

Active learning: Impact of use of Webcasts and Entrepreneurship videos from Small
Business School in an Introductory Business class at Nevada State College

Grace S. Thomson

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Active learning is key element in a successful curriculum implementation, especially in online accelerated courses. Through a working partnership with Small Business School (SBS), high-quality educational videos about successful entrepreneurs were included as part of the curriculum of BUS101 an introductory course in Business offered in summer 2007 in accelerated mode.

SBS had supported the use of innovative learning resources in similar classes in the business program at NSC: Seminar in Management (Fall 2006) and Introduction to Business (on-ground version fall 2006 and Spring 2007). The new element in this summer class is its accelerated mode which imposed challenges in terms of time and scope of learning.

Characteristics of the BUS101 class

The Summer 2007 session of BUS101 had 18 students, 99% of them working full-time jobs, at least 50% of them were not business-major students but law enforcement or non-declared degrees. A large percentage of them were taking BUS101 as an elective course.

Appendix A shows a log of the activities performed during this course, where it is clear that the Discussion tool was the most frequently used, with a total of 1278 sessions, with an average of 2.5 hours per session, for a total activity of 50 hours, which represent 25% of the activities of the course. Considering the number of students in this class (18) an estimated average of 71 messages were posted per learner in the discussion forum.

How SBS and NSC Partnered to Promote Active Learning?

Our Introduction to Business BUS101 class was built in 6 weekly modules. Each module contained at least two different topics ranging from fundamentals of business, planning, organization, human resources, marketing, price strategy and accounting.

Each week was populated with discussion questions, case studies, papers, essays, power point presentations, photovoice projects and projects. Small Business School (SBS) provided the most valuable resources for the learning process. The live webcasts of episodes about entrepreneurship captivated the attention of our learners, who could bring the theoretical framework of Business to practice, and devise the implications of these cases in their own role as leaders –current or future.

Integration of SBS resources in the Curriculum

The webcasts of SBS episodes were imbedded as part of the weekly modules, and students were required to access the link located on the SBS website, view the pre-selected episode, and respond to up to 4 questions in the discussion forum. The Discussion forum worked as threaded conversation that built up on the students' own answers.

Following a list of the episodes of SBS used in three out of six weeks of our Summer program:

Table 1

SBS® Episodes used in active learning: Discussion forums in BUS101

Week 1 Fundamentals of Business and Economics

- Video: Capital the American Revolution

Week 4 Managing Human Resources and The Art and Science of Marketing

- Video: Wahoo's fish tacos
- Video: People power, Human Resources in the organization

Week 5 Basic Accounting Concepts

- Video: Rebuilding Main Street America
 - Video: Understand your financials. (Taken from New York Times link to SBS)
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Source: BUS101 Summer 2007 Syllabus. Gthomson

Discussion Questions used for Active Learning based on SBS webcasts

The discussion questions created around SBS episodes encouraged an increased the participation of learners in the online environment. These episodes provided opportunities for students to connect with the experiences of real entrepreneurs and extrapolate their successes and failures to their work place. Each discussion thread started with one main question which was expanded to 3 or 4 more during the week built up on the students' answers.

Appendix B summarizes the main discussion topics used in our BUS101 course based on the five episodes provided by SBS.

Reflections about Wahoos' Fish Taco! The most frequently case cited by my students.

I used the video cast about Wahoo's Fish Taco to discuss two weeks of Marketing, product and pricing strategy, and the impact it had in our students reached their personal and professional lives. Here are some examples of their reflection papers and discussion postings:

| From: Monical Subject: Thanks | Date Sent: July 9, 2007 | To: Grace Thomson |||
Grace, || I wanted to thank you for a great class, I really took a lot from it. I also wanted to tell you that my family and I went to Southern California this weekend, and I made a point to visit Wahoo's Fish Taco. It was just as they described it, and the food was great! || Well, have a great summer and I hope to be able to take another class with you soon. || Mary

