' moment comes.

Practical implications from the results of this study are fairly clear. Since most organizations use grades as an indicator of a person's skill levels or productivity (Benson et al., 2004), removing the obstacles to providing a normal distribution of grades will result in continued usage by companies in their hiring efforts. If grades lose their meaning related to accomplishments, employers will be forced to use more expensive methods, such as job fairs, to find their candidates. But without GPA to help make the first cut when viewing resumes, job fairs become an even greater selling exhibition during which companies will have to find something else on resumes they can use to make their first cuts. Clearly, companies want and need GPAs to help them quickly sort through job applicants.

Focusing on the negative impact for business leads to a criticism we have faced with the consumerism argument we use to describe negative implications for grade inflation. This paper argues that grades should represent knowledge gained from classes while earning a degree and that pressure from students, and their parents, to inflate grades partially causes grades to swerve away from representing knowledge. The criticism is that we argue that 'accurate' grades are needed in order for employers to use them in choosing 'best' candidates for open positions and that this is consumerism in its most raw form. The logic of the criticism is that we are catering to the needs of businesses who are the embodiment of consumerism. It seems that grades have always been used by students to land jobs. Universities have even ranked students upon graduation, which has always put them in a competitive forum with others. If the grades lose

meaning with regard to ranking of students, businesses will abandon using them as employee selection tools and rely on other methods. Grades then become a commodity that carry little weight in finding jobs. Thus, this research argues that the idea that business is consumerism is not what we consider consumerism in the case of grade inflation. We believe that when students use the idea of consumerism to get higher grades without earning them, they are participating in something entirely different than what business does when using grades as an employee selection tool. What business does in its course of existence is not the same as what students are doing when they try to have their grades inflated for their own purposes.

Limitations and Future Directions

The empirical portion of this study is but an illustration of the problem with grade distribution changes. Though the data show that more grading categories result in a greater dispersion of grades, only one cross-sectional sample was used so the study should be replicated to increase external validity. On the other hand, the data are not tainted with common-method variance problems since the data come from multiple sources. Another limitation is that the prediction regarding the move to 'all A grades' resulting in the extinction of university degrees is likely to be met with skepticism. The point is made by extrapolating current grade trends toward a doomsday without data to support such a contention. However, the argument that if the goal of students is to get a job with their degree, and the way they get that job is with employers using GPA as an indicator of best candidates, it is not so much a wild doomsday shout, but more of a prediction based on science. It should be clear that if there is no variability in grades, employers will not use them to screen candidates. If getting the degree is the goal of education, the end could be near. This paper argues that this should not be the goal of education and that the degree should reflect academic achievement along with how a student learned to learn, to problem-solve, and get along with others. Companies will value this in the 21st century just like they did in the earlier part of the 20th century.

Future research can go in many directions that follow the various causes of grade inflation. For instance, developing a new way to evaluate teaching effectiveness would be an excellent study that might remove some pressure to inflate grades. Another study could examine ways to get central administrations to have another alternative to using 'degree completion' as a measure of success, especially in schools with low or no entrance requirements. Behavior from each stakeholder must change for there to be transformation with grade distributions. Research can look at each of the stakeholders and the reasons for their current behavior to find ways to soothe their concerns about changes.

CONCLUSION

This study briefly discusses some of the many reasons that have combined to result in rising grade distributions that have caused grading scales to become range restricted. The negative result of not using the entirety of the scale was illustrated with data that shows when more categories are included in a grading scale, the prediction of job performance is enhanced. Though job performance is only one outcome to consider when assigning grades, it is an important one given that the stated goal for most students (and their parents) is to get a good job

upon graduation. Furthermore, though we argue that consumerism has led to the grade distribution problem, the biggest consumer of our graduates -- employers – have no desire for higher grade distributions since it weakens the employee screening tool of using GPA. Educational consumerism has emanated from consumerism, but awkwardly and without attention being given to long-term implications. Definitionally, consumerism is supposed to help consumers and enrich them. But educational consumerism will not help stakeholders in the long-run and can only lead to a drastically different model for education, perhaps one where what we do in the educational process is unbundled allowing students to learn in one place and be evaluated in another (Currell, 2013). Such a change could be catastrophic to the traditional education model. Moreover, without a move away from consumerism, the environment required to encourage the assignment of grades that are based on achievement will be only a mirage. Accurate grades based on achievement must be a goal toward which everyone in the education industry moves toward before it is too late and education becomes unbundled. The purpose and goal of education must be redefined: education is not a business -- it is a public service.

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WHEN EXPERIENCE ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH: AN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THEORY FRAMEWORK FOR STUDENT MANAGED REIT PROGRAM EDUCATORS

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ABSTRACT

While experiential learning takes many forms, David Kolb's and John Dewey's complementary approaches provide additional educator role guidance in the pursuit of enhanced student learning, experience, and development outcomes. The motivation supporting Kolb's educator role initiative was Dewey himself who contended that experience itself did not always produce learning. This paper seeks to introduce Dewey and Kolb into the student managed real estate investment trust (REIT) conversation. By reviewing the student managed model prominent in REIT programs, a discussion of the advantages of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory – and particularly educator roles - to the REIT learning experience is developed.

Student managed Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) programs have the potential to enhance the learning experiences by introducing real world discussions of development, sustainability, valuation, acquisition, geography, capital structure, and free cash flow, among others, into the conversation. Students, however, are often encouraged to experience these domains with minimal, uneven, or unstructured input from the educator.

Leveraging seminal works of John Dewey and David Kolb, this paper proposes a differentiated approach that purposely engages the REIT educator in time-varying roles as the student encounters new learning opportunities and challenges. This framework is recommended as it has proven successful in other disciplines.

Aside from acknowledging the experiential learning cycles witnessed by both the student and educator, this paper seeks to develop an educator role framework that includes specific tools and techniques to enhance the REIT program learner's experience. These tools and techniques bring elements of schema, storytelling, knowledge continuum, intentional change, and self-efficacy theories, among others, strategically into the conversation.

Organizationally, this paper develops the foundational elements of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory's student and educator role frameworks; secondly, introduces the student managed REIT portfolio space by comparing differentiated approaches by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Villanova University, Arizona State University, University of North Carolina-Charlotte, University of Texas-Austin, and George Washington University; and finally, provides an example of how the American University (AU) Kogod School of Business Nulsen REIT Program has incorporated experiential learning theory, and specifically educator roles, into its learning program.

Experiential Learning as A Necessary Process– A Review

Experiential learning – learning by doing - has evolved as an alternative to the traditional banking, lecture-oriented approach. But to this end, Dewey and Kolb's experiential learning is not only about the student's experience. Educators play an important role too. Specifically, experiential learning is a cyclical process of student-centered learning and growth by experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting enhanced by the employment of varying educator roles (Dewey, 1910; Kolb, 1984).

As to why experiential learning is often preferred to traditional learning, Dewey (1938) remarks that:

> I think that only slight acquaintance with the history of education is needed to prove that educational reformers and innovators alone have felt the need for a philosophy of education. Those who adhered to the established system needed merely a few fine-sounding words to justify existing practices. The real work was done by habits that were so fixed as to be institutional. The lesson for progressive education is that it requires in an urgent degree, a degree more pressing than was incumbent upon former innovators, a philosophy of education based on a philosophy of experience. (p. 29)

The student advantages of Kolb's and Dewey's experiential learning include elements of active engagement, problematizing, knowledge creation, real-world/lived world applicability, knowledge retention, and personal growth, among others – all realized in partnership with the educator. With respect to these advantages, Slavich and Zimbardo (2012) contend that experiential learning events provide:

> An opportunity to experience concepts first-hand … richer, more meaningful understanding of course concepts and of how they operate in the real world … enhance the affective quality of the course content …When engaged in solving problems that are part of the activities and when they are analyzing, sharing, discussing, and reflecting on their personal reactions ... improve students' memory for concepts …. shape students' beliefs about learning and about the self …. lead to significant personal insights, including a greater awareness of one's personally held perspectives as well as an improved awareness of other people's experience … (p. 594)

Please refer to Table 1 for a comparison of traditional versus experiential learning characteristics applicable to REIT programs. The experiential outline may serve as a checklist of items to implement in any learning event.

Table 1: Traditional vs Experiential learning Approaches. Timura (2021)

Traditional	Experiential
Knowledge transfer	Knowledge creation
Learn by knowledge transfer	Learn by doing (experience)
Recall facts unnaturally	Knowledge created, theory formed, theory applied
Outcomes based	Process based
Instructor centered	Student centered and responsible
Little interaction	Discussion, debate encouraged
Standardized tests	Open-ended questions
Passive	Active
Environment, society stagnate	Environment, society dynamic
Present contrived issues (+ solutions)	Problematize issues
Oppresses critical thinking	Encourages critical thinking
Memorization	Reflection
Learning in abstract classroom	Learning takes place in lived world
Themes emerge in contrived curriculum	Generative themes emerge from learner
Teacher empowered	Student gradually empowered
Teacher is expert	Educator is Facilitator, Expert, etc.
Confidence, self esteem not a focal point	Confidence, self esteem enhanced
Classroom	Lived world, society
Not multidisciplinary focused	Multidisciplinary focus
Learning in the past	Learning in the present
Unnecessary knowledge not limited	Unnecessary knowledge limited
Not always real world applicable	Instrumentalism
Faith	Truth learned by knowing how it works
Practice into theory	Theory into practice

Dewey's Insight - Why Experience Alone Oftentimes Does Not Produce Learning

Educational philosopher John Dewey recognized that oftentimes student experience by itself did not produce learning. He emphasized that, "reconstruction or reorganization of experience that adds to the meaning of that experience …. increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experience" (Dewey, 1916, p.59). He contended that it was necessary to reflect on experience to discern the meaning in it and to use that meaning as a guide to future learning events. Dewey (1944) observed that, "the reflective process seemed to be initiated only when we are 'stuck' with a challenge or 'struck' by the strangeness of something outside of our usual experience." (Dewey, 1944, p.274)

Kolb's Contribution - Experiential Learning Theory and Educator's Roles

Expanding upon Dewey's reflection of the insufficiency of experience alone in producing student learning, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory describes how the experience can be augmented and why the educator role can be instrumental to enhanced outcomes.

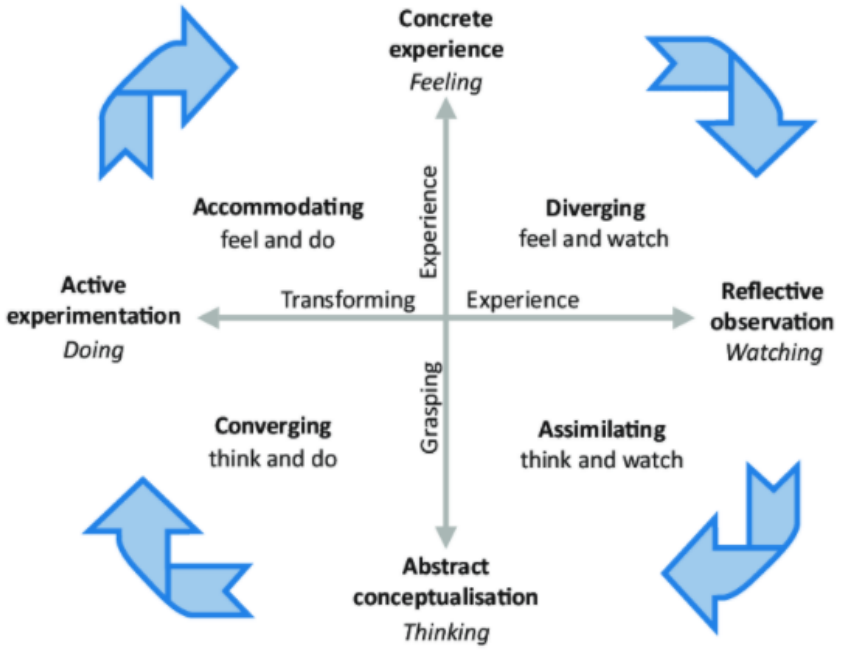
According to Kolb (1984), the student experience is grasped and transformed into learning through a cycle involving experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting. The model in Figure 1 portrays two opposing modes of grasping experience—Concrete Experience (CE) and Abstract Conceptualization (AC) --and two opposing modes of transforming experience—Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE). Importantly, the students are encouraged to touch all four modes during a learning event.

Kolb's Learning Styles – Knowledge to Increase Learning Effectiveness

In addition to acknowledging oneself as an active experiential learner, it is also important to understand how one learns best – in short, one's learning style (or one's preferred learning identity). Kolb (1984) suggests that "An understanding of one's learning preferences and capabilities and the match between these and the demands of learning tasks can increase learning effectiveness. It can suggest why performance is not always optimal and suggests strategies for improvement, as well as help explain why some topics and courses are interesting and others are painful." (Kolb, 1984, p.6)

Kolb (1984), linking grasping and transforming, identifies four learning styles based on the four learning modes: Divergers who favor CE and RO, Assimilators who favor AC and RO, Convergers who favor AC and AE, and Accommodators who favor CE and AE. Figure 1 features the four modes and styles.

