



Quality Classroom Instruction Through the Utilization of Organization Development Practices

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Abstract. Organization development (OD) techniques have proven successful in transforming organizations of all types in multiple contexts across the globe. OD techniques are commonly taught in business schools around the world, yet often the very principles espoused by the discipline are not applied to the business school structure & operation itself—we “talk the talk, but don’t walk the walk”. This paper suggests that applying OD tools such as culture design, enriched job design, and team building to the way we conduct business school classes could significantly improve our student’s motivation and learning outcomes.

1. Introduction

A primary challenge for business management education today is to produce graduates with the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to become effective professionals in their field of choice. Key KSAs such as critical thinking, analysis, problem solving, communication, and working collaboratively in diverse teams are increasingly demanded by employers (O’Neill, Allerd, & Baker, 1997), as well as the ability to effectively integrate and apply knowledge and skills to novel settings/situations (Swart, 2007). This necessitates that we as educators design an appropriate learning environment, in addition to proper curricula, for our classrooms to meet these professional demands, a call that has been made for many years by researchers in the educational field (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002). While the problem is evident, the real challenge lies in discovering the most effective methods of creating this improved modern learning environment and then implementing those methods into our classrooms.

This challenge can seem formidable given that delivering quality classroom instruction is a very complex process. One area of insight is the field of educational research, which is rich with research on instructional methods, techniques, the use of technology, as well as adult learning (andragogical) theory. While this body of knowledge does offer much wisdom about curricular and instructional design, it leaves room for insights into how to create a more effective classroom context that enables management (and self-management) of the

students' inter- and intra-personal dynamics that are needed to truly develop mastery of the course material (Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989). This is not to say that the educational field has ignored the context of learning (indeed there is a rich research stream in the educational literature on this topic—c.f. Palincsar, 1998), but the educational research in this area is still nascent and developing and there is opportunity for knowledge from other fields to offer insights.

One such well-established academic field that specifically examines social psychological dimensions and can offer guidance into the educational context is Organization Development (OD). It is our assertion in this paper that several commonly-used OD techniques can be incorporated into the educational setting to create a truly effective learning environment. The application of OD techniques to the classroom has the potential to create a unique experience that facilitates internal motivation, fosters critical thinking, and prepares students to function effectively in group settings—precisely the skills necessary for modern business professionals.

We begin the paper by briefly introducing the field of OD, including discussion of both the definition and unifying theoretical framework from which the assertions in the paper arise. We then move on to discussing various OD techniques that we believe could be used to transform the classroom context into a more effective learning environment that meets the needs of today's business-school graduates. Finally, we offer conclusions and specific practices that instructors can use to put these techniques into action in their organizations.

2. Overview of The Organization Development Field

Organization Development (OD) can be defined as "...a system-wide application and transfer of behavioral science knowledge to the planned development, improvement, and reinforcement of the strategies, structures, and processes that lead to organizational effectiveness (Cummings & Worley, 2008, pp.1-2)." It is an applied academic discipline (see Austin & Bartunek, 2003, for a discussion of the divisions and connections between OD scholarship and practices) that involves scholarly topics such as human process management, group dynamics, employee growth and development, as well as enhancing the organizational structure and culture for outcome maximization. Based in the foundation of these scholarly topics, OD practitioners have developed a series of applied techniques to bring about desired organizational change and transformation, including cultural change/development interventions, job redesign, and team-building efforts.

The primary reason why we believe the application of OD principles/practices has the potential to be transformative in business education is that OD scholars have clearly demonstrated that the organizational context matters (Payne, Youngcourt and Beaubien, 2007). Starting with the work of Kurt Lewin

on Field Theory in the mid-1900s (e.g. Lewin, 1951) which spawned the field of OD, scholars began to research the ways in which individual behavior and outcomes were influenced by their social environments, specifically the organizational environments in which they functioned (Dweck, 1986). While individuals are rational beings with volitional behaviors, they are also affected to a great extent (consciously or unconsciously) by the implicit and explicit norms, values, and processes of their organizations. It therefore stands to reason that if context matters in organizations such as businesses, it also matters in higher education organizations.