Comments on weaknesses identified by Wahoo's taco and the Hap hazard concept

"I watched the video a few times looking and listening for the weakness needed to answer this question. What I found was the brothers and Steve's slow but unique methods to growth. The brothers ran the business in a hap hazard method, where as Steve brought organization and growth to the model. I think the limited "big picture view" the brothers had, limited the business growth. As the video proceeded you can see how the limitation was met by Steve, who understood the potential. This combine with the model of the business the brother developed allowed the growth to take place." Galo

Comment on how family businesses can improve with participation of outsiders:

"I think it is important to note that the brothers were running their business fine until they chose to go beyond their 3 businesses. If they wanted to continue to maintain just the three, I think that their "hap - hazard" way of running things would've continued to work. It was

something that they were raised up seeing done and had the experience and the know how to do. Steve, came from the larger restaurants and knew how to manage things differently, which allowed for more growth, but considering their parents success in their restaurant, I think the brothers would've been fine with the original three restaurants being run in this manner."

Carmen

Comment on use of discounted coupons to attract customers, based on Wahoo's taco case:

"My company is a limited liability corporation privately owned by a developer. Our managerial composition is relatively flat, which gives us the ability to communicate and get to know all the managers and employees of all our properties quite well on a personal level. Being Las Vegas, we frequently get clientele from all over the world. When they check in, we do take their address and later send fliers to them. We also have coupons available in hospitals guides in the Las Vegas area thanks to an agreement we have with an important firm. We provide complimentary suite rooms to that company's regional manager when she comes into town and in turn receive their services for free. We deliver the coupons on a cumulative basis, based on an audit of guests most likely to return to Vegas, based on what they tell us when they are there. I have a need for short term (e.g. regional managers and trainees) and long term (e.g developers and construction workers), but that's a pretty healthy number for a privately owned hotel chain."

Anthony

Comment on use of free events for promotion strategy:

"Wahoo's gets involved in big beach and outdoor events. They market to the outdoor extreme sports type of person (surfing, rock climbing, snowboarding, skateboarding). They cater

to these events for no charge. The company I work for does community service and outreach programs in the community. They also team up with organizations such as Good Neighbor and Modest Needs to provide community support." Nicholas

Comment on how Wahoo's taco approach is similar to his business.

"Wahoo's supports many beach and extreme sports activities which focus on their core target market. By networking with other business and activities that attract their target market. As a photographer, I team up with other wedding vendors and provide photographs of their places and products in exchange for placing my name in front of their customers." Juan

Comment on how learning makes her aware of her role model at work (a police department)

"Steve is the brain for Wahoo's. Since he came on board with the brothers he has given them a lot of direction and is a big part of their continued success. The Sheriff would be considered the brain in my organization."

"Wahoo's taco help promote other business' at sporting events and gives out free food, which in return promotes them. Also, it gives the community and chance to see them giving back. The Police Department markets themselves by keeping people aware that we are doing the best we can to protect and serve. I really liked this video about Wahoo's. I have never heard of it before, but now I think I would like to visit one just to see for my own eyes." Mary

And she did it! In July 2007 Mary travelled to Southern California and visited Wahoos' Taco.

Conclusions

In summer 2007, the Introduction to Business class offered at NSC applied active learning techniques to enhance the learning outcomes of the curriculum. By using effective resources that included real-life cases and discussions, learning was perceived as a fun, meaningful, interactive activity. Videos and webcasts were imbedded in the curriculum of BUS101 as basis for discussion questions and threaded interactions among learners and learner-instructor.

The impact of SBS videos was reflected in a higher level of participation from students and the application of real life scenarios to reinforce the learning derived from the textbook. Through this activity, the gap between theory and practice was closed and students experienced positive effects in their understanding of business, management and their role as leaders.

