



Increasing Student Engagement with Entrepreneurship Education through the Innovative use of Experiential Learning Pedagogy – Experience at a Canadian University

Presented at:

MENA – Higher Education Leadership Forum

Dubai, UAE
April 17-18, 2024

M. Nauman Farooqi, Ph.D.

*President & Vice Chancellor
Professor of Finance & Entrepreneurship
St. Thomas University, Canada*

Agenda

- Objectives for the session
- What is Experiential Learning (EL)?
- Why I choose EL
- Organization of the course
- Instructor's Role, Evaluation Process and Use of Reflective Learning
- Course Feedback
- Q & A

What is Experiential Learning?

- Effective teaching method that allows students to learn through 'hands-on' experience
- EL places students in situations that allow them to experience the challenges and processes of practical life
- David Kolb (1971) defined experiential learning theory as *“the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.”*
- Increases motivation & long-term retention (Toncar & Cudmore, 2000)



Introduction to Entrepreneurship and New Venture Creation Course

- Motivation for using the EL approach
- Organization of the Course
 - Third year business course
 - Students taking the course typically have accounting, marketing, management and finance background



Organization of the Course

- Formation of Groups
 - Students organized themselves into groups of ten to fifteen
- Appointment of President, election of Chairperson and hiring of employees
- Organization of Ventures
 - Mounties Choice Inc.
 - Raffles and Dogs Inc.
 - Mounties Entertainment Inc.
 - Boost Management Solutions

Mounties Choice Team



Raffles and Dogs Team



Mounties Entertainment Team



Organization of the Course

- **Camp Centennial**
 - Groups attended a one-day training program which allowed them to become better acquainted with one another and to strengthen team-building skills

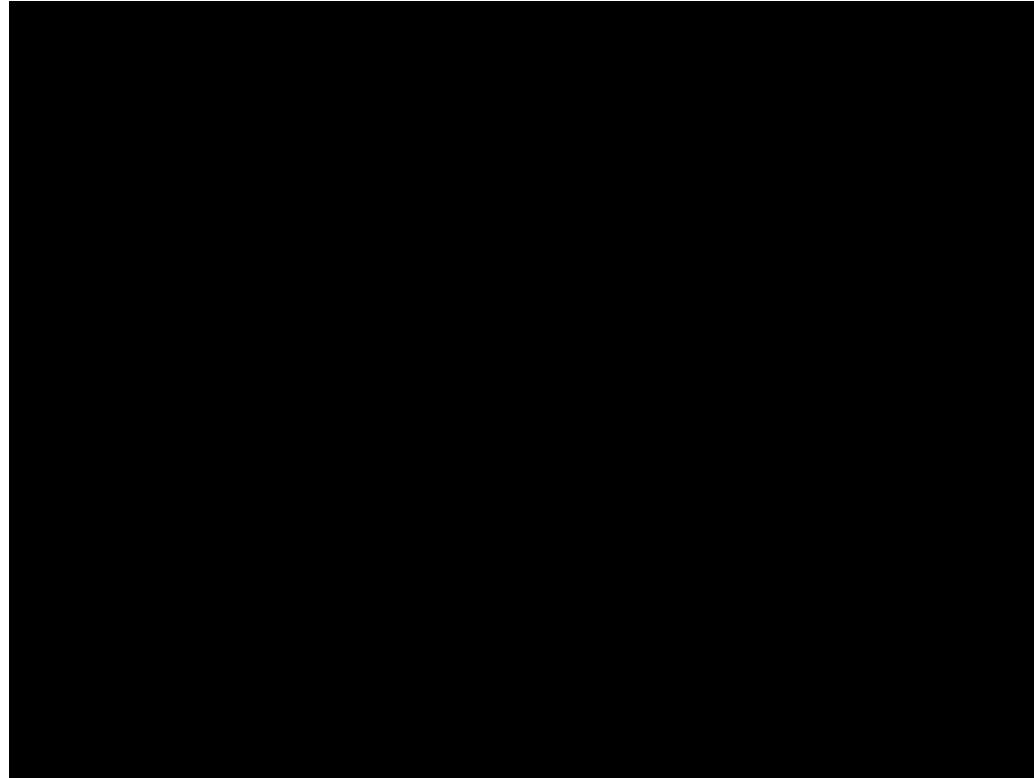


Organization of the Course

- Dual Role Played by Students
 - Students developed an appreciation and understanding of the often-conflicting goals of owners and managers
- Other Activities
 - \$20,000 Small Business Loan
 - Lunch with Presidents
 - Mounties Choice Inc. won the business plan competition for Entrepreneurial Leadership organized by the University of New Brunswick's Faculty of Administration and BMO Bank of Montreal



What is Experiential Learning?



- What students said about the EL approach



Instructor's Role

- Defined a clear role at the beginning of the semester
- Effort was made not to provide specific instructions but to let the management of each company make decisions
- This policy was followed even if the instructor realized flaws in the decisions and judged that they would have an adverse impact.
- The groups were allowed to make mistakes and learn from them
- Offered advice and guidance to individuals and groups
- Access to other faculty members on campus



Evaluation Process

- Criteria used to evaluate each student included:
 - Leadership skills
 - Commitment to organizational objectives
 - Reliability in professional matters
 - Ability to work well with others
 - Ability to organize/prioritize tasks
 - Problem- solving skills
 - Communication skills
 - Ability to cope with crisis situations



Use of Reflective Learning

- Individual, group and instructor evaluation activities used to enhance the assessment of student performance
- Reflective Learning Exercises included:
 - Individual Learning Reports
 - Company Learning Reports
 - Appraisal Learning Reports
 - Peer Evaluation Exercises
- Instructor used a Team Evaluation Form and maintained notes on individual student performance
- Company Binder

