Redesigning Sport Through Fink

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According to King (2009) there are over 300 sport management programs in the United States with an estimated enrollment of 30,000. As the major continues to grow and more graduates head out into the work force, jobs might become scarce; a candidate will need a large network of contacts, work experience, or special training to help set them apart from the competition. The Sport Management Program Review Council and the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) identified experiential learning as a critical element in student preparation for sport industry careers (COSMA, 2012; McKelvery & Southall, 2008). Sport management education studies have suggested the importance of using experiential learning methods in the classroom (Bower, 2013; Charlton, 2007; Dees & Hall, 2012; Hardin, Bemiller, & Pate, 2013; McKelvey & Southall, 2008; Pauline & Pauline, 2008; Pierce & Peterson, 2010; Southall, Nagel, LeGrande, & Han, 2003; Spence, Hess, McDonald, & Sheehan, 2009) and active learning methods such as case studies, projects, and team-based learning have been implemented in the sport management curriculum (Dees & Hall, 2012; Dixon, 2008; Easter & Evans, 2014; McDonald & Milne, 1999; Pauline, 2013; Pierce, Peterson, Meadows, 2011; Sanchis, 2007; Young, Pittman, & Spengler, 2004; Zeigler, 1959). Although research has provided sport educators with an abundance of pedagogical methods, exploration into course design that best fits active learning is sparse.

Institutions have long used Bloom’s taxonomy (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill & Krathwohl, 1956) to develop course design and align objectives, lessons, and assessments (Airasian, Cruikshank, Mayer, Pintrich, Raths, & Wittrock, 2001; Joyce & Weil, 1996). Bloom’s taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956) is based on a hierarchical, linear approach to learning in which lecture-based pedagogical methods are often used (Apul & Philpott, 2011; Brooks & Brooks, 1999). However, given the uniqueness of sport management, traditional (linear) approaches that focus on memorization of content as well as a lecture-based format would not foster the experiential teaching environment. By contrast, Fink’s taxonomy (2003) is one that stresses active learning as a key principle to teaching foundational knowledge. In addition to application and integration it is “...more comprehensive as it includes categories such as learning how to learn, the human dimension of learning, and the caring dimension of learning” (Apul & Philpott, 2011, p. 71). Educators who use Fink are instructed to create learning goals based on significant learning rather than content-driven methods (Fallahi, 2011; Fink, 2003) and shifts the course design to what “...the instructor wants his or her students to retain after the course is completed” (Fallahi, 2011, para. 2).

The purpose of this presentation is (1) to explore Fink’s Six Dimensions of Significant Learning; (2) create learning goals, assessment, and feedback that promote Fink’s Taxonomy of Significant Learning in a graduate sports marketing course; and (3) provide a reflection on the experience of incorporating Fink into a graduate sports marketing course.