

**Using Experiential Learning to Transform your Classroom: A Team-Based Learning Approach**

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**Teaching**

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**60-minute symposium,  
roundtable, or workshop  
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**2:35 PM**

Barr and Tagg (1995) suggest there has been a shift in higher education whereby institutions are moving away from a paradigm of instruction to one of learning. As suggested by McManus (2005) in his book *Leaving the Lectern*, faculty in higher education are moving away from the traditional lecture format to a more facilitative style within the classroom. One of these experiential methods of instruction is a team-based learning (TBL) approach within the classroom. While many experiential methods have been examined and applied to sport management, little attention has focused on a TBL approach.

TBL is reconnecting faculty with millennial students who in many cases are half their age. Millennials, defined as those individuals born between 1980 and 2000, comprise the current and next generation of students on college and university campuses throughout the US. While many faculty were educated in a time when learners were dependent on educators to give them information in a lecture-based format, Mangold (2007) suggests that millennials expect learning to be fun and interactive, thus preferring to work in teams as technologies are integrated into the learning environment.

**Experiential Learning Theory**

In experiential learning theory, Kolb (1984) defines learning as a process whereby knowledge is created through a transformation of experience and results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience. Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) described experiential learning as a holistic process, socially and culturally constructed, influenced by socio-emotional context, and having active learning with experience as a foundation and stimulus. A common theme of experiential learning is that the individual learner takes responsibility for their own learning. In experiential classrooms, what a student takes away from the classroom is somewhat outside the control of the instructor and is often idiosyncratic of the student's perceptions of the experience (Gentry, 1990). Thus, Rogers (1969) highlights the importance of the quality of personal involvement of the whole person's feeling and cognitive aspects being involved in learning. Hoover and Whitehead (1975) suggest that experiential learning exists when "a personally responsible participant cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally processes knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes in a learning situation characterized by a high level of active involvement" (p. 25).

**Team-Based Learning**

TBL is defined as an instructional strategy that is designed to support the development of high performance learning teams and provide opportunities for those teams to engage in significant learning tasks (Michaelsen, Bauman-Knight, & Fink, 2002). According to Fink (2004), the use TBL changes the structure of a course in an effort to develop and capitalize on the special capabilities of high performance learning teams. In a study of TBL used in a medical gross anatomy and embryology course, faculty noted improvement in student day-to-day preparedness and group problem-solving skills (Nieder, Parmelee, Stolfi, & Hudes, 2005). In a study of three marketing courses, the majority of students in the sample believed that an experiential learning exercise (i.e., trade show) was worth the effort and should be assigned in future classes (Bobbitt, Inks, Kemp, & Mayo, 2000). In a study of 10 medical schools using TBL in 2003, a total of 9 of the schools were still using TBL in 2005. In the 9 remaining schools, TBL was added to 18 courses, continued use in 19 courses and discontinued in 13 courses (Thompson, Schneider, Haidet, Levine, McMahon, Perkowski, & Richards, 2007). A study of work-related stress on mental health teams suggested an overall trend pointing to a reduction in work-related pressure when working in a learning pack (Sharkey & Sharples, 2003). A six year study in chemistry found the following: 95% of students believed that TBL builds better relationships among students than does the lecture method; 83% of students believed that TBL was a better way to learn chemistry than the lecture method; 78% of students believed that TBL required more consistent work than the lecture method; 90% of students felt responsible for preparing for each class as well as possible; 93% of students felt responsible to their teams to be present in class everyday; Only 16% of students reported that they learned

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chemistry better with the lecture method (Michaelsen, Bauman Knight, & Fink, 2004).

### **Purpose of the Presentation**

This presentation is designed for the purpose of increasing awareness of team-based learning as an experiential teaching strategy to be employed within sport management classrooms. In particular, the presentation will: a) define experiential learning; b) review the current literature on team-based learning; c) explain the differences between group activities within the classroom and a team-based approach; d) discuss effective techniques for assigning teams; e) model a team-based learning activity in the classroom; and f) outline strategies for interested faculty to employ team-based learning as a teaching method in their classroom.

### **Impact on Sport Management**

The transition from a lecture-based classroom to a team-based approach can have a tremendous impact on several stakeholder groups. First, the cognitive benefits to the student stem from engagement at both the individual and team level. Students are held accountable for both individual and team performance through team readiness assurance tests which use an immediate feedback assessment technique (IF-AT). This shared learning engages the student in real-world scenarios which not only help to enhance cognitive learning of theoretical topics, but also assists in developing and fostering strong communication, decision-making, leadership and team-building skills. Second, the faculty member who employs a team-based learning approach transitions from being a "lecturer" to a "facilitator". The approach asks students to become more engaged with the faculty member and can assist in improving the relationship between the faculty member and his or her students. This method can also re-energize faculty seeking new ways to engage student learners. The final stakeholder group is comprised of industry representatives. Faculty can engage industry representatives in the team-based learning process within the classroom. By doing so, students gain valuable industry knowledge and the opportunity to network within the industry.