

## An Interdisciplinary Competency-Based Approach to Technology Instruction in the Sport Management Curriculum

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Sport organizations continue to seek out potential employees that possess key characteristics such as creativity, integrity and professionalism (Otis 2007; Lynn 2008; Leonsis 2008). Yet, in recent years, prospective sport employers, along with their preference for sport industry cognate knowledge, have placed an increased emphasis on business-based skill sets such as ability to work on a team, critical thinking, written and oral communication, sales skills, problem-solving ability and tech savvy (Hanni 2008). While business education research supports the importance of student acquisition of specific industry knowledge (Lainema and Lainema 2007), the development of core business skill sets and professional characteristics have also been identified as being necessary for effective individual and work team performance within the organization (Paul 1995; Quible 1991; National Association of Colleges and Employers 2006; Ward 2008).

As a result, sport management program administrators and faculty, concerned with student placement rates, are faced with the challenge of enhancing their curriculum to facilitate the development of sport industry cognate knowledge, business related skill sets and personal and professional growth. With the current tumultuous economic situation and increasing competitiveness of the sport industry job market, many faculty members are charged with the complex task and responsibility of not only conveying specialized topic content, but also with developing students' core skill sets and professional qualities (Dykstra 2008) in order to better prepare them for successful entry into the marketplace.

Drawing upon literature in business education and Human Performance Technology (HPT) (Chyung, Stepich and Cox 2006; Cooper 2000, James 2002, Klein and Cox 2004), this paper sets forth a model for an interdisciplinary competency-based sport management curriculum. Recent research in business education and HPT suggests that interdisciplinary competency-based curriculum design has been effective in transforming hands-on learning experiences into highly valued capabilities that spring from a combination of acquired knowledge, skills and professional characteristics (Davis 1995; Ducoffe, Tromley and Tucker 2006; Chyung, Stepich, and Cox 2006.) The model defines competency as including not only student knowledge and skills (what they know, who they are, and what they can do) but also the ability to apply these characteristics and abilities into the performance of a valued organizational purpose which is linked directly to strategic organizational goals (Chyung, Stepch, and Cox 2006).

This paper details an interdisciplinary competency-based sport management curriculum technology curriculum infusion project that represents a collaboration between sport management and engineering faculty along with sport industry partners. Course design and delivery strategies are discussed. Relating their experience in piloting the technology curriculum infusion project with an undergraduate sport facility management course, the authors detail the step by step process they followed in adopting the interdisciplinary competency-based approach to course design.

Impetus for the course revision was provided by both internal and external assessment findings that recommended that technology instruction be enhanced across the curriculum. Additionally, members of the Sport Management program's Advisory Board had provided feedback that technology competencies were highly valued by potential sport employers and that such competencies were in critical demand in sport event management and marketing as well as in sport facility management and operations (Martyn and Ostiguy 2008.) The paper provides examples of specific learning objectives, project-based course instruction modules, assignments, and assessment tools. A template for industry and interdisciplinary collaboration is set forth and the benefits and challenges of both the competency-based and interdisciplinary aspects of the model are identified and examined. Clear communication, technology infrastructure, industry partner investment and resource allocation were identified as critical to the successful implementation of the model. Stakeholder (students, faculty, administrators and industry partner) assessment of the approach and implications for the instructors, students, and industry partners are discussed.

Overall, the pilot of the model and enhanced course design were successful with goals for student learning, skill development and personal growth being met. While anecdotal evidence of gains in employer perception of student internship and employment seeker value have begun to emerge, future research will need to further explore and document the practical implications and outcomes of this pedagogical change to the sport management curriculum.