3. Theoretical Framework

Given this empirically-demonstrated belief that context is important, the teleological theoretical framework of OD (see Van de Ven & Poole, 1995) argues that organizational context and change are the end result of an intentional and goal-directed social construction by various members of the organization. Thus organizational members can intentionally modify their organizational environment by various change initiatives to achieve their explicit goals. If one considers the classroom (and/or a business college itself) to be an organization of some form (Cohen, 1976)¹, then the conceptual leap for arguing that these teleological OD theories and practices have potential for improving the classroom context is a short one.

One well-known teleological OD theory that provides a unifying framework to organize the assertions in this paper is Likert's Four Management Systems theory (Likert, 1967). In this theory, there are four different types of management systems that exist along a spectrum ranging from Authoritative to Participatory. System I, labeled as "Exploitative Authoritative", is a system where decisions are made solely at the top of the organization by management, and orders are communicated top-down to subordinates who are charged with executing them while being motivated by the use of fear and threats. System II, labeled as "Benevolent Authoritative", is a system where most decisions are again made at the top, but with a small-degree of subordinate influence, with motivation occurring less through threats and more through rewards & encouragement, although punishment is still a feature. System III, labeled "Consultative", is a system where major decisions are still controlled by management, but employees are often consulted about such decisions (allowing for a moderate degree of two-

1. For the purposes of this paper, we will use March and Simon's (1993) definition of an organization: "*Organizations are systems of coordinated action among individuals and groups whose preferences, information, interests, or knowledge differ*". Thus, in their simplest form, organizations are "systems of coordinated action" that take place between multiple individuals or groups, generally for some specific (formal or informal) purpose or goal. Given this, we believe that the view that an organization is a classroom is clearly appropriate.

way communication and some degree of worker involvement), while allowing for some employee decision-making and control over micro-level issues. Motivation is done primary through rewards and some involvement in decision-making. System IV, labeled “Participatory”, is a system where employees have a high degree of participation in organizational systems and substantial influence over organizational policies and procedures. There is a high level of two-way communication, and employees are viewed as valued assets that have the ability to help the organization perform up to its potential. This participation leads to feelings of ownership and identification with the organization and its goals, and thus motivation is achieved both intrinsically (through participation) and extrinsically (financial rewards tied to the achievement of organizational goals).

Likert’s Four Management Systems theory asserts that management styles that are closer to the “participative” end of the spectrum are superior to those closer to the “authoritative” end of the spectrum (Likert, 1967) because System III and IV styles will yield employees who are more productive, more committed to the organization and its goals, and more satisfied with their experiences. Likert’s assertions in this theory have some direct empirical backing, with a meta-analysis (Miller & Monge, 1986) finding weighted mean (corrected) correlations between participatory-management styles and employee satisfaction and productivity to be $r = .34$ and $r = .11$ (both significant at $p < .01$), respectively. This finding that subordinate participation in organizational decision-making has positive results for motivation, performance, and satisfaction is robust, having been echoed in other literature reviews as well (e.g. Cotton, Vollrath, Froggatt, Lengnick-Hall, & Jennings, 1988; Wagner, 1994).

Given Likert’s theory and the meta-analytic findings in support of it, our main assertion is that incorporating OD concepts & practices into the design of the business college educational experience can help shift these organizations more toward the System III or IV side of the spectrum, thus improving the outcomes for our students. At present, the typical business college educational context more resembles a System II-type management style, with college administration and faculty controlling the rules, processes, and procedures of the educational experience to students. Students typically have very little influence over or participation in the design of program curricula, college/classroom rules/procedures, or instructional methodology. This philosophy reflects a pedagogical (peda- means “child”) approach to education where college administrators and faculty seem to adopt a paternalistic philosophy towards the students, whom are presumably viewed as lacking the requisite capability or experience to be meaningfully involved in decisions about the design of the educational context. Thus students are passive receivers of instruction, empty vessels waiting to be filled by the knowledge of their instructors who tell them what to learn and how to learn it. While this structure has proven adequate, there is still much room for improvement, specifically along the lines of facilitating greater student engagement (NSSE, 2013).

Adopting OD principles can enable us to transform the typical business college and classroom context into a System III- or IV-type style that increases the level of involvement & participation of our students in their educational experience, ultimately resulting in better learning outcomes and a more satisfactory experience overall. This move towards a more participative context meshes well with andragogical (andra- means “adult”) theories of learning. Educational research has found that adults learn differently from children, and thus should be taught using different techniques (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). The pioneering work of Knowles (1984) on andragogy explains that adults approach education differently from children due to their wealth of life experiences as well as the social roles (e.g. employee, parent, spouse, etc.) they occupy. Given this, adults tend to be self-motivated learners who desire educational experiences that they have some influence over so that the learning is contextual, building on their previous experiences, and helps them successfully function in their social roles. Thus adults prefer learning that is self-directed to some degree, task-oriented, and immediately applicable to the real-world problems they deal with.