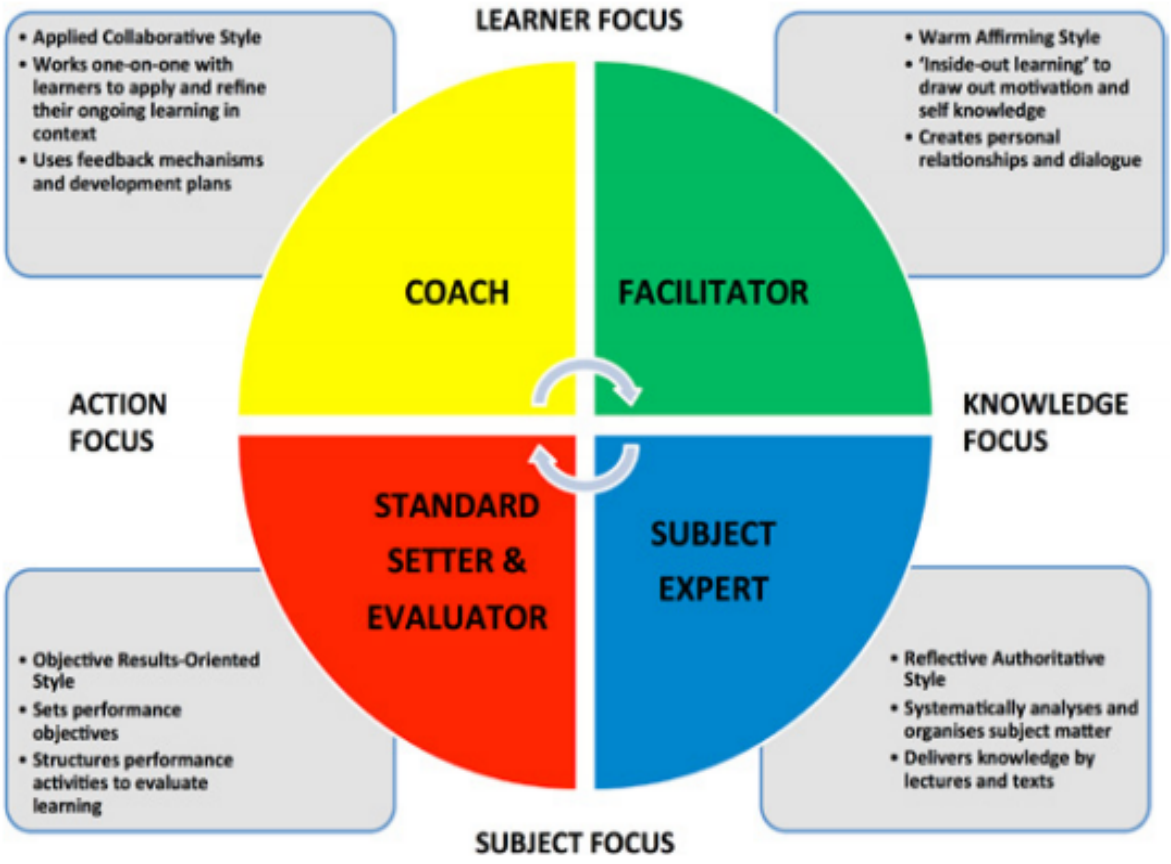
Figure 1: Kolb's learning cycle and experiential learning styles. Kolb, A., & Kolb, D. (2018)



Kolb's Educator Roles: A Framework to Enhance the Student Learning Experience

Leveraging Dewey's contention of the value of the educator to student learning, Kolb argues that more effective instructors tend to organize their educational activities in a way that addresses all four modes for the student —experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting - using specific frameworks or approaches for the roles they seek. As evidenced in Figure 2, Kolb describes the four educator roles to accomplish this rotation as facilitator, expert, evaluator, and coach. To motivate learners to move around the learning cycle, educators must alter their role, transitioning from facilitator to expert to evaluator and to coach, gainfully employing tools and techniques such as schema, continuum, intentional change, and self-efficacy theories to enhance the experience. (Kolb et al., 2014; Timura, 2012).

Figure 2: Educator Role Profile. Kolb, A., & Kolb, D. (2018)



Kolb's Educator Role Characteristics, Tools, and Techniques and the Concept of Balanced Educators

Kolb (2011) and Timura (2012) describe these roles and their tools and techniques, respectively, in some detail. Taken together, these four roles allow the educator to engage the student learner in a more effective manner and with the appropriate tools and techniques.

When facilitating, educators help learners understand their existing, foundational knowledge and experience. They adopt an approach to establish the "learners' interests, intrinsic motivation, and self-knowledge." (Kolb et al., 2014, p. 220-21)

Schema, the facilitator's primary tool and technique, provides the necessary mental maps – including their preferred language and insights into their lived worlds - which students will employ to give form to new information (Driscoll, 1994).

As subject expert, educators aid learners to reflect upon and connect their new, advanced knowledge and experiences to their existing foundational knowledge and experience. Educators exhibit an authoritative approach where they "teach by example, modeling and encouraging critical thinking as they systematically organize and analyze the subject matter knowledge." (Kolb et al., 2014, pp. 220-21).

Stories, narratives, metaphors, lectures, and readings help to satisfy criteria of the Continuum Theory. It is important for the educator to directly link to the student's existing knowledge and experiences with the new, oftentimes through stories and thereby forming an information continuum. Otherwise, if not properly connected, the new material may be quickly forgotten, misinterpreted, or incomprehensible (Bruner, 1966)

As evaluators, educators help learners employ the application of knowledge and skill to meet standard goals. Quality and professional communications, oral and written, guide the outputs. "Educators adopt an objective results-oriented style as they set the knowledge requirements needed for quality performance." (Kolb et al., 2014, pp. 220-21)

High quality communications outlines and salient points analysis and presentation are representative tools and techniques that afford the student learner the view into what can be expected in the industry. Oftentimes professions will have their own styles of engagement.

As a coach, educators help learners to then employ their knowledge and experience to achieve personal and professional goals. "They adopt a collaborative, encouraging style, often working one-on-one with individuals to help them learn from experiences in their life context.' They engage in the creation of personal and professional development plans (Kolb et al., 2014, pp. 220-221)

Intentional Change Theory and Self Efficacy Theory are examples of the means which the education can continue the learning momentum. Boyatzis clarifies elements of learning event challenges with Intentional Change Theory, suggesting that individuals learn what they want to learn in the spirit of achieving their ideal self while other lesser important messages are soon forgotten (Boyatzis & Akrovou, 2006). Self-Efficacy Theory suggests that if individuals do not believe they can learn, they will not, likely either withdrawing or quitting the learning event (Zimmerman, 2000).

These four Educator Roles arise in part because of the way instructors need to resolve fundamental dilemmas that occur during a learning event. Kolb et al. (2014) suggests the following two examples:

- Do we focus on the learner's knowledge and experience (facilitator?) or interest (coach?) or subject matter requirements (evaluator?)?
- Do we focus on effective performance and action (evaluator?) or on a deep understanding of the meaning of the new ideas (expert?)? (p. 221)

True to the definition of a "balanced educator," Kolb's response is that all four roles are required for orchestrating effective learning. Educators, as with learners, tend to have a definite preference for one or some of the roles over the other and most work to overcome this instructional bias. This educator preference, not unlike the students' preference for a particular

learning style, is perhaps because of their educational philosophy, teaching style, personality, etc. (Kolb, 2014) but importantly, needs to purposely expand to include all four roles and the respective tools and techniques.

Introducing Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (KELT) to Student Managed Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) Programs

Because experiential approaches have improved learning and development outcomes in other disciplines (Kolb & Kolb, 2014; Prince & Felder, 2006; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012; Sugarman, 1985), this paper outlines an Experiential Learning Theory framework for student managed Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) programs. While REIT programs have more recently begun to successfully meet the challenges of providing experiential learning opportunities in universities, perhaps more can be done to realize the visions of Dewey and Kolb. Pursuant of enhanced student learning and personal development experiences, this paper proposes a process where REIT instructors actively employ Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory principles and teach around the cycle, adopting the four educator roles at the appropriate times and in turn, guiding the students around the curve (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2013; Kolb et al., 2014).

The dynamic nature of Experiential Learning Theory, this paper's proposed approach, presents a more complex, but also a more realistic model for constructing REIT educational philosophies and practices than do simple recommendations to teach to personality styles, perceived cognitive abilities, or matched learning styles (Coffield et al., 2004a; Jensen & Kolb, 1994; Kolb et al., 2014). In the pursuit of enhanced learning and growth outcomes and owing to the importance of recognizing and emphasizing educator-student learning relationships and development goals, Experiential Learning Theory recommends that the REIT educator consider linking the roles to the student analyst, to the specific learning goal, or to the subject matter (Kolb et al., 2014). With time and practice, Kolb contends that educators will develop the flexibility to use all the educator roles and encourage the students to touch all the learning modes to create a more powerful and effective process of learning and personal growth (Kolb et al., 2014; Willingham, 2005).

Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs): Liquid Real Estate Investment Portfolios

Authorized by Congress in 1960, REITs are an equity security structured much like a traditional operating company except that the assets of the REIT are generally entirely real estate. Correlated with the overall stock market, REITs trade on the stock exchanges and provide liquidity, an inflation hedge, professional management, no corporate taxes, and income if 75% of income is generated from real estate activities and 90% of tax income must be paid out in the form of dividends (NAREIT).

According to NAREIT (2021), in total, REITs of all types collectively own more than $3.5 trillion in gross assets across the U.S., with stock-exchange listed REITs owning approximately $2.5 trillion in assets, representing more than 500,000 properties. U.S. listed REITs have an equity market capitalization of more than $1 trillion.

REIT Indices – or the REIT industry in general - are divided into sectors, not unlike the major US stock indices. Major sectors include office, retail, infrastructure, industrial, data center, health care, residential, multifamily, and self-storage. Like traditional securities, REITs are impacted by economic, political, regulatory, factor, fundamental, performance, valuation, and sentiment issues and are subject to similar levels of rigorous original research and analysis.

REITs historically have delivered competitive total returns based on high, steady dividend income and long-term capital appreciation. Their comparatively low correlation with other assets also makes them an excellent portfolio diversifier that can help reduce overall portfolio risk and increase returns (NAREIT, 2021).

Student Managed Investment Fund (SMIP) Programs; Experiential Learning Vehicles

Student managed investment programs (SMIP) have answered the experiential challenge faced by many colleges and universities, and likely will continue to respond to the call by linking the classroom to real world security analysis and portfolio management (Buser, 2020). SMIPs are real money portfolios funded by university endowments or outside donors (Block & French, 1991; Lawrence, 1994). From an early program founded at Gannon University, SMIPs, with assets over $400 million, now number over 300 internationally, with more than 140 in the United States alone (Clinebell & Murphy, 2016; Kahl, 1997; Lawrence, 2008).

By bridging the college classroom to the real money management marketplace, SMIPs seek to achieve experiential learning-based enhancements through the multi-disciplinary application of functional knowledge from investments, economics, real estate, psychology, accounting, statistics, finance, mathematics, and history courses, among others (Buser, 2020; King & Jennings 2004; Weber 2007).

Beyond leveraging functional experiential-based knowledge, the goals of SMIPs include achieving Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business assurance of learning (AoL) requirements that include communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and leadership objectives (Clinebell & Murphy, 2016; Knewtson et al., 2020). Overall, the evidence of participant success is compelling with increased knowledge of investments (97%), communication skills (66%), leadership skills (83%), and interpersonal skills (84%) suggested by participants in surveys (Clinebell & Murphy, 2016; Knewtson et al., 2020).

Generally established as equity funds, SMIPs have grown globally to include real estate investment trusts, fixed income, commodities, private equity, and venture capital (Buser, 2020). They continue to evolve in other directions, offering the opportunity to enhance the student learning experience by including elements of Environment, Social & Governance (ESG), international securities, risk, Exchange Traded Funds (ETF), and manager selection to the mandate (Buser, 2020).

Student Managed Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) Programs – A Next Generation Experiential Learning Vehicle

Presently limited in number and small in assets under management when compared to equity and fixed income student managed investment programs, REIT programs are beginning to gain traction as next generation vehicles. Several institutions including the University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Texas-Austin, Arizona State University, George Washington

University, Villanova University, University of North Carolina-Charlotte, and American University already have successful student managed REIT programs or student managed real estate investment programs in place (see appendix A).

Experiential Real Estate Program Advantages to Students

Not unlike other forms of experiential learning, the evidence suggests that REIT Programs offer compelling and unique advantages for the student participants. For example, the University of Wisconsin-Madison Applied REIT (n.d.) lists student involvement benefits (see Table 2).

Table 2: Experiential Real Estate Program Advantages. University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Business Applied REIT (2022)

Fundamental research and portfolio management skills
Deep understanding of real estate and capital markets
Successful teamwork skills
Polished and professional presentation skills
Skill sets that can be applied to either the public or private real estate markets upon graduation
Rigors of managing real money in a real-world portfolio
Challenges of being responsible to a demanding client
Necessity of thorough research and clear communication
Demands of decision-making
Frequent interaction with real estate professionals

The Varied Approaches and Elements of Real Estate Investment Management Programs

While it is not within the intended scope of this paper to comment on the attractiveness or appropriateness of different strategies, in reviewing public information, there appear to be many proven and successful constructs that a real money REIT Program may take (see Table 3). For example, a choice can exist in the form of the investable universe (e.g., private investments versus public securities; fixed income instruments versus equity securities; etc.); the degree and nature of student responsibility (e.g. students as analysts; students as managers and analysts; students as economists, technical analysts, etc.); the involvement of boards, outside advisors, and instructors (i.e., voting power, veto power, etc.); the size of the fund; the nature of the fund management meetings (weekly presentations and market updates; once-a-semester presentations and recommendations, etc.); the degree program(s) and length of time associated with the participants (undergraduate, graduate, undergraduate and graduate; one semester or two semesters); whether the investment program is a stand-alone program or part of a course or program; and whether the investment program is located within a real estate center or whether the program is independent, other than belonging within a department.

Informal conversations with program faculty and alums suggest that oftentimes the program takes the form of its resources and donors (e.g., endowment or individual). For

example, those with a private investment program focus (e.g., direct real estate investment) may pursue a blended approach while a liquid securities-oriented group may favor REITs.