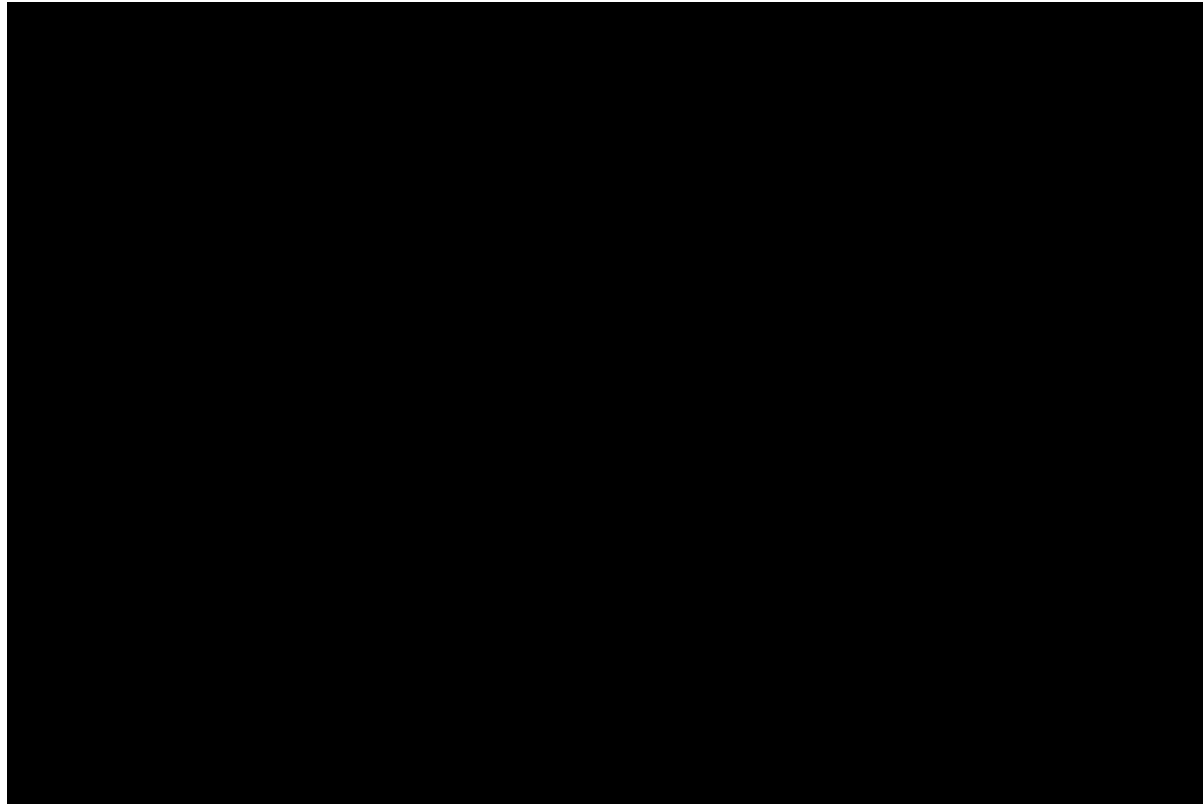
Evaluation Process

Grading	Frequency	Number	Percentage	Total
Individual Learning Report	Once every 3 weeks	4	3%	12%
Appraisal Learning Report	Once	1	8%	8%
Company Learning Report	Once a month	2	7.5%	15%
Journal Articles Presentation	Once every 3 weeks	2	5%	10%
Mid-Semester Peer Evaluation	Once	1	10%	10%
Group Performance	Once	1	15%	15%
Participation in Business Plan Competitions	Twice	2	10%	20%
End-of-Semester Peer Evaluation	Once	1	10%	10%
			TOTAL	100%

The Bean Coffee Shop



Reflective Learning - Lessons Learned



- Student Feedback

Lessons Learned



- Student Feedback

Lessons Learned



- Student Feedback



A sample from Student Comments

“I realize that it is not the smart one with the brightest ideas that will ultimately become successful, but those who are willing to push hard and work to complete necessary goals for the company.”



A sample from the Student Comments

“This course has allowed me to see the dedication, research, and planning needed to make the simplest ventures work.”



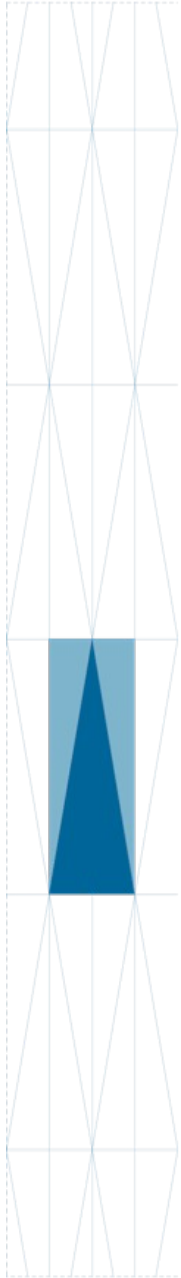
Course Feedback

- Interface theory with practice
- Organization, communication between employees and cooperation were vital elements to achieve success
- Students were able to flex their leadership skills
- Allowed students to reflect on their learning
- Students enjoyed making decisions and learning from their own mistakes
- Feedback provided to students on a regular basis



Lessons Learned

- All the students learned valuable lessons that could only have been learnt by the hands-on approach
- Success was not only measured financially but by the degree of knowledge gained and preserved for future endeavors
- Records were audited by a qualified chartered accountant at the conclusion of the semester
- Return on investment varied from 20% to 348%



Q & A

THANK YOU!

It has been a pleasure to share some ideas with all of you.