Thus an andragogical educational philosophy advocates that the adult students who populate our business college classrooms become active participants in their education by partnering with their instructors to jointly create an effective educational experience tailored to their needs—a recommendation which echoes the principles of a Likert System III/IV-type management style organization. The specific techniques that be employed in a classroom setting to achieve this type of participative system are discussed in the remainder of the paper.

4. Applying OD Techniques in the Classroom

The following sections focus on specific concepts and techniques that OD scholars utilize to create effective organizations, which we believe could be impactful in the classroom as well. Though other OD concepts and techniques might be incorporated in to the classroom, the following discussion is limited to what we consider the main tools in incorporating OD in the classroom: cultural development, enriched job design, and team building. We will now go into detail of each and connect these concepts to the classroom.

4.1. Organizational Culture

Organization Development offers an excellent suggestion for the improving the educational context—developing organizational culture. It is widely acknowledged that every organization possesses its own unique culture, which has important impacts on a whole series of important organizational and

individual outcomes (Hartnell, Ou, & Kinicki, 2011) including employee attitudes, operational performance, and financial performance. This evidence suggests that certain types of organizational cultures can be developed to enhance the overall outcomes for both the organization and its members, and creating a positive, “fitting” organizational culture has been shown to create more effective organizations (Abrahamson & Formbrun, 1994).

Further, it is commonly accepted that organizational sub-units may develop cultural values that are unique from the larger organizations (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967), known as differentiation, resulting in the creation of organizational sub-cultures, which allows the sub-unit the ability to make adjustments to its strategy and structure so that it can adapt itself to achieve its goals. This concept of unique organizational culture has been specifically applied to the higher education context as well, with education scholars Kuh & Whitt (1988) acknowledging that universities, their component colleges, and even individual departments within colleges can have unique organizational cultures.

This evidence points to the possibility of deliberately creating unique sub-cultures at the college or even classroom-level, with the sub-unit’s culture designed to help students learn more effectively. The work of Collins and Green (1990, 1992) suggests that culture can be developed even at the classroom-level through the interaction of instructors and students in order to achieve certain ends. For example, Zhu & Engels (2014) found evidence that universities with a culture of innovation were more likely to be receptive to the implementation of new instructional styles and instructional technologies, while Kock, Taconis, Bolhuis, & Gravemeijer (2014) found evidence that teachers could foster a “culture of inquiry” (i.e. student-centered active learning).

Thus both fields (OD and education) seem to support the notion of cultural development as a tool in improving outcomes for students—the question now is what type of culture might be developed? One suggestion comes from the Hartnell et al. (2011) study cited earlier. This meta-analytic review examined four distinct cultural types based on the Competing Values Framework (CVF; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983): Clan, Adhocracy, Market, Hierarchy. A Clan culture has a flexible internal orientation that emphasizes internal cohesion, member involvement in decision-making & empowerment, and communication amongst members. An Adhocracy culture has a flexible external orientation that emphasizes informality, flexibility, creativity, and risk-taking. A Market culture has a controlled external orientation that is focused on competitiveness, efficiency, productivity, and control. Finally, a Hierarchy culture has a controlled internal orientation emphasizes rules, predictability, stability, and formalization of authority. The Hartnell et. al (2011) study found evidence that organizations of each cultural type did indeed achieve higher levels of the specific outcomes each valued.

These results suggest that classroom culture could be designed accordingly to more effectively bring about desired student outcomes based on what the

institution decides are the primary educational goals. For example, if knowledge/skill acquisition and transfer are the primary goals, then a “Market” culture can be developed in the classroom. If greater student engagement, ownership in the educational process, and student satisfaction about the learning experience are the primary educational goals, then a “Clan” culture can be developed.