Table 3: Real Estate Program Approaches

Investable Universe
Student Responsibilities
Involvement of Boards, Outside Advisors, Educators
Size of the REIT Fund
Form of Fund Meetings
Undergraduate or Graduate Students, or Both
Time Associated with Fund
Stand Alone or Center-Associated Program

The American University Kogod School of Business Nulsen REIT Program

Experientially based and funded by a generous donation from Charles Nulsen III, the AU Kogod School of Business REIT Program possesses similarities to many of the programs outlined in the Appendix but is also distinctly different in many other important respects, owing to its focus on experiential learning and educator roles. See Table 4 for the experiential learning objectives of the Program.

Specifically, the Program is a $250,000 portfolio of securities that features the students at the center of learning in their lived worlds who are creating new knowledge through problematizing discussions and critical thinking. Discussion questions during both the weekly breakout portfolio manager (with generally five to six analysts) and fund management meetings (full team) are open-ended and seek to translate multi-disciplinary theories into practice so to be portable into their professional futures. The multiple facets of student learning objectives are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: AU Nulsen REIT Characteristics

AU Nulsen REIT Characteristics
Knowledge creation
Learn by doing (experience)
Knowledge created, theory formed, theory applied
Process based
Student centered and responsible
Discussion, debate encouraged
Open-ended questions
Active
Environment, society dynamic
Problematize issues
Encourages critical thinking
Reflection
Learning takes place in lived world
Generative themes emerge from learner
Student gradually empowered
Educator is Facilitator, Expert, etc.
Confidence, self esteem enhanced
Lived world, society
Multidisciplinary focus
Learning in the present
Unnecessary knowledge limited
Instrumentalism
Truth learned by knowing how it works
Theory into practice

- Is managed and operated by the students.
- Admits students before the semester start to allow preparation; there is a competitive application process that seeks passion and perseverance ("grit" per Duckworth et al., 2007) and investment knowledge and experience.
- Seeks diversity of knowledge and experience; undergraduate and graduate students are selected from real estate, finance, economics, and accounting, among other departments
- The number of students approximates twenty per semester
- The Fund Managers (Chief Investment Officers) and Portfolio Managers are invited to lead the fund by the Faculty Advisor because of a positive experience

and evidence of leadership and management in the flagship AU student investment managed equity program

- Three to Four Portfolio Managers function as both team leaders and multi-sector strategists for broad categories of REIT coverage and for weekly break-out conversations with five to six teammates
- The students self-select responsibilities that can include economic, political, technical, performance, risk, and the REIT sectors; the fund management weekly meeting begins with an update on actionable, "data points" (i.e., new information) from each coverage area
- The MSCI Real Estate Index is the benchmark. Outperformance increases the team grade (for example, from B+ to A-) while underperformance lowers the grade. Teamwork is recognized as imperative.
- Each analyst is asked to bring his or her investment philosophy and process to the fund. By not requiring an overriding philosophy of contrarian, value, fundamental, growth or momentum, the fund can pivot in the necessary market directions to generate competitive performance
- During the semester, each analyst is asked to present a minimum of two recommendations; the recommendations can be from any sector as well as either a buy or sell; the recommendation selections (and form thereof) are the sole decision of the analyst but must represent their highest conviction idea
- With the full analysis having been provided in advance of the presentation, each fifteen-minute presentation provides an executive summary of the salient investment questions/issues; elements of factor analysis (systematic risk), fundamental analysis (idiosyncratic risk), a valuation range (combination of DCF absolute and relative price metric values), and technical analysis that are combined into the "investment story" that encourages debate. Note that the use of technical analysis – the theory of "a picture says a thousand words" – helps to generate questions.
- Each week, between three to five recommendations are presented – only the highest conviction idea (determined by a team vote that does not include the Faculty Advisor) is acted upon in the portfolio.
- The portfolio contains approximately 15 REITs. These fifteen REITs represent the Fund's highest conviction ideas.
- Presentation discussions seek to target the salient questions that need to be addressed to make an informed decision. The fact that this is not a book report or a journalism program, but an original research analysis is emphasized.
- At the end of the presentations and discussions, a one-minute recap articulates why the idea should be adopted now and how it will impact the portfolio going forward.
- Before the beginning of the semester, Wall Street Prep (WSP™) is provided to each of the students as a resource; the focus of the WSP™ library is fundamental analysis, valuation, forecasting, and REIT analysis. During the academic year, Argus Research™ is enlisted as an optional outside course.

- Strict stop losses are calculated for each position. Momentum (i.e., allowing your winners to run) is equally emphasized.
- The educator usually takes the final ten minutes to comment on the fund management meeting and provide expert knowledge. Individual experiential-oriented meetings with varying educator roles can be held with the learners at other times. Comments may include an emphasis on trending relative performance; factors driving the market; sector weightings in the current market; the need to be anticipatory, not reactionary; the need to focus the discussion on the salient market or recommendation issues and avoid trivia; the difference between Wall Street and Main Street, etc.

The AU REIT Educator's Varying Roles

Each of the above highlighted elements of AU REIT is linked to an educator role or roles. As with other experiential learning programs consistent with Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb et al., 2014), the educator is critical to the learning process and will help the student analyst to gain new knowledge and experience by moving through the experiential learning curve with the aid of the four educator roles. These educator roles are practiced both inside and outside (i.e., individually) the fund meetings.

Over the course of a series of AU REIT Fund and portfolio manager break-out meetings, the facilitator, expert, evaluator, and coach roles could be viewed by engaging the students in the following ways.

Facilitator (with Schema Theory):

As a facilitator, the educator seeks to discover (or for the student, rediscover) or discuss the foundational knowledge and experience of absolute and relative valuation analysis, factor analysis, fundamental analysis, and technical analysis. While topics are recalled from prior coursework or internships. When necessary, the instructor reintroduces them at the level and in the language of the student. Elements of portfolio management, optimization, and risk management are also recalled, albeit at a relatively elementary level.

Expert (with Stories and Continuum Theory):

As an expert, the instructor seeks to provide advanced knowledge and experience regarding valuation, modeling, forecasting, factors, and fundamental and technical analysis. Importantly, it is through stories, readings, videos (e.g., Wall Street Prep™) and personal experience, that the instructor seeks to take the analyst to the next level by connecting or linking this new information to the foundational knowledge previously discussed. This element of connection between the new and old material is what allows the experience to flourish as a learning event.

Evaluator (with High Quality Analytical, Communication, and Presentation Roadmaps):

As an evaluator, the instructor assists the analyst through producing high-quality analysis and presentations. Multiple examples are reviewed but individuality is emphasized as the original research analysis and presentation should reflect the key elements that the analyst believes are important to discuss and to have the team make an informed decision.

Coach (with Intentional Change and Self Efficacy Theories):

As a coach, the instructor motivates, encourages, and reaffirms (Self Efficacy Theory) the analyst's efforts. The analyst is encouraged to recognize that he or she orchestrated the REIT

analysis, that the effort was higher quality, and that this is what the student could seek as a profession (Intentional Change Theory). The coach also then resets the analyst towards thinking about what was learned or what could be improved in the next analysis and presentation that is scheduled and as per Kolb, the learning cycle begins all over again.

Multiple Learning Cycles

Interestingly, the instructor has discovered that for each student, multiple learning cycles can be ongoing at the same time, with each requiring different educator roles. For example, the REIT original research learning cycle may have the instructor in the role of expert but the weekly "data point" sector updates may necessitate the coach role.

Experiential Learning and Educator Role Challenges

Few instances of experiential learning are without their challenges. The recommendation to adopt Experiential Learning Theory in a REIT program, including specifically the educator role construct, is not always easy to execute. Because much of the effort is aimed at the individual student, the overall exercise takes time. In addition, a partnership with the student must be established where he or she must be "willing to engage" one-on-one when encountering a challenge. Because of the nature of these REIT learning events (i.e., interactive fund meetings and not classroom lectures), for some students, it takes a bit of adjustment to be "the center of the action." Moreover, because each of the weekly update "data points" and recommendations and presentations are original research, many have a learning curve that includes long hours of trail-and-error modeling, overcoming extrapolated forecasting, and difficulty constructing "the story" – the combination of technical, fundamental, factor, and valuation analysis – that supports the recommendation. Finally, because of the nature of a discussion in a professional fund meeting, oftentimes students need a bit of time to confidently learn to entertain probing questions and of course, to not take fund decisions personally when not winning the high conviction vote of the team. Nonetheless, from experience, while it takes time, the educator role framework allows for an effective construct to address challenges and in the end, student learning, experience, satisfaction, confidence, and competitive placements to be the result.

Suggested Experiential Theory-Based REIT Program: A Step-by-Step Approach

As with all investment companies, REIT programs need a framework. The following outline (see Table 5) provides a step-by-step program framework, from initially constructing a Mission Statement and a Learning Outcome Statement to finally, providing transparency on the use of Experiential Learning Theory principles as well as educator roles.

Transparency is critical. The author believes that the successes of the AU REIT student learning outcomes and performance are based on the full transparency of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory approach. The Faculty Advisor should strive for "no surprises." From the Experiential Mission Statement to the Investment Policy Statement to the student focused, discussion-oriented design of the portfolio manager breakout and full team Fund Meetings to the

Fund Organizational Meeting where the Faculty Advisor outlines the Experiential Learning Theory foundations (including the educator roles) that underlie the Program's workings, all facets of the learning events are understood by the participants.

Table 5. A Recommended Outline to Developing an Experiential Learning Theory Approach to a REIT Program. Timura (2021)

1) Design an Experiential Student-Centered Mission Statement for the REIT Program.
2) Construct a Learning Outcome Statement for the Experiential REIT Program.
   Be conscious of learning modes, learning styles, educator roles, student centered learning, etc.
3) Secure Funding and Coordinate with Mission and Learning Outcomes Statements.
4) Construct an Investment Policy Statement.
5) Implement Complementary REIT Educational Curriculum – Argus Research; Wall Street Prep; etc.
   Be aware that the knowledge continuum takes different forms of new knowledge to be successful.
6) Outline Investable Universe, Benchmark, Student Roles and Responsibilities, and Instructor Roles and Responsibilities.
7) Outline the Student Application Process.
8) Outline Fund Meeting Design.
   Market and sector reviews, security updates, performance commentary, etc.
9) Address Full Transparency of Experiential Learning Model:
   Articulate Experiential Learning Theory and Educator Role including learning modes, learning styles, etc. Recognize the goals of thinking, reflecting, acting, and experiencing and How the Instructor Will Serve as facilitator, expert, evaluator, and coach during the learning events.
   Specifically:
   Facilitator – Establish foundational knowledge and experience of the student participant by reviewing prerequisite accounting, economic, real estate, finance, and quantitative methods knowledge and experience. Emphasize lived-worlds, importance thereof, and connections.
   Expert – Build advanced knowledge of markets, cycles, analytical tools, portfolio management techniques, technical analysis, and risk measurement. Link new information to foundational knowledge.
   Evaluator – Show examples of original research that articulate salient investment criteria as well as presentation strategies.
   Coach – Take opportunity to discuss how this Program will integrate into the student's ideal self as well as how the student was able to accomplish the learning goals of the Program.

Conclusion

REITs are a next generation of student managed investment portfolio programs that can provide valuable experiential learning opportunities to real estate, finance, accounting, economics, etc. students. However, the student experience alone is not enough. By employing Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory's recommendation for the educator to adopt the roles of facilitator, expert, evaluator, and coach to motivate the student to move around the learning curve to experience, reflect, think, and act, REIT programs will meet the challenges of providing

more effective learning (i.e., per AACSB, AoL) and development opportunities and successful placement outcomes.

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APPENDIX A:

A Brief Outline of Existing Student Managed Real Estate Funds

The following university program descriptions highlight the many available approaches available to designers. Each have been successful in accomplishing their goals and taken in aggregate, provide a valuable case study of learning approaches.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Applied REIT program:
Accepts up to four students to participate during the second year of the MBA program. Beginning in September of the academic year, the team is given one month to form an investment management "firm" that has an organizational structure, an economic outlook, an investment philosophy and a disciplined strategy that will be executed throughout the year. The team then presents their portfolio management proposal to the board of advisors (the client) for approval and subsequent release of funds to manage.
Following approval from the client, the teams meet multiple times each week, often with faculty and with the many investment professionals that serve as guest speakers for the program. Individual members of the team are responsible for conducting rigorous company and property sector research, making recommendations on the composition of the portfolio, and participating in the team decision-making process for management of the funds. Students maintain complete flexibility and independence over all investment decisions, subject to endowment guidelines. Students cannot rely on a "safety net" as they walk the tightrope of active portfolio management. University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Business Applied REIT. Retrieved from https://bus.wisc.edu/mba/current-students/mba-specializations/real-estate/curriculum/investment-track

The Villanova University Real Estate Investment Fund:
Billed as the first undergraduate real estate investment fund, founded in 2018, is organized to co-invest with sponsors and operators on projects in the United States. According to the University website, the fund consists of students serving as senior managers, analysts and interns who work cohesively to research, evaluate, and underwrite or co-invest in potential commercial real estate investment opportunities. The DAN-TOM Fund has invested in various real estate property types.