Appendix A

Tool Usage Report: O1 - Summer 2007

Report generated July 9, 2007

Grace Thomson

May 2, 2007 to July 9, 2007

<u>Tool</u>	<u>Sessions</u>	<u>Average Time per Session</u>	<u>Total Time</u>	<u>Percent of Total Sessions</u>
Artifact	2	00:00:53	00:01:45	0.01 %
Assessments	32	00:01:40	00:53:18	0.44 %
Assignments	420	00:05:11	36:18:54	18.05 %
Calendar	38	00:00:32	00:20:26	0.17 %
Chat	69	00:05:51	06:43:47	3.34 %
Discussions	1278	00:02:22	50:29:50	25.09 %
File	1995	00:01:08	37:31:56	18.65 %
File Manager	139	00:00:58	02:14:46	1.12 %
Folder	2166	00:00:22	13:11:28	6.56 %
Mail	915	00:02:07	32:21:55	16.08 %
My Grades	195	00:02:11	07:05:03	3.52 %
Printable View	10	00:03:44	00:37:24	0.31 %
Syllabus	117	00:02:52	05:34:38	2.77 %
tracking.tool- name.web-links	129	00:03:38	07:49:00	3.88 %
Total	7505	00:33:29	201:14:10	100.00 %

Times given are in hours, minutes, and seconds.

Appendix B

Master Discussion questions used in BUS101

- Week 1 Fundamentals of Business and Economics. Video: Capital the American Revolution

Access the webcast Capital, the American Revolution; click on video 1401a "Become Economically Independent" and answer the following questions by or before the end of week 2. (Notice that this discussion will last two weeks)

(Remember to close all other windows and let your computer refresh the screen before watching the video. Video courtesy of Small Business School
www.smallbusinessschool.org.

Michael Novak, one of the most notable writers in America offers some reflection about the importance of knowledge as key to growth and capitalism as the key to fight poverty. Why is his message so important to you as a business student? Share with us what you think about this video and comment on your classmate's posting right below yours.

Week 4 Managing Human Resources and The Art and Science of Marketing

- Week 4. W4D2 People power- Human resources in the organization.

Watch the video [People Power](#) and post your response by or before the end of this week.

(Remember to close all other windows and let your computer refresh the screen before watching the video. Video courtesy of Small Business School
www.smallbusinessschool.org.

This episode is about Nicole Miller who runs a successful fashion business. She tells Hattie Bryant secrets to a successful business have to do with their staff. Choose one of the mini-videos in this episode and share what did you like about it? Also, tell us where does Nicole Miller recruit her employees from? What do you think about that system? Is this included in your business book as a source of recruitment for employees? Comment on your classmates postings

- W4D3 Marketing at Wahoo's Fish Tacos- Giving back

Watch the video about Wahoo's Fish tacos and post your response by or before the end of week 5.

(Remember to close all other windows and let your computer refresh the screen before watching the video. Video courtesy of Small Business School
www.smallbusinessschool.org.

- a) What do you think the inspiration was for the creation of Wahoo's fish tacos.
- b) Do you agree with the statistic given by Hattie Bryant (the hostess of the show) about the number of times in a week an adult male eats out. Are you under or over that average?
- c) Describe what the owner of Fish taco considered one of their main weaknesses. Do you feel that is the weakness of the organization your work at?
- d) Who is the "brain" in the organization and management of operations at Wahoo's fish taco? Who is the brain in your organization?
- e) Describe how Wahoo's gets involved in marketing in beach events. How does your

company get involved in marketing?

- Week 5: Rebuilding Main Street America. No boundaries
Post your answer to this discussion question by or before the end of Week 6

(Remember to close all other windows and let your computer refresh the screen before watching the video. Video courtesy of Small Business School
www.smallbusinessschool.org.

Watch the movie Rebuilding Main Street America: No boundaries . Some of the businesses presented in the video base their marketing strategy on getting to know their customers well, others base their strategy on getting the customers to talk.

- a) Choose one key idea about the video from the list below and describe how you would apply it to the company you work for now or worked for in the past?
- b) Take the key idea you chose before and go to chapter 13 of your textbook or to your webcompanion. Find a concept that matches that key idea, write down the page number where you found it. e.g. "Lead with quality means to produce items or services that stand out for their high quality, good customer service and low rate of complaints from the customers. This key is contained in the section about product positioning, slide 25 of the powerpoint slides"

Key ideas of the video

1. Give more than you take
 2. Lead with quality
 3. Know your customers
 4. Be where your customers are
 5. Target your direct mail
 6. Set customers to talk
 7. Market on the web
 8. Treat customers like family
 9. Take calculated risks
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