There is also the possibility that a hybrid Market-Clan culture could be created that emphasizes goal achievement as well as student commitment and satisfaction. This idea is supported by the work of Ritchie, Fornaciari, Drew, & Marlin (2012), who found that business college student team culture was related to performance on a group simulation project. While they found a main effect for the Market culture-performance relationship (Market culture teams were the highest performing), using cluster analysis they also found that teams with cultures that emphasized features of both “Market” and “Clan” cultures (controlled student involvement and engagement in the educational process while having a goal-focused orientation) were higher-performing teams. This finding is consistent with a bevy of educational research into “student-centered” or “active” learning which advocates active student participation and in, and some measure of control over, the learning process which yields superior educational outcomes for students (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

A hybrid Market-Clan culture could be created in a classroom setting. Aspects of a “Market” culture can be created by instituting structures and rules such as those that focus students on achievement and emphasize the importance of outcomes (e.g. frequent skills-based assessments, explicit coverage of how concepts will be applied in real-world business settings) while emphasizing efficiency (e.g. having a clearly defined course goals and an agenda for each class session, quickly redirecting discussion that gets off-task). Classroom structures and rules that emphasize open communication, active student involvement in the classroom and some measure of input into class decision-making can be used to create and reinforce “Clan” culture features.

4.2. Job Design

A second popular OD intervention, Job Design, also offers a wealth of possibilities for improving the learning context and classroom experience. Job Design interventions rely heavily on the insights from the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) of Hackman & Oldham (1980), which posits that jobs/work should be designed to incorporate five characteristics: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. The JCM proposes that jobs/work that feature these characteristics elicit positive psychological states in individuals which ultimately lead to higher levels of motivation, satisfaction, and performance. The JCM model has substantial empirical support, with multiple

meta-analyses (i.e. Fried & Ferris, 1987; Humphreys, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007) confirming its predictive validity of the above-mentioned work outcomes.

Thus the empirical evidence provides substantial support for using JCM principles to design jobs/work more effectively—but the question remains whether these principles are applicable to an educational context in addition to an employment context, and if so, how can they be applied in an educational setting? It is our contention that incorporating these Job Design characteristics into the course structure can result in a course that is both more satisfying and more motivating for students. Logically, JCM principles translate directly to the student experience if one is willing to accept the notion of a student being analogous to an employee with a job to perform. In this situation, a primary driver of student (employee) motivation lays with the design of the educational experience (job) itself. If the class experience is designed correctly, the student motivation levels will increase (Ames, 1992); if the class experience is mundane, repetitive, without significance and/or context, the student's satisfaction, engagement, and motivation suffer. The following discussion describes how the JCM principles can be used to enhance the motivating potential of the educational context.

4.3. Skill Variety

Skill variety is the degree to which the work involves a number of different activities, which in turn requires a variety of personal skills and abilities to successfully complete. The JCM concludes that the greater the skill variety the better the outcomes, as the person experiences the work as more interesting, and thus more internally motivating and satisfying (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), with the opposite also being true. This same effect has been found to apply in the educational setting as well, with educational researchers (Ames, 1992; Stipek, 1996) noting the positive effects of task variety and differentiation on student motivation and subsequent performance.

Applying this to the educational context means that instructional methods should be designed to incorporate a variety of different activities, moving away from the traditional teacher-centered “lecture & exam” method of teaching that provides little skill variety. One recommendation is to minimize the lecture component and require active student engagement through a variety of in-class exercises, case studies, projects, and team activities. When learning occurs in this environment, a number of complex skills are required to engage in learning: critical analysis, problem solving, information processing, oral & written communication, social interaction, etc. A second recommendation is to incorporate more variety into assessing student performance. For example, utilizing assessments such as projects and case studies that require the students to analyze and synthesize in addition to memorize would also increase the skill

variety of the course. A final recommendation is to provide variety in the context of learning environment, so that students are required to work both individually and in pairs/groups, which again provides contextual variety which requires a broader set of skills.

4.4. Task Identity

The second core dimension is task identity, which in the JCM is defined as the degree to which a job requires the individual to complete a whole task/product with an identifiable outcome from beginning to end, rather than just a piece of a whole. The JCM finds that people are more motivated and satisfied when they participate in all parts of the process of completing a task, rather than just a narrow slice. This finding has also been demonstrated in the educational context, with Brophy's (1987, pg. 44) review of research on student motivation noting that "students prefer tasks that have meaning or integrity in their own right over tasks that are mere subparts of some larger entity", as those tasks are more satisfying and motivational.