Villanova University School of Business. Retrieved from https://www1.villanova.edu/university/business/faculty-and-research/centers-of-excellence/real-estate/career-resources/dan-tom.html

The University of Texas – Austin McCombs Real Estate Center:
The Fund will create a mutually beneficial partnership that will provide student members with real world experience. The Real Estate Investment Fund is a student-managed investment fund where elect MBA students serve as equity managers with undergraduates as analysts handling the day-to-day operations of the fund. Faculty members and an Advisory Board act as mentors and guide students in their investment underwriting and analysis; an outside Investment Committee continually oversees the fund performance.
The students participate in all aspects of the investment process including underwriting and closing, asset management and reporting, through the disposition of funds. This multi-million-dollar public-private real estate investment fund affords McCombs the distinction of being the only business school in the country where students have the opportunity to manage a fund with both public and private real estate investments as part of their course work. University of Texas-Austin McCombs Real Estate Center. Retrieved from https://www.mccombs.utexas.edu/Centers/Real-Estate-Center/Academics/Real-Estate-Investment-Fund

The George Washington University:
The Program was established in 2018 with a seed investment provided by Charles R Bendit and launched in partnership with the GWU Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis. Portfolio analysts and managers for the fund are undergraduate students enrolled in a course entitled *Applied Financial Security Analysis: Real Estate*. This course is offered in the spring and fall semester. Fundamental security analysis techniques are taught and employed with pitch days once a semester. George Washington University School of Business Investment Institute. Retrieved from https://investment.business.gwu.edu/funds

The Arizona State University REIT Portfolio Practicum:
Is a two –semester (3 credit hour) course which allows students to act as manager and analyst for an investment portfolio of Real Estate Investment Trust ("REIT") stocks. Students will analyze, research, underwrite, and invest up to five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000), of money gifted to W. P. Carey School of Business by a local REIT, specifically for investment into publicly traded REIT stocks.
There are numerous team assignments and projects. The course covers a wide array of financial statement analysis, fundamental real estate analysis, macro-economic effects on value, and REIT-specific underwriting and valuation metrics. The course will focus on both qualitative and quantitative analysis to enable students to make carefully crafted investment decisions. The REIT Portfolio Practicum, launched Fall of 2018, is limited to 16 students. Arizona State University W. P. Carey School of Business Center for Real Estate Theory and Practice Retrieved from https://research.wpcarey.asu.edu/real-estate/reit-portfolio-practicum/

The University of North Carolina-Charlotte*:*
Thanks to a generous donation by Peter Fioretti to the Childress Klein Center for Real Estate, an investment fund was established in 2016 to provide students with real world experience in the analysis, investment, and management of private and public real estate securities. The fund provides students with the opportunity gain hands-on experience by actively participating in private real estate deals.
Working closely with real estate faculty, students will identify and evaluate real estate investment opportunities. Students will make investment and reporting presentations to an investment committee comprised of faculty and real estate investment professionals. All full-time students and second year part-time students will participate in this program throughout the academic year. University of North Carolina-Charlotte Childress Klein Center for Real Estate. Retrieved from https://realestate.uncc.edu/academic-programs/student-managed-real-estate-investment-fund

CHEERING UP THE DISMAL SCIENCE: USING SPORTS TO ENGAGE STUDENTS OF ECONOMICS

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ABSTRACT

Economics has earned a reputation as the "dismal science," not only because it posits that every decision involves tradeoffs – there is no free lunch - but also because it is largely taught in universities with tools of mathematics (graphs, tables, equations). Students generally fail to see the connection between abstract tools and the "real world" of business and everyday life. Sports economics may hold an answer. This article shows how it can illustrate key business concepts: consumer behavior, the production function, market structures, public finance, labor productivity, and the economics of discrimination. It also covers the use of data analytics to understand sports outcomes.

In the 1986 hit movie "Ferris Bueller's Day Off an economics professor played by a real economist, Ben Stein, tries to explain the link between the Smoot-Hawley Tariff and the Great Depression (Hughes et al., 1986; Hammer & Anderson, 2011). A class of students looks back at him, their blank faces emitting the message that "economics is sooo boring." Why this sentiment should be widespread is actually rather mysterious. After all, what could be more important than learning about the forces that determine whether you will be able to buy a home or car, get a good job, or increase your salary to keep up with inflation? Much of the reason probably derives from the commitment made over a hundred years ago by social scientists like Max Weber (Saka, 2014) to make economics a Wertfrei - value free - discipline dedicated to empirical analysis of verifiable facts rather than discussion of how the economy should be organized. At about the same time, the development of models in the "Marginalist Revolution" of Alfred Marshall in England, Leon Walras in France, and Eugen von Bohm-Bawerk in Austria showed how complex phenomena could be reduced to mathematical models that are then generalized as economic laws. This highly deductive approach to thinking about the economy may have sparked a revolution in economic analysis, but it also required deployment of graphs, charts, and equations as the primary means of explaining economic phenomena. This abstract modeling seems rather irrelevant to many young people with careers ahead of them as employees, managers, investors, and citizens rather than as social scientists. To engage most students, economics professors need a "hook" that brings economic theory to bear on the real world. Maybe sports can provide this hook with its host of user-friendly examples that illustrate economic concepts such as supply and demand, marginal analysis, market structure, public goods and public choice. This list should more closely match the list in the abstract. Economic theory helps us to understand key issues like player compensation, league structures and competitive balance, public finance, and team profitability. While these issues are common to all sectors of the economy, sports are a mirror of the modern world and can serve as a point of access to understanding how the modern economy works. Information on the performance of sports businesses is widely available and sports are a topic that appeals widely to college students. It gets their attention in the way that traditional examples of the "widget factory" never will.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Explaining the basic economic model of supply and demand often bogs down in abstract references to "ceteribus paribus" and shifts in demand and supply curves. In fact, this foundational model – with its elegant simplicity – can be a powerful source of practical insight. Applying it to sports can bring out the context which often gets lost in more generic and abstract illustrations. Here are a few examples.

When incomes drop during a recession, as they did during the financial crisis of 2008-2009, the demand curve for tickets shifts to the left, with fewer tickets being purchased at any given price point. How did most sports teams maintain attendance levels during the recession? They used basic demand analysis to discount tickets, by an average in the NBA and MLB of 25% (Sandomir, 2009). NASCAR and professional golf – two sports heavily dependent on sponsorships from manufacturers hit especially hard by the recession – had to cut back on their prize purses and on the number of events (Gregory & Goldberg, 2009; Sirak, 2009).

Sports franchises struggle in deciding whether to make home games available on local TV networks. Viewing on TV is a substitute for live attendance; why go to the ballpark when one can watch the game in the comfort of one's own home. As substitutes like TV viewing become available, demand shifts to the left. Pioneering sports marketers like Bill Veeck (1996) countered this trend by transforming the ballpark experience with prize drawings, "ladies' nights," seventh inning contests, and in-park entertainment. Veeck and his son Mike shifted the demand curve for attendance at games in the Cleveland Indians stadium to the right (Veeck & Linn, 1996).

> Changing consumer tastes are another key driver of demand shifts. Fans may be willing to pay more for a game when the Yankees or Red Sox or a particular player are in town; hence, the practice of dynamic pricing to take advantage of the rightward shift in demand for different games in the same home team stadium.

A perpetual problem in sports is the imbalance between small and large market teams. In the film Money Ball (Miller et al., 2011), and before the film there was the book (Lewis, 2003), which provides much more detail about Beane's innovative use of metrics), Billy Beane confronts the owner of the Oakland Athletics with a desperate request for more money to stem the talent drain from his team to the deeper pocket teams like the Yankees and the Red Sox. Steve Schott's response is basic economics: we are a small market team with small market revenue and a small market payroll. Demand curves fall to the right or the left based on the size – number of consumers - of the market being served.

Sports also provide insights into the dynamics of supply curves. The production function explains how a product – in this case, sporting events – is produced with a mix of inputs, some of which are fixed, such as the cost of the stadium and player contracts, and others such as marketing, entertainment, travel expense, player development, that are variable. In most cases, sports have high fixed costs that do not change with the number of games played and low variable costs up to the point where a stadium or venue is fully occupied. Looking at the relationship between these inputs and the outputs they generate – number of games played and games won – is a powerful way of analyzing business models and business performance. In general, the fixed costs represent two thirds of a team's cost structure. Owners can decide to price based on the marginal – variable – costs that are low while ignoring the fixed costs that are

"sunk" and therefore irrelevant to decision making in the short run or year over year time horizon. However, in the long run, all costs become variable. Hence, the decision to radically reconfigure stadiums to reflect the actual attendance projections and the fan experience. Camden Yards in Baltimore and Progressive Stadium in Cleveland reflect this thinking with decisions that can only be taken once in a generation.

Sports lends itself to the final piece of supply and demand analysis. Elasticity measures the responsiveness of supply and demand to changes in price and income. How much will demand for tickets change as prices are raised or lowered? How has the supply of players from markets like Cuba and Dominican Republic affected the ability of sports franchises to field higher performing teams (Cooper, 2021)? Working through questions like these can give students a clear sense of what economists mean by the otherwise recondite concept of elasticity and why it is important to analyzing and predicting economic behavior.

MARKET STRUCTURES

Most economics courses start by analyzing supply and demand in the context of perfectly competitively competitive markets. Perfect competition is another abstract concept that is important to economic understanding. It posits a basic market structure – a farmers' market for example – where entry and exit are easy, knowledge is widely disbursed, and products are not significantly differentiated. In a farmer's market, apples are largely interchangeable, the knowledge of how to grow them is widely available, and apple farmers can enter or exit the market based on how attractive they consider prices to be. The perfectly competitive market exhibits Pareto Optimality ("Pareto Principle", 2021) . It is not possible to make any one participant better off without making another worse off. All participants operate at the optimum level with no surpluses or shortages and no wasted resources. Adam Smith captured the beauty of this concept when he wrote that firms are led not by altruism but by competition to produce the best product at the lowest price. "In the pursuit of profit, they are led as if by an invisible hand to do what is best for the world."

While the Adam Smith model of perfect competition is an ideal, it is generally not a reality. In the modern economy, most sectors are characterized by imperfect competition where firms have some form of market power to determine prices and quantities that they produce. The technology sector is dominated by the giant FAANG (Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, Google) oligopolies. Pharmaceuticals enjoy patent protection for their proprietary drugs, a form of monopoly. In autos and aerospace huge capital requirements form a powerful barrier to entry and make exit so costly that governments will intervene to prevent firms from failing. This model of imperfect competition is especially true of sports, another feature that makes it an especially interesting way to understand the actual behavior of economic actors. In an interview with Steve Croft on CBS "60 Minutes" (2012) after Superbowl XLVII National Football League (NFL), Commissioner Roger Goodell called the league business model a blend of the best elements of both capitalism and socialism ("The Commissioner", 2012). Goodell is no socialist but the billionaire owners whom he represents have found ways of revenue sharing – particularly revenue from the hugely lucrative national TV contract – and other leveling techniques such as salary caps and reverse order player drafts so that an NFL small market team like the Green Bay Packers can be competitive with large market teams in New York, Los Angeles or Boston.

Understanding how this model of imperfect competition works - where teams gain market power by competing but also cooperating - helps to explain much of what happens in the modern economy as well as in sports economics. In fact, as Goodell's comment illustrates, sports represent an extreme form of imperfect competition. Thanks to lenient treatment by anti-trust enforcers, or even total exemption in the case of Major League Baseball, leagues and their participating teams are able to form what amounts to a legal cartel. The benefit is a robust entertainment product that is almost universally respected. But there is a cost in the ability of the league and its oligopolistic team owners to dictate all aspects of the business, including the working conditions of the leagues' basic resource, which is the talent of its players.

In fact, sports leagues are a great way to illustrate the flip side of monopoly. As monopoly is a single supplier, monopsony is a single buyer. Leagues exercise monopoly power over their sport and they represent the only employment opportunity for professional athletes. Monopoly power comes in the form of ability to organize and control all of the processes essential to professional sports including pricing, revenue sharing, and policies designed to support competitive balance. These powers are reinforced by anti-trust exemptions. For many years monopsony power was enshrined in Major League Baseball's Reserve Clause (Leeds et al., 2018) that gave owners the right to lock in a player's terms of employment indefinitely. Curt Flood, the outstanding African American center fielder for the St. Louis Cardinals in the 1960s challenged the Reserve Clause when the team's owner traded him to Philadelphia. Flood did not want to go to Philadelphia. He also felt that he was not being paid his true value and wanted to test this value in the market. When Howard Cosell (the leading sports commentator of the time) asked him how he could be dissatisfied with a salary of $90,000 – a hefty sum in 1968 – Flood replied that "a well-paid slave is still a slave" (Haberman, 2014, para. 4). His challenge to the Reserve Clause went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Flood lost his fight, but the idea of free agency – the right to have the market rather than an individual owner determine one's pay – was finally enshrined in baseball a few years later. In fact, the salaries of star players quickly jumped higher to reflect what competing owners were willing to pay. In 1998 Flood finally got his just recognition when Congress passed the "Curt Flood Act" placing limits on baseball's anti-trust exemption (Johnson, 1996).

As the Curt Flood case illustrates, sports is a great way to look at the mechanics of setting compensation levels. According to the theory of labor economics, people are paid in accordance with their Marginal Revenue Product – a measure of how productive they are (for example, their baseball statistics) and how much that productivity contributes to marginal or incremental revenue (by bringing in fans, TV viewers, other forms of brand recognition). In a competitive market, salaries should approximate MRP (Marginal Revenue Product). In a monopsony, employers can control the level of compensation. Because they are the sole employer, raising salaries for some employees will force up salaries in the entire labor market, causing marginal costs to rise. A profit maximizing employer will set salaries at the level where marginal expenditure equals marginal benefit, a point lower than would prevail in a free market for talent. It all sounds esoteric, but the presence of monopsony in the modern economy is seen as a primary reason why wages have stagnated during a period that when corporate profits have boomed. Monopsony also generates the need for counter-vailing countervailing power whereby workers – the athletes – form unions to bargain collectively with the league. While union membership has declined steadily outside of the government sector since the 1960s, it has grown steadily in professional sports (Haupert, 2015). This has little to do with providing a "living

wage" and basic worker rights to athletes, the traditional goals of unionization. It has everything to do with recognizing the marginal revenue productivity of those athletes who are the primary generators of sporting revenue. The emergence of digital images is another element in the evolution of player compensation that promises to further erode monopsony power or at least balance it with player interests. The NCAA has even reduced its opposition to remuneration of college athletes by adopting a new Name Image Likeness (NIL) policy.

DISCRIMINATION

In 1947 the Brooklyn Dodgers signed Jackie Robinson to a contract bringing an end to the practice of racial discrimination in professional baseball that had relegated African-American Elsewhere you do not hyphenate. Be consistent, either way. players to the Negro Leagues. In 1962 Robinson was inducted to the Baseball Hall of Fame. The Civil Rights Act passed in 1964 making the practice of discrimination on the basis of race illegal across the economy (Civil Rights Act of 1964, 1964). Why did sports get such a jump on the political process? The answer lies in Gary Becker's concept of the economics of discrimination. According to Becker, Nobel Prize winning economist at the University of Chicago, there is a cost to discrimination (Stigler & Becker, 1977). Branch Rickey realized that black players represented a rich source of talent, but that teams were willing to pay the price of ignoring this talent because either they or their fans were afraid to confront the costs of discrimination. By breaking the "color barrier" he got ahead of his competitors in the war for talent, the most important element in sporting success. When several white players circulated a petition objecting to bringing Robinson onto the team, the Dodgers manager, Leo Durocher, called a team meeting.

> Boys, I hear that some of you don't want to play with Robinson. Some of you have drawn up a petition… I'm the manager and I'm paid to win, and I'd play an elephant if he could win for me, but this fellow Robinson is no elephant. You can't throw him out on the bases, and you can't get him out at the plate. This fellow is a great player. He's gonna win pennants. He's gonna put money in your pockets and mine. (Kahn, 1993, p. 36).

Other sports took longer to integrate. For many in the South, the Washington Commanders (formerly "The Redskins") was a surrogate team; to appease fan prejudice for many years the team did not take advantage of newly graduated African-American running back talent. The economist, Thomas Sowell, drew the conclusion: a Washington quarterback was forced to play with the loneliest back field backfield in professional football (Perry, 2016). Sowell has also made the point that the areas of society where racism was most prevalent in the past – such as the US Navy which was re-segregated under President Woodrow Wilson – are now those where racial quotas and implicit reverse discrimination are now most prevalent.

Much of the debate over discrimination in the United States has degenerated into a tedious exchange of political platitudes orchestrated by talking heads from MSNBC on the one side and Fox News on the other. . Economic analysis brings a fresh approach to the whole debate by critically examining issues such as the relationship between ethnic groups and human capital formation, statistical discrimination, and institutionally sanctioned racism. It also shows the tenuous links between promoting racial equality and using race as a criterion for making

judgements judgments in areas where race is or should be irrelevant, and thereby provoking an inevitable backlash in the ongoing culture wars.

PUBLIC FINANCE

One of the most contentious issues in sports economics has to do with public funding of sports facilities. What is the argument for having taxpayers pay the costs of a stadium owned by a private sports franchise? Economists like Andrew Zimbalist have criticized the practice as it applies not only to funding of new venues but also for nationally sponsored events such as the World Cup and the Olympic Games (Sorkin & Kessler, 2021). In fact, there is actually a relevant argument for this sort of funding that derives from the area of Welfare Economics. The argument is that sports generate positive externalities. They can be considered as public goods whose benefits extend beyond the transactions – sales of tickets, memorabilia, and media space – which accrue to private owners. Teams point out that a new stadium which attracts a new team or that keeps an existing team from leaving town will generate added spending, first for construction, and then on an on-going basis for hotels, restaurants, and other downtown establishments. Sports also serve a collective or sociological function in boosting civic pride. A "big league" city requires a bigleague team. Families take their kids children to games and bond over major events in the progress of "their" hometown team. Cities often use a new sports venue as the anchor for downtown revitalization. Most recently, in 2021 Worcester, Massachusetts inaugurated Polar Stadium, home of the Worcester Red Sox, a Triple A franchise that the city lured from Rhode Island with $100 million in subsidies on the theory that it would spearhead revitalization of the downtown and make Worcester a more desirable destination for both tourists and businesses seeking a new location ("About Polar Park", n.d.). The cost-benefit analysis for these sports events relies on another tested idea in economic theory, the Multiplier, which measures the "ripple effect" of spending on the wider economy. There is a rich debate among economists over the imputed benefits and how they can justify the actual costs. For students, this becomes an exercise in critical thinking – one that is relevant to many ongoing public debates – and for application of basic quantitative reasoning as a means of carrying out the cost-benefit calculation. Such an exercise forces them to think about the future costs of an investment and the future benefits that must be discounted back to a net present value to determine the validity – or true opportunity cost – of a public subsidy. Also, to this point and perhaps are the current efforts of the Tennessee Titans to obtain public financial support for a new stadium in Nashville and the Chicago Bears to seek support for a new stadium that will keep them in the city of Chicago rather than moving to the suburbs

These lessons have been developed "in the field" over ten years of teaching economics and finance at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and, specifically, through teaching a course in Sports Economics and Finance to advanced undergraduate students. While complex economic concepts are never easy for instructors to articulate or for students to grasp, the use of sports analogies has been a major help in smoothing this process of knowledge transmission. The most recent developments in sports betting and use of NIL and NFT digital imaging show that sports remain at the forefront of economic innovation and continues to provide insight into the evolution of new income streams and new technologies.

COLLEGE SPORTS

One underappreciated element of "American Exceptionalism" is the unique role that sports play in higher education in the United States). No other country links the university experience so closely with participation in athletic activities. Sports are a key part of the university experience for student athletes. In smaller colleges these generally comprise a third or more of enrolled students and are a key element in attracting students to a school. In larger institutions, the proportions of student athletes are lower, but the impact of sports programs is vast. Football and Men's Basketball are the big money generators, but increasingly other sports such as Women's Basketball are gaining attraction and significant fan bases. The reputations of major league teams drive support from alumni and politicians. Beyond college, these athletic programs often function as feeders or "farm teams" for professional franchises (Smith, 1988).

The importance of revenues and the stimulus to institutional branding have long been recognized. University administrators see the spillover from successful sports to a broader impact on the reputation of the entire institution and the "school spirit" that is an essential component of the university experience. One could say that college sports provide a public good to the college community – students and employees, but also alumni and the surrounding residents – much the way that professional teams provide this benefit to their host cities. In this context, the NCAA can be seen as a highly sophisticated cartel with vast monopsony power over its work force of student athletes. Until recently, the feature that distinguished college sports from professional sports was the prohibition of pay for the players who are bound to amateur status and whose benefit of a scholarship is considered a fair recompense for their efforts. More recently, the emergence of digital products such as NIL (Name, Image, Likeness) and NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens) has increased the opportunities for monetizing college sports activity and the role of college athletes ("NFT's in College Sports", 2021). Nevertheless, the NCAA remains a complex hierarchical structure that governs all aspects of college sports with draconian powers to sanction or even suspend institutions that violate the rules. As college sports only continue to grow in popularity, the role of the NCAA will remain central, and its cartel powers will determine distribution of revenues and rewards.

DATA ANALYTICS – REGRESSION

While economics is known to turn off many students who should otherwise be interested, statistics tends to compete for the "least friendly" rank among college courses. In this case, perceived lack of relevance to real world problems meets math anxiety to dampen student engagement. Here again, using applications from the world of sports can help. Sports economics uses statistical techniques, most notably regression analysis, to answer some of the basic questions relevant to anyone managing a sports enterprise. What factors contribute to attendance at games, player productivity, and team winning percentages? More recently, tracking activity on social media and building a digital presence are keys to creating the "buzz" that excites fans and makes teams financially successful. These are all critical questions that have traditionally been answered by reference to anecdote or received wisdom. Regression analysis allows the manager to understand the structure of these relationships and to create models that can then be applied to

improve decision making. Moneyball (2011) has shown how understanding the relationships between specific player skills and winning percentages are critical to putting together a successful team. The lessons are valuable when drafting college players or making personnel decisions at senior levels. By explaining exactly how correlation coefficients, the t-statistic, and p-values work and how a model can be used to predict the outcome of decisions, statistics becomes an exciting way to understand the dynamics of a sports organization. But even more importantly, it can show students how data is essential in making good decisions. Instead of a course crammed with complex concepts and with little relation to realities of interest to students, a module on data analytics in sports can help students to understand what statistics is all about and how wonderful and powerful a tool data can be in learning about the world and making more effective decisions.

CONCLUSION

Sports play a unique role in modern society. Cities identify with their home teams; nations see their performance in events like the Olympic Games and the World Cup as gauges of national prestige and morale; matches between cricket teams from nuclear armed enemies India and Pakistan have smoothed the road to broader negotiations as did the "ping pong diplomacy" that preceded the rapprochement between the United States and China in the 1970s; and sports have been in the forefront of fighting discrimination, most recently in the fight for "Equal Pay" that dominated the Women's World Cup soccer championships in 2019. In fact, the economic heft of the sports industry is not that significant. According to Forbes, the combined revenues of the four largest North American sports leagues (NFL, MLM, NBA, and NHL) would put them at number 89 on the list of Fortune 500 companies (Ozanian, 2021). But something else is going on in this space. The value of teams rose 9.9% in 2021 and is up 55% over the past five years (Ozanian & Settimi, 2021) . In the new economy value is created by more than traditional cash flows. It is a complex of brand positioning, market power, and managerial effectiveness. Sports are a sector that shows this dynamic in a public and accessible fashion. More broadly, the point of studying sports economics is not to show how important sports are in the overall economy. It is rather to use sports as a way of analyzing a wide range of economic behaviors in a way that takes advantage of vast amounts of publicly available information – on player salaries, team profitability, public financing, and team valuation – to apply the abstract tools from the economist's arsenal of economic tools. From the point of view of the academic instructor, sports economics is also a means of cutting through the tendency of students to cringe when confronted with concepts and theories whose relevance to their own lives and practical problems they have trouble grasping. Ben Stein pleaded unsuccessfully with his class for engagement – "does anyone have a comment? Anyone …" Understanding the impact of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff of 1930 on the Great Depression is a point of supreme importance in economic history (Hughes et al., 1986). But maybe it would be more effective to begin by conveying economic theories by mining the rich vein of sports data that is available in the emerging field of sports economics.

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HOW DOES A CLASS STACK UP? THE INFLUENCE OF STRUCTURAL VARIABLES ON STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

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ABSTRACT

The current work analyzes how students' perceptions of the faculty member's evaluation may be influenced by length of class period, method of delivery, students' classification, whether the course is required for degree completion, the students' self-reported expected grade, the students' current GPA, and the students' course workload may influence students' ratings of class performance. The findings strongly suggest a need for faculty members to focus on more

thoughtful assessment of the structural components of a course and for administration to be cautious in using this data when evaluating teaching effectiveness.

For many faculty members across the country, assessment has become an ingrained process in the day-to-day routine. Each assignment being chosen, each modification to a test or quiz, each essay required, each formatting style chosen for any written assignment are no longer chosen based on the metrics of the individual faculty member but are now also being chosen, at least in part, on whether the choice will impact the faculty member's ability to adequately *assess* the course and its work. This new focus on assessment is a direct result of accrediting bodies like AACSB requiring its member institutions to be held to a higher standard, not just in name, but also in practice. Specifically, gone are the days in which a school or institution could achieve accreditation without much data to back up the school's claim that it merited inclusion in the accrediting bodies' ranks. Faculty members now feel an increased pressure to constantly, and actively, look for ways to measure the success of their class in a way that allows them to defend the value of the class to administration and accrediting bodies alike. This focus on assessment is even more pressing for faculty members as this data is often used as justification for important employment decisions (i.e., promotion, tenure, merit) for the faculty member. More importantly, with the current *push* across the country to *weaken* the power of tenure (i.e., by revoking tenure once awarded if performance is not satisfactory), importance must be placed on the faculty member focusing on assessment-related activities as this data may be the only defense the faculty member has for maintaining tenured status. The current and primary tool used for *assessing* classroom performance requires the use of student-rating instruments.

Accordingly, the current work seeks to understand how components (i.e., subscales) of these student-rating instruments may be influenced by factors that are outside of the faculty member's control (i.e., Class Format) and thus create a multi-faceted dilemma for faculty and administration alike when evaluating this data. Specifically, the current work analyzes how students' perceptions of the faculty member's *Course Characteristics* and *Global Course Characteristics* can be influenced by length of class period, method of delivery (i.e., on-campus versus online versus distance learning, and semester a course is taught), students' classification (i.e., freshmen, sophomore, junior, senior), whether the course is required for degree completion, the students' self-reported expected grade, the students' current GPA, and the students' course workload (i.e., full-time versus part-time) may influence students' ratings of class performance (i.e., quality of the class and the faculty member) and thus require caution when such data is being interpreted. The current work focuses its analysis on students in several required and optional management classes within an accredited AACSB institution. The findings strongly suggest a need for faculty members to focus on more thoughtful assessment of the structural components of a course and for administration to either amend its process of using such information as the sole, or main, weight when evaluating faculty members' teaching effectiveness or allow faculty to have more input on the *design* aspects of the classes being taught.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

Role of Expectations

The focus of the current work is how structural variables, particularly those outside the control of the faculty member, may influence students' ratings that focus on how the faculty member and

his/her class compares with other faculty members and their courses. This evaluation is of particular importance today based on the tightening state budgets, a push to minimize tuition increases, and the desire of the various governing bodies of a university to make sure faculty "earn" their rewards (i.e., tenure, promotion, merit). While a literature review did not return much in the way of how one faculty member's course compared to other courses, especially those outside of one's discipline, much literature is available that helps educators understand how a link between structural variables of the course and the ratings received from students may be established. Liao (2013) found that the psychological contract (an often unexpressed and unshared belief system between parties) was able to influence students' perceptions of faculty members. In other words, the preconceived notions or expectations about how a class will "operate" may be able to influence a student's perceptions of that course compared to others. Jussim et al., (1996) discussed findings of how an instructor's preconceived notions/expectations can influence the subsequent performance of a student. This information means, in relation to the current work, that faculty members may design a class based on the "expected" student in a structural manner based on past experiences: for example, suggesting no morning classes for underclassmen based on attendance, tardiness, and other class related issues. Furthermore, the expectation that underclassmen (freshmen and sophomore) need more structure and explanation may cause a faculty member and/or administrator to structure the class to provide more rigor for underclassmen but less for upperclassmen (juniors and seniors) despite the fact that the students may not want this rigor. Lang, McKee, and Conner (1993) detailed several important characteristics of effective teaching and further explained how the level of importance placed on each characteristic fluctuated based on who was making the evaluation acknowledging that the student, faculty, and administrators often have different expectations for a course.