One method of applying this concept to the educational context is for instructors to give students larger-scale assignments such as projects, papers, and case studies that require the integration of multiple learned concepts and skills and produces a tangible work product, such as semester-long business simulations. A second method is to explicitly convey to students how the individual class sessions are the "pieces" that form a coherent course and how individual courses "fit together" in a coherent manner to form a degree program (i.e. have goal clarity). For example, at some point early in the degree program such as during orientation or one of the foundational program courses, students should have the design of the curriculum including the required course offerings and suggested sequence of courses explained to them so that they understand the "big picture" and role that each individual course plays in the degree program. Second, on the first day of a course and also periodically throughout, the instructor should remind students of the course goals and how the class content relates to them.

4.5. Task Significance

The third core dimension, task significance, involves the perception of the degree that the job/work has a positive impact on the individual, others, the organization, or larger society, and is thus important. The JCM proposes that if the task is perceived by the employee as unimportant and/or of little relevance, both satisfaction and motivation to perform the task will suffer, and vice-versa.

Extending this concept to the educational context, it implies that if students view the educational process as important and see the relevance of their education in producing positive outcomes that they themselves and/or others (e.g. society at large) value and find meaningful, they will be increasingly motivated and satisfied. This assertion has substantial empirical support in the educational literature, with reviews of student motivation by Brophy (1987), and Pintrich (2003) concluding that one of the primary contextual factors affecting student motivation is the student's assessment of the value of the task itself.

There are several recommended actions to improve the perception of task significance in the educational context. First, as suggested in the previous section on task identity, explicitly informing the students of how each course is an important part of the overall program as well as their future professional careers will serve to reinforce the importance and meaning of each course. Second, the importance of the course material should be made overtly clear. One method of accomplishing this is to have in-class learning activities simulate "real-world" work activities that students will be expected to perform in their future careers. Another means of accomplishing this is for the instructor to specifically explain how the course material can/will be applied in "real-world" situations, particularly those where the ignorance of and/or failure to use the knowledge resulted in significant negative outcomes (i.e. "critical incidents").

4.6. Autonomy

Autonomy, the fourth JCM dimension, is operationally defined as the degree of decision-making authority and independence one has over how the task is to be performed (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). It relates to the perceived control and responsibility a person has in performing the various components of a job. The JCM finds that the greater the number and scope of decisions one can make when performing their job, the greater the motivating potential of the task as they create feelings of personal responsibility/ownership and the ultimately ability to take personal pride and have a sense of individual achievement. On the contrary, negative outcomes result from being micro-managed, with little freedom to make decisions regarding the job and how it is done.

Applying the JCM principle of autonomy to the educational context means that students should be given a bit more autonomy and responsibility for their education in order to stimulate intrinsic motivation, a concept that has substantial support in the more recent educational literature (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Pintrich, 1994) on student motivation. This stands opposed to the traditional educational environment where students are typically given very little control over which courses they take, how they engage the material and what they learn, and how they are assessed. They thus often feel little ownership over the

process, little responsibility for the quality of their education, and thus less motivation (Niemic & Ryan, 2009).

Obviously the instructor cannot fully cede responsibility for what is to be learned and how it is to be delivered and assessed, but that does mean the student can be given a degree of input and control over the educational process. For example, an instructor might empower the students by allowing them input on issues such as what type of assessments will be used (e.g. tests vs. projects), which topics they choose for group presentations or research projects, and whether they work as individuals or in teams. Another method is to assign responsibility for finding and integrating outside instructional materials such as books and articles to the classroom so that the instructor and the materials they assign are not the sole source of information, which allows the students a chance to contribute to the course in meaningful ways. A final technique to increase autonomy would be to give students more responsibility and flexibility in choosing courses to craft a degree program, within certain constraints, that better fits their needs.

4.7. Feedback

The final core JCM dimension is feedback, which is defined in the JCM as specific, timely, and constructive information about person's job performance², given either from the job itself or from another individual such as a supervisor. The JCM concludes that the receiving this manner of feedback on performance is important because it helps the individual understand their own performance, grow and make adjustments to improve it, and also to see the outcome/impact of their efforts. Individuals who receive accurate and timely feedback about their performance are thus more satisfied and motivated to continue the job, and ultimately perform better (Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

Applying these concepts to the educational context means thinking about student assessment and feedback in a different way than many instructors are familiar with, as research has shown that not all forms of feedback are equal (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Obviously all instructors are required to give students some form of feedback. However, if