Complexity of Teaching

Palmer (2001) discusses the complexity of developing a flexible teaching program that will fit the needs of students as no one-size-fits-all technique exists. Goode, et al. (2007) provide an in-depth discussion detailing the difficulties and benefits of having a more flexible teaching style within the information systems discipline. Murray et al., (1990) found that the personality of the instructor may influence the success of such teaching styles.

Telford (1995) states that flexible learning is like, " . . . another cover-all term [similar to open learning], inclusive of all forms of learning which, though institution-based, do not follow a laid-down pattern but are adaptable (in terms of time, place, method, etc.) to individuals or particular groups" (p. 165). Furthermore, Thomas (1995) states, "Flexible learning is not about producing variously deliverable learning packages or pick 'n'-mix courses to an otherwise undifferentiated mass market. It is about being prepared to configure all available resources, expertise and learning opportunities in the way that fits the learning purpose best" (p. 2).

This research highlights the difficulty of course development and design since many students often require different characteristics of a course to learn efficiently. In the context of the current work, this differentiation in learning styles makes comparing one course to another, even within the same discipline, problematic as the "types" of students taking courses (especially broad disciplines like business) are diverse and thus many faculty members may be disadvantaged on students' ratings even though the ratings have little to no reflection on the actual merit of that faculty member's performance in the classroom.

These issues are important because as universities increasingly require comparisons across disciplines, departments, colleges, and campuses, such comparisons may prove to be problematic. Specifically, without knowing what "type" of student is enrolled in each course, discipline, department, etc. understanding what "anchor" the student is using for determining a successful classroom experience would be impossible. To the point of the current work, the student likely is rating the faculty member on factors that are outside of the faculty member's control and thus making the scores received on the students' ratings less meaningful from an employment standpoint (i.e., being able to discriminate between faculty on important decisions like merit, promotion, and tenure).

Structural Components of Teaching

Rivera and Rice (2002) found that students were significantly less satisfied with a web-based class when compared to a traditional (face-to-face) or a hybrid class. Students said that the material was harder to follow, understanding the material was made harder, and faculty members' explaining the material was more difficult when presented in a web-based format. Webster and Hackley (1997) found that traditional classes were viewed more positively than technology-mediated (i.e., distance learning) classes. Rubens and Southard (2020) noted that technological difficulties are still causing issues for students learning outside of the traditional (face-to-face) setting. This research is supported by Weldy (2018) who found more positive experiences and a higher preference for the traditional (face-to-face) classes. Research has found that elective courses compared with required courses are typically scored higher by students (e.g., Brandenburg et al, 1977; Feldman, 1978; McKeachie, 1979; Scherr & Scherr, 1990). Many studies have also found that higher-level courses receive higher ratings from students as well (e.g., Feldman, 1978; Marsh, 1987).

The current work seeks to analyze how a structural component (class format), akin to the components discussed previously in this section, may be able to influence students' ratings of a class, specifically as it compares to other classes within the discipline (i.e., content area), department (i.e., required classes from a different subject), and campus (i.e., general education courses). Since research literature has determined that students have definite perceptions, attitudes, and opinions toward class format, the following questions were identified for analysis in this article.

***Research Question 1**: Will Class Format have a significant influence on students' perceptions of the Course Characteristics?*

***Research Question 2**: Will Class Format have a significant influence on students' perceptions of the Global Course Characteristics?*

Once the questions were known, the methodology for the study was determined. The population used for the study was upper-division, undergraduate business students enrolled in a medium-sized university, and the student-rating instrument used was a pre-created instrument developed as a tool for faculty to measure students' perceptions of characteristics of the instructor and course. Stepwise regression was utilized in the data analysis with variables such as length of

class (50- vs. 75-minutes), type of course (Summer, online, distance learning), etc. taken into consideration.

METHODOLOGY

Sample Population for Study

The current study utilized upper-division, undergraduate business students enrolled in a medium-sized university located in the mid-south of the United States. Six hundred forty-one students were included in the analysis. This sample represents all students' ratings submitted over a 6-year period (AY 2011 through AY 2017) and provides a "response" rate of approximately 44.8%. This number is not higher because students' ratings are not a "requirement" at the university. Classes taught during the summers were not included in the analysis as students' ratings of instruction are not provided for any summer classes. This exclusion of summer classes resulted in class sizes ranging from 15 to 47 students. While summer course exclusion may draw concern from some, all of these classes had fewer than 15 students enrolled, but research suggests the exclusion of classes with fewer than 15 students does increase statistical confidence in the findings as the reliability coefficient surpasses the .70 threshold for Cronbach's Alpha for classes with 15 or more students (e.g., Cashin, 1995; Gillmore et al., 1978).

Rating Instrument

The current student rating instrument was developed in the early 1990s as a tool for faculty to increase their confidence in measuring students' perceptions of characteristics of the instructor and course. The college's overall instrument has 5 dimensions comprised of 35 items plus an additional 5 questions pertaining to demographic information. The current study focuses on two of these dimensions: Characteristics and Global Course Characteristics. Course Characteristics comprises 9 items, and the Cronbach's alpha for the current study was .963, which is consistent with initial reliability measures on the scale. Items on the survey include "Assignments relate to course objectives;" "Exams are unrelated to material covered;" "This course makes a contribution to the acquisition of knowledge;" "Overall, this is a valuable course;" "Examinations and assignments require creative, original thinking;" "The course is challenging;" "The course is too repetitive; materials were already covered sufficiently in other courses;" "Reading assignments reinforce concepts and principles taught;" and "Subject matter is organized." Global Course Characteristics comprises 3 items, and the Cronbach's alpha for the current study was .975, which is also consistent with initial reliability measures on the scale. Items include "Focusing now on the course content, this course is worthwhile in comparison with others I have taken in this University;" "Focusing now on the course content, this course is worthwhile in comparison with others I have taken in the College of Business;" and "Focusing now on the course content, this course is worthwhile in comparison with others I have taken in this department."

Analysis of Data for Current Study

The focus of the current research design was to measure how a structural variable (i.e., one that is commonly outside of the control of the faculty member) may influence important metrics of classroom success as measured by the students' perceptions of whether the course was challenging (i.e., Course Characteristics) and how well the course compares to other courses within the department, college, and university. (i.e., Global Course Characteristics). Specifically, could the format of a class (i.e., length of the class period, number of days per week it meets, modality of delivery, etc.) impact students' perceptions of the class in comparison with other courses they have taken? The availability of pertinent variables (i.e., 5 identifiers discussed in the next section) were also included based on their inclusion in the literature as being evidenced to have an impact on students' ratings. The current work utilized a stepwise regression analysis in order to more accurately understand the impact of each variable included.

Variables Included in the Analysis

Demographic variables were not available for analysis as a result of the data collection and data entry process (i.e., the desire to keep students' ratings anonymous). The main focus of the current analysis was to ascertain to what extent Class Format influenced students 'perceptions on the *value* of the class (in comparison to other courses) as measured by the student-rating instrument. Of particular importance to the current work, was whether a structural element (i.e., Class Format) could influence two measures of a successful class based on the perception of the student rater. Specifically, can Class Format influence students' perceptions of Course Characteristics and Global Course Characteristics? Class Format was coded as follows: 1 = 50-minute class periods, 2 = 75-minute class periods, 3 = summer courses, 4 = Online, 5 = Distance Learning). Each format requires a different approach to teaching that may influence students' perceptions of the level of challenge the course presents and how the course compared to others taken by the student. For example, some students prefer meeting more frequently (i.e., 3 days a week for 50-minute class periods) while other students prefer meeting less frequently (i.e., 2 days a week for 75 minutes or 1 night a week for 150 minutes). Perhaps a portion of a faculty member's student rating is influenced by student preference for shorter or longer class periods. For example, distance learning courses, summer courses, and online courses may overwhelm some students and thus cause them to rate the course lower than courses that meet for shorter class periods but more frequently. Online classes, especially in rural areas, limit the ability to have high-quality face-to-face interaction with students. Connectivity issues with distance learning classes limits communication that they would be able to experience in traditional face-to-face courses. Despite these concerns, research has found no appreciable difference in ratings of distance learning compared to on-campus among special-education courses (i.e., Spooner et al. 1999). As such, the current work seeks to further understand the linkage between on-campus versus distance learning in the setting of management classes, as differences are possible as each discipline presents its own idiosyncrasies.

Additional information collected in the student-rating instrument was included in the analysis as, in part, an exploratory analysis to assess influence on students' ratings of Course Characteristics and Global Course Characteristics. Step 1 included demographic variables. Step 2 included Classification (Freshman = 1, Sophomore = 2, Junior = 3, and Senior = 4). Step 3 included Required versus Elective. This element was included based on findings (see Downie, 1952; Evans, 1969; Gage, 1961; Marsh, 1978) that students rate classes higher based on whether they are required to take the classes. Step 4 included expected grade. The logic is that students who think they will perform well reward the faculty member with a higher rating or simply are in a more positive mood state (i.e., happier) with the class thus rating it higher. Step 5 added current GPA. Expected Grade and Current GPA were included based on findings of a meta-analysis (see Cohen, 1981) that students' ratings and student achievement are highly correlated (i.e., 43–47). Finally, Step 6 included full-time (12 hours or more per semester) versus part-time (less than 12 hours per semester) students to assess any potential impact that the course workload may have on students' ratings of the class. In other words, students with heavier course workloads may be overburdened with work and have lower ratings of the course not because of any fault of the faculty member but because of the students' choices (yet another variable that would be outside of the faculty member's control). These nuances and others are discussed in the results and discussion sections of this paper.

RESULTS

The following sections contain the results gleaned from the research conducted during this study concerning the influence of structural variables on student perceptions of course characteristics. The sections are divided for clarity by course prefix and number.

Characteristics of Courses Used in the Analysis

MGT 300 – Management and Behavior. Table 1 included at the end of this paper provides the Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients for all variables included in the steps. Table 2 provides the Beta coefficients, t values, correlation coefficient, r squared, r squared change for each step, F change for each step, and degrees of freedom.

Class Format was significant in Step 1 but was not significant in any other steps. Each variable introduced in Steps 2 through 6 were significant. These findings prove interesting based on the directionality of the findings and their counter intuitiveness to "popular conceptions" on students' ratings.

MGT 303 – Organizational Behavior. Table 3 provides the Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients for all variables included in the steps. Table 4 provides the Beta coefficients, t values, correlation coefficient, r squared, r squared change for each step, F change for each step, and degrees of freedom.

Class Format was significant in Steps 1 through 3 but was not significant in any other steps. Steps 2 through 4 were significant.

The same directional findings discussed above were found with this course as well.

MGT 340 – Labor Relations and Negotiations. Table 5 provides the Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients for all variables included in the steps. Table 6 provides the Beta coefficients, t values, correlation coefficient, r squared, r squared change for each step, F change for each step, and degrees of freedom.

Class Format was significant in Steps 1, 4, 5, and 6. Steps 2 through 5 were significant. The same directional findings discussed above were found with this course as well.

MGT 350 – Human Resource Management. Table 7 provides the Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients for all variables included in the steps. Table 8 provides the Beta coefficients, t values, correlation coefficient, r squared, r squared change for each step, F change for each step, and degrees of freedom.

Class Format was not significant in Step 1 but was significant in Steps 4, 5, and 6. Steps 2 through 4 were significant.

The same directional findings discussed above were found with this course as well.

MGT 491 – Current Issues in Human Resource Management. Table 9 provides the Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients for all variables included in the steps. Table 10 provides the Beta coefficients, t values, correlation coefficient, r squared, r squared change for each step, F change for each step, and degrees of freedom.

Class Format was not significant in any steps of the model. The only step that was significant was Step 4. Of note, the low sample size may be why no significant findings were realized for any other variables introduced into the model.

Global Course Characteristics

MGT 300 – Management and Behavior. Table 11 provides the Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients for all variables included in the steps. Table 12 provides the Beta coefficients, t values, correlation coefficient, r squared, r squared change for each step, F change for each step, and degrees of freedom.

Class Format was significant in Step 1 but was not significant in any other step. Steps 2 through 6 were significant.

Directionality of the findings for Global Course Characteristics mirrored those for Course Characteristics discussed above.

MGT 303 – Organizational Behavior. Table 13 provides the Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients for all variables included in the steps. Table 14 provides the Beta coefficients, t values, correlation coefficient, r squared, r squared change for each step, F change for each step, and degrees of freedom.

Class Format was significant in Steps 1 through 3 but was not significant in any other steps. Steps 2 through 4 were significant.

The same directional findings discussed above were found with this course as well.

MGT 340 – Labor Relations and Negotiations. Table 15 provides the Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients for all variables included in the steps. Table 16

provides the Beta coefficients, t values, correlation coefficient, r squared, r squared change for each step, F change for each step, and degrees of freedom.

Class Format was significant in Steps 1, 4, 5, and 6. Steps 2 through 5 were significant. The same directional findings discussed previously were found with this course as well.

MGT 350 – Human Resource Management. Table 17 provides the Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients for all variables included in the steps. Table 18 provides the Beta coefficients, t values, correlation coefficient, r squared, r squared change for each step, F change for each step, and degrees of freedom.

Class Format was not significant in Step 1 but was significant in Steps 4, 5, and 6. Steps 2 through 5 were significant.

The same directional findings discussed above were found with this course as well.

MGT 491 – Current Issues in Human Resource Management. Table 19 provides the Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients for all variables included in the steps. Table 20 provides the Beta coefficients, t values, correlation coefficient, r squared, r squared change for each step, F change for each step, and degrees of freedom.

Class Format was not significant in any steps of the model. The only step that was significant was Step 4. Expected Grade added 44.6% (p <.001) in explanatory power to the model.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The current study results are consistent with prior research that found students' ratings often are influenced significantly by variables that are external to the "typical teaching process." Expected grades (Marsh, 1978; McPherson, 2006; Stapleton & Murkison, 2001), course structure and organization (Marks, 2000), along with the findings reported here on length of class period, classification of a student, whether the class was required for a student's degree program, a student's overall GPA, and whether the student was full-time are all variables that are not typically "expected" when thinking of what factors influence students' ratings. Furthermore, these factors are all variables that are typically outside of the faculty member's control and thus have no effect on any decisions made by colleagues or administration on the teaching effectiveness of the faculty member. These findings strongly suggest that faculty and administrators need to exercise caution when interpreting findings from students' ratings and, when possible, should do so on a course-by-course basis (not based on discipline or degree) because of observed nuances presented in this study. These results clearly indicate that the "type" of student taking the class is an important aspect when interpreting students' ratings as significance level of the variables changing from course to course (i.e., the weight that each variable represented in the models changed from course to course). This finding suggests that students' ratings need to be interpreted on a course-by-course basis.

This research (2018a) found that the structure of a class influenced a rapport-based metric (Interest in Students). This research (2018b) found that the structure of a class had moderate significance on perceptions of the teaching styles (i.e., organized, flexible, communicative) of an instructor and how well those styles impact students' ratings. The current analysis extends the

understanding of how structural components influence students' ratings as findings suggest that the length of the class period, how often a class meets, the modality of the class (i.e., face-to-face versus online versus distance learning) can significantly influence students' ratings. The current work also highlights supporting evidence (see Author 2018a, 2018b) that other variables outside the faculty member's control have significant relationships with the ratings provided by students. A student's Expected Grade and his Classification proved to be the two most significant variables in this analysis. Of importance to the current work was the finding that students who expected lower grades and students who were *newer* to college gave higher faculty ratings. Faculty typically anticipate that those students who expected higher grades would have rewarded the faculty member with a higher rating or that those students further along in their degree programs would have been more satisfied with the course. Similarly, a student's overall GPA had a significant relationship such that those with a lower GPA gave higher ratings of the course on both scales. Furthermore, higher ratings were received by those students taking the course as a required component of their degree program as opposed to taking it as an elective (counter to much research and anecdotal postulations by faculty). These findings, when examined as a whole, suggest the importance of careful and thoughtful attention to variables that are often administratively determined and not faculty derived before using these ratings to interpret faculty performance in the classroom. Furthermore, these findings also suggest that while the utilization of *generalizations* (i.e., higher ratings for elective versus required or for those students expecting higher grades) for measuring teaching effectiveness in a course may make sense in some contexts, some modifications might need to be made to those generalizations as observed differences in significance across the different classes indicate.

A second interesting finding relates to the directionality of the current findings. Why would *newer* students, those with a lower expected grade, those with a lower overall GPA, and those who are taking the classes as a required component rate the Course Characteristics and Global Course Characteristics higher when most research (and anecdotal evidence) points in the opposite direction? Are these ratings a byproduct of the specific discipline or, perhaps as the newer generations enter academia, are these students now beginning to engender newer preferences/results? Researchers must continue to delve into these issues as much of the "playbook" in academia may need to be rewritten as Millennials and newer generations begin to fill classroom seats.

Additionally, the current study found significance for Class Format, i.e., students were found to provide significantly higher faculty scores in 75-minute sessions compared with shorter or longer sessions. A student's overall GPA entering a class, Classification, and whether the class was Required all had significant impact on the ratings provided by the student.

Furthermore, the student's Expected Grade also had a significant impact on students' ratings. The fact that these variables had such a profound impact on students' ratings is concerning because these variables are often out of the faculty member's control and used to make important employment decisions about the faculty member (i.e., annual performance reviews, merit decisions, promotion, tenure, etc. . .).

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Implications of the Research

Strengths of the current work include the utilization of students' ratings across five different courses taught over a 6+ year time period to over 600 students. By using multiple courses, the

current work was able to provide a more holistic picture of the nuances in variables impacting students' ratings. Furthermore, by using a 6+ year timespan, the current work provided a more comprehensive analysis as multiple administrations for the same course were included in the analysis and, therefore, it reduces any issues with single administrations.

Limitations to the current work were also present. First, students' ratings are not mandatory at the university included in this analysis and, therefore, do not require full student participation. Second, all courses included in the analysis were from a single discipline (i.e., management) and may not be reflective of findings outside of management or outside the field of business. Further research should include an analysis in other business disciplines (i.e., accounting, finance, marketing) along with other non-business disciplines (i.e., sciences, humanities, etc. . .). Third, confidentiality/anonymity requirements made gathering demographic data impossible thus decreasing the richness of the data and its findings. Future research should strive to include these variables in analysis, if possible. Fourth, in a similar vein, the current work was unable to pair students' ratings provided with grades earned by the actual student. The ability to pair students' ratings with the grades earned would have provided more in-depth information, and thus enhanced the statistical interpretation in regard to the link between Expected Grade and Current GPA with the dependent measures. Finally, all courses included in the analysis were taught by one faculty member. While this situation presents some degree of control, and thus some confidence, for the current analysis, it also merits a need for future research to assess the impact of and/or by different faculty members teaching the same courses.

Future research should focus on how the demographics of the faculty member may impact ratings (i.e., men versus women, white versus black, etc. . .). For example, research has shown that students may have a positive bias toward male faculty members. More concerning, the higher students' ratings were provided to the male faculty members even when the student was not completely sure the faculty member actually was male (e.g., MacNell et al., 2015). Second, future research should analyze how other components of students' ratings are impacted, such as those metrics that focus on knowledge learned, quality of teaching, etc.

As the process of education continues to develop and evolve, so must the research that assists educational practitioners in providing quality learning experiences to students. Likewise, as students continue to change, educators need to adapt to students' needs, perceptions, and requirements so that a balance of teaching and learning can exist in the ever-changing classroom. Research as provided in this study is particularly useful in stiving to strike that educational balance.

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APPENDIX

Study 2 Results – Evaluations

300 – Course Characteristics

N = 357

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variable	M	SD	Course Characteristics	Class Format	Classification	Required vs Elective	Expected Grade	GPA
Course Characteristics	4.39	.455						
Class Format	1.46	.499	.088					
Classification	3.04	.646	-.606	-.252				
Required vs Elective	1.05	.225	-.449	-.067	.333			
Expected Grade	1.56	.627	-.750	-.062	.670	.387		
Current GPA	3.53	.999	-.676	-.176	.780	.350	.716	
Workload Current Semester	1.97	.165	-.097	-.049	.274	.040	.151	.294

Table 2: Beta coefficients, t values, r, R squared, R squared change, F change, and Degrees of Freedom

	Model **Course Characteristics**						
Variable	*B*	*t*	r	R ^2	Change R^2	F Change	df 1, df 2
Step 1							
Constant	4.268	57.528****					
Format	.081	1.673*	.088	.008	.008	2.800*	1,355
Step 2							
Constant	5.812	47.264****					
Format	-.062	-1.571					
Classification	-.439	-14.318****	.610	.372	.364	205.007****	1,354
Step 3							
Constant	6.194	47.587****					
Format	-.058	-1.540					
Classification	-.373	-12.164****					
Req. vs Elect.	-.559	-6.541****	.663	.440	.068	42.787****	1,353
Step 4							
Constant	5.751	50.018****					
Format	-.000	.008					
Classification	-.116	-3.478***					
Req. vs Elect.	-.348	-4.725****					
Expected Grade	-.416	-12.249****	.779	.607	.167	150.040****	1,352
Step 5							
Constant	5.756	51.189****					
Format	-.004	-.121					
Classification	-.026	-.673					
Req. vs Elect.	-.330	-4.566****					
Expected Grade	-.357	-9.869****					
GPA	-.108	-4.133****	.791	.625	.018	17.079****	1.351
Step 6							
Constant	5.409	26.975****					
Format	-.006	-.193					
Classification	-.035	-.900					
Req. vs Elect.	-.321	-4.459****					
Expected Grade	-.349	-9.645****					
GPA	-.118	-4.451****					
Workload	.198	2.091**	.794	.630	.005	4.372**	1,350

*p<.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p< 0.001

303 – Course Characteristics
N = 75

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variable	M	SD	Course Characteristics	Class Format	Classification	Required vs Elective	Expected Grade	GPA
Course Characteristics	4.40	.450						
Class Format	1.25	.438	.240					
Classification	3.63	.564	-.335	.224				
Required vs Elective	1.55	.501	-.591	-.085	.636			
Expected Grade	1.59	.680	-.738	-.279	.473	.633		
Current GPA	3.41	.902	-.607	-.132	.600	.749	.745	
Workload Current Semester	1.96	.197	-.124	-.194	.350	.224	.177	.322

Table 4: Beta coefficients, t values, r, R squared, R squared change, F change, and Degrees of Freedom

	Model **Course Characteristics**						
Variable	*B*	*t*	r	R ^2	Change R^2	F Change	df 1, df 2
Step 1							
Constant	4.088	26.238****					
Format	.246	2.098**	.240	.058	.058	4.400**	1,73
Step 2							
Constant	5.152	16.463****					
Format	.343	3.107***					
Classification	-.328	-3.824****	.467	.219	.161	14.619****	1,72
Step 3							
Constant	4.989	17.721****					
Format	.208	2.014**					
Classification	-.023	-.227					
Req. vs Elect.	-.499	-4.393****	.622	.387	.169	19.297****	1,71
Step 4							
Constant	5.044	21.539****					
Format	.022	.40					
Classification	.102	1.154					
Req. vs Elect.	-.256	-2.466**					
Expected Grade	-.416	-5.686****	.763	.583	.195	32.335****	1,70
Step 5							
Constant	5.062	21.166****					
Format	.021	.226					
Classification	.110	1.213					
Req. vs Elect.	-.235	-2.045**					
Expected Grade	-.399	-4.802****					
GPA	-.031	-.435	.764	.584	.001	.189	1.69
Step 6							
Constant	5.000	12.522****					
Format	.027	.276					
Classification	.104	1.059					
Req. vs Elect.	-.232	-1.988*					
Expected Grade	-.396	-4.639****					
GPA	-.034	-.463					
Workload	.041	.196	.764	.584	.000	.039	1,68

*p<.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p< 0.001

340 – Course Characteristics
N = 103

Table 5: Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variable	M	SD	Course Characteristics	Class Format	Classification	Required vs Elective	Expected Grade	GPA
Course Characteristics	4.41	.544						
Class Format	1.30	.461	.212					
Classification	3.79	.457	-.384	-.204				
Required vs Elective	1.67	.473	-.445	-.080	.397			
Expected Grade	1.63	.714	-.840	-.076	.507	.449		
Current GPA	3.64	.815	-.678	.056	.582	.682	.680	
Workload Current Semester	1.98	.139	-.068	-.061	.398	.200	.125	.285

Table 6: Beta coefficients, t values, r, R squared, R squared change, F change, and Degrees of Freedom

	Model **Course Characteristics**						
Variable	*B*	*t*	r	R ^2	Change R^2	F Change	df 1, df 2
Step 1							
Constant	4.080	25.780****					
Format	.250	2.183**	.212	.045	.045	4.764**	1,101
Step 2							
Constant	5.795	12.243****					
Format	.165	1.498					
Classification	-.424	-3.816****	.408	.166	.121	14.564****	1,100
Step 3							
Constant	5.840	13.095****					
Format	.165	1.596					
Classification	-.260	-2.287**					
Req. vs Elect.	-.399	-3.703****	.518	.268	.101	13.710****	1,99
Step 4							
Constant	4.872	17.633****					
Format	.193	3.113***					
Classification	.137	1.850*					
Req. vs Elect.	-.114	-1.687*					
Expected Grade	-.641	13.378****	.861	.741	.473	178.973****	1,98
Step 5							
Constant	4.763	18.748****					
Format	.271	4.563****					
Classification	.256	3.520***					
Req. vs Elect.	.075	.998					
Expected Grade	-.532	-10.611****					
GPA	-.258	-4.472****	.886	.785	.044	19.998****	1.97
Step 6							
Constant	4.445	11.240****					
Format	.271	4.576****					
Classification	.232	3.023***					
Req. vs Elect.	.075	.996					
Expected Grade	-.523	-10.302****					
GPA	-.265	-4.568****					
Workload	.214	1.049	.887	.788	.002	1.100	1,96

*p<.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p< 0.001

350 – Course Characteristics
N = 72

Table 7: Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variable	M	SD	Course Characteristics	Class Format	Classification	Required vs Elective	Expected Grade	GPA
Course Characteristics	4.28	.586						
Class Format	2.00	1.007	.138					
Classification	3.63	.488	-.518	-.430				
Required vs Elective	1.21	.409	-.747	.000	.327			
Expected Grade	1.49	.605	-.686	.277	.292	.610		
Current GPA	3.49	.949	-.710	-.250	.673	.642	.588	
Workload Current Semester	1.97	.165	-.129	.169	.218	.087	.137	.177

Table 8: Beta coefficients, t values, r, R squared, R squared change, F change, and Degrees of Freedom

	Model **Course Characteristics**						
Variable	*B*	*t*	r	R ^2	Change R^2	F Change	df 1, df 2
Step 1							
Constant	4.117	26.271****					
Format	.080	1.165	.138	.019	.019	1.356	1,70
Step 2							
Constant	6.850	12.079****					
Format	-.061	-.918					
Classification	-.676	-4.957****	.526	.277	.258	24.576****	1,69
Step 3							
Constant	6.709	16.689****					
Format	.005	.096					
Classification	-.363	-3.506***					
Req. vs Elect.	-.930	-8.339****	.801	.642	.366	69.542****	1,68
Step 4							
Constant	6.194	16.720****					
Format	.104	2.214**					
Classification	-.212	-2.188**					
Req. vs Elect.	-.622	-5.248****					
Expected Grade	-.406	-4.599****	.853	.728	.086	21.153****	1,67
Step 5							
Constant	6.163	16.412****					
Format	.097	1.997**					
Classification	-.177	-1.567					
Req. vs Elect.	-.590	-4.531****					
Expected Grade	-.384	-3.983****					
GPA	-.044	-.608	.854	.730	.002	.370	1.66
Step 6							
Constant	6.295	12.243****					
Format	.103	2.004**					
Classification	-.166	-1.421					
Req. vs Elect.	-.592	-4.511****					
Expected Grade	-.387	-3.976****					
GPA	-.042	-.568					
Workload	-.093	-.378	.855	.730	.001	.143	1,65

*p<.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p< 0.001

491 – Course Characteristics
N = 34

Table 9: Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variable	M	SD	Course Characteristics	Class Format	Classification	Required vs Elective	Expected Grade	GPA
Course Characteristics	4.35	.516						
Class Format	1.29	.462	.064					
Classification	4.00	.492	-.225	-.399				
Required vs Elective	1.82	.387	-.305	-.209	.477			
Expected Grade	1.53	.706	-.809	-.213	.348	.352		
Current GPA	3.35	.981	-.670	-.169	.565	.568	.772	
Workload Current Semester	1.94	.239	-.156	.161	.000	.540	.190	.350

Table 10: Beta coefficients, t values, r, R squared, R squared change, F change, and Degrees of Freedom

	Model **Course Characteristics**						
Variable	*B*	*t*	r	R ^2	Change R^2	F Change	df 1, df 2
Step 1							
Constant	4.257	15.760****					
Format	.071	.362	.064	.004	.004	.131	1,32
Step 2							
Constant	5.391	5.682****					
Format	-.035	-.162					
Classification	-.249	-1.245	.227	.052	.047	1.551	1,31
Step 3							
Constant	5.519	5.852****					
Format	-.041	-.194					
Classification	-.123	-.558					
Req. vs Elect.	-.343	-1.306	.320	.103	.051	1.707	1,30
Step 4							
Constant	5.362	9.214****					
Format	-.117	-.898					
Classification	.052	.379					
Req. vs Elect.	-.080	-.479					
Expected Grade	-.605	-7.065****	.819	.670	.568	49.919****	1,29
Step 5							
Constant	5.208	8.453****					
Format	-.093	-.688					
Classification	.104	.681					
Req. vs Elect.	-.024	-.130					
Expected Grade	-.527	-4.079****					
GPA	-.091	-.806	.823	.678	.007	.650	1.28
Step 6							
Constant	4.790	5.937****					
Format	-.115	-.834					
Classification	.149	.912					
Req. vs Elect.	-.118	-.546					
Expected Grade	-.518	-3.963****					
GPA	-.112	-.957					
Workload	.254	.809	.828	.685	.008	.655	1,27

*p<.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p< 0.001

300 – Global Course Characteristics

N = 357

Table 11: Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variable	M	SD	Global Course Characteristics	Class Format	Classification	Required vs Elective	Expected Grade	GPA
Global Course Characteristics	4.57	.606						
Class Format	1.46	.499	.116					
Classification	3.04	.646	-.631	-.252				
Required vs Elective	1.05	.225	-.478	-.067	.333			
Expected Grade	1.56	.627	-.744	-.062	.670	.387		
Current GPA	3.53	.999	-.720	-.176	.780	.350	.716	
Workload Current Semester	1.97	.165	-.121	-.049	.274	.040	.151	.294

Table 12: Beta coefficients, t values, r, R squared, R squared change, F change, and Degrees of Freedom

	Model **Global Course Characteristics**						
Variable	*B*	*t*	r	R ^2	Change R^2	F Change	df 1, df 2
Step 1							
Constant	4.364	44.283****					
Format	.141	2.203**	.116	.013	.013	4.855**	1,355
Step 2							
Constant	6.485	40.523****					
Format	-.055	-1.072					
Classification	-.603	-15.113****	.633	.400	.387	228.400****	1,354
Step 3							
Constant	7.038	42.150****					
Format	-.049	-1.014					
Classification	-.508	-12.905****					
Req. vs Elect.	-.809	-7.374****	.693	.480	.080	54.377****	1,353
Step 4							
Constant	6.497	43.199****					
Format	.022	.532					
Classification	-.193	-4.444****					
Req. vs Elect.	-.551	-5.715****					
Expected Grade	-.508	-11.442****	.788	.621	.141	130.914****	1,352
Step 5							
Constant	6.506	45.411****					
Format	.015	.367					
Classification	-.026	-.520					
Req. vs Elect.	-.516	-5.611****					
Expected Grade	-.397	-8.628****					
GPA	-.203	-6.075****	.811	.657	.036	36.904****	1.351
Step 6							
Constant	6.104	23.870****					
Format	.012	.304					
Classification	-.036	-.726					
Req. vs Elect.	-.506	-5.512****					
Expected Grade	-.388	-8.416****					
GPA	-.214	-6.333****					
Workload	.229	1.894*	.813	.661	.003	3.588*	1,350

*p<.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p< 0.001

303 – Global Course Characteristics
N = 75

Table 13: Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variable	M	SD	Global Course Characteristics	Class Format	Classification	Required vs Elective	Expected Grade	GPA
Global Course Characteristics	4.59	.610						
Class Format	1.25	.438	.309					
Classification	3.63	.564	-.345	.224				
Required vs Elective	1.55	.501	-.586	-.085	.636			
Expected Grade	1.59	.680	-.773	-.279	.473	.633		
Current GPA	3.41	.902	-.648	-.132	.600	.749	.745	
Workload Current Semester	1.96	.197	-.138	-.194	.350	.224	.177	.322

Table 14: Beta coefficients, t values, r, R squared, R squared change, F change, and Degrees of Freedom

	Model **Global Course Characteristics**						
Variable	*B*	*t*	r	R ^2	Change R^2	F Change	df 1, df 2
Step 1							
Constant	4.052	19.723****					
Format	.430	2.778***	.309	.096	.096	7.715***	1,73
Step 2							
Constant	5.591	13.733****					
Format	.566	3.956****					
Classification	-.471	-4.244****	.526	.277	.181	18.012****	1,72
Step 3							
Constant	5.387	14.479****					
Format	.397	2.922***					
Classification	-.095	-.695					
Req. vs Elect.	-.615	-4.096****	.644	.415	.138	16.778****	1,71
Step 4							
Constant	5.451	18.251****					
Format	.129	1.101					
Classification	.086	.758					
Req. vs Elect.	-.268	-2.026**					
Expected Grade	-.578	-6.350****	.793	.629	.214	40.324****	1,70
Step 5							
Constant	5.498	18.127****					
Format	.126	1.073					
Classification	.107	.930					
Req. vs Elect.	-.212	-1.460					
Expected Grade	-.531	-5.092****					
GPA	-.083	-.924	.796	.633	.005	.854	1.69
Step 6							
Constant	5.316	10.498****					
Format	.144	1.156					
Classification	.088	.708					
Req. vs Elect.	-.204	-1.381					
Expected Grade	-.522	-4.871****					
GPA	-.092	-.993					
Workload	.118	.451	.796	.634	.001	.203	1,68

*p<.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p< 0.001

340 – Global Course Characteristics
N = 103

Table 15: Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variable	M	SD	Global Course Characteristics	Class Format	Classification	Required vs Elective	Expected Grade	GPA
Global Course Characteristics	4.66	.571						
Class Format	1.30	.461	.210					
Classification	3.79	.457	-.359	-.204				
Required vs Elective	1.67	.473	-.424	-.080	.397			
Expected Grade	1.63	.714	-.787	-.076	.507	.449		
Current GPA	3.64	.815	-.647	.056	.582	.682	.680	
Workload Current Semester	1.98	.139	-.085	-.061	.398	.200	.125	.285

Table 16: Beta coefficients, t values, r, R squared, R squared change, F change, and Degrees of Freedom

	Model **Global Course Characteristics**						
Variable	*B*	*t*	r	R ^2	Change R^2	F Change	df 1, df 2
Step 1							
Constant	4.319	25.994****					
Format	.260	2.159**	.210	.044	.044	4.661**	1,101
Step 2							
Constant	5.986	11.925****					
Format	.177	1.515					
Classification	-.412	-3.499***	.385	.148	.104	12.244***	1,100
Step 3							
Constant	6.032	12.674****					
Format	.177	1.604					
Classification	-.246	-2.031**					
Req. vs Elect.	-.404	-3.511***	.493	.243	.094	12.325***	1,99
Step 4							
Constant	5.082	15.216****					
Format	.204	2.727***					
Classification	.143	1.598					
Req. vs Elect.	-.125	-1.519					
Expected Grade	-.628	-10.855****	.810	.656	.413	117.830****	1,98
Step 5							
Constant	4.965	15.839****					
Format	.288	3.939****					
Classification	.272	3.026***					
Req. vs Elect.	.080	.862					
Expected Grade	-.511	-8.262****					
GPA	-.278	-3.913****	.838	.703	.047	15.311****	1.97
Step 6							
Constant	4.798	9.787****					
Format	.289	3.927****					
Classification	.259	2.727***					
Req. vs Elect.	.080	.857					
Expected Grade	-.506	-8.044****					
GPA	-.282	-3.922****					
Workload	.113	.444	.839	.704	.001	.198	1,96

*p<.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p< 0.001

350 – Global Course Characteristics
N = 72

Table 17: Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variable	M	SD	Global Course Characteristics	Class Format	Classification	Required vs Elective	Expected Grade	GPA
Global Course Characteristics	4.52	.680						
Class Format	2.00	1.007	.178					
Classification	3.63	.488	-.510	-.430				
Required vs Elective	1.21	.409	-.647	.000	.327			
Expected Grade	1.49	.605	-.621	.277	.292	.610		
Current GPA	3.49	.949	-.716	-.250	.673	.642	.588	
Workload Current Semester	1.97	.165	-.120	.169	.218	.087	.137	.177

Table 18: Beta coefficients, t values, r, R squared, R squared change, F change, and Degrees of Freedom

	Model **Global Course Characteristics**						
Variable	*B*	*t*	r	R ^2	Change R^2	F Change	df 1, df 2
Step 1							
Constant	4.278	24.076****					
Format	.120	1.515	.178	.032	.032	2.295	1,70
Step 2							
Constant	7.274	10.940****					
Format	-.034	-.440					
Classification	-.741	-4.636****	.512	.262	.230	21.495****	1,69
Step 3							
Constant	7.137	13.196****					
Format	.029	.461					
Classification	-.437	-3.132***					
Req. vs Elect.	-.906	-6.039****	.721	.519	.258	36.466****	1,68
Step 4							
Constant	6.524	12.660****					
Format	.148	2.261**					
Classification	-.256	-1.905*					
Req. vs Elect.	-.540	-3.275***					
Expected Grade	-.483	-3.932****	.781	.610	.090	15.461****	1,67
Step 5							
Constant	6.398	12.529****					
Format	.118	1.765*					
Classification	-.111	-.724					
Req. vs Elect.	-.407	-2.297**					
Expected Grade	-.389	-2.968***					
GPA	-.185	-1.862*	.793	.629	.019	3.468*	1.66
Step 6							
Constant	6.524	9.327****					
Format	.124	1.779*					
Classification	-.101	-.634					
Req. vs Elect.	-.408	-2.288**					
Expected Grade	-.392	-2.959***					
GPA	-.182	-1.818*					
Workload	-.090	-.267	.793	.629	.000	.071	1,65

*p<.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p< 0.001

491 – Global Course Characteristics
N = 34

Table 19: Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variable	M	SD	Global Course Characteristics	Class Format	Classification	Required vs Elective	Expected Grade	GPA
Global Course Characteristics	4.43	1.000						
Class Format	1.29	.462	.132					
Classification	4.00	.492	-.041	-.399				
Required vs Elective	1.82	.387	-.267	-.209	.477			
Expected Grade	1.53	.706	-.690	-.213	.348	.352		
Current GPA	3.35	.981	-.510	-.169	.565	.568	.772	
Workload Current Semester	1.94	.239	-.144	.161	.000	.540	.190	.350

Table 20: Beta coefficients, t values, r, R squared, R squared change, F change, and Degrees of Freedom

	Model **Global Course Characteristics**						
Variable	*B*	*t*	r	R ^2	Change R^2	F Change	df 1, df 2
Step 1							
Constant	4.061	7.812****					
Format	.286	.755	.132	.018	.018	.570	1,32
Step 2							
Constant	3.931	2.102**					
Format	.298	.710					
Classification	.029	.072	.133	.018	.000	.005	1,31
Step 3							
Constant	4.239	2.311**					
Format	.283	.691					
Classification	.330	.772					
Req. vs Elect.	-.820	-1.606	.309	.095	.078	2.579	1,30
Step 4							
Constant	3.969	2.984***					
Format	.152	.512					
Classification	.631	2.001*					
Req. vs Elect.	-.368	-.969					
Expected Grade	-1.038	-5.307****	.736	.541	.446	28.161****	1,29
Step 5							
Constant	3.85	2.666**					
Format	.182	.585					
Classification	.693	1.965*					
Req. vs Elect.	-.301	-.722					
Expected Grade	-.946	-3.175***					
GPA	-.109	-.417	.738	.544	.003	.174	1.28
Step 6							
Constant	2.919	1.566					
Format	.134	.421					
Classification	.786	2.079**					
Req. vs Elect.	-.497	-.995					
Expected Grade	-.926	-3.069***					
GPA	-.151	-.560					
Workload	.527	.726	.743	.553	.009	.527	1,27

*p<.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p< 0.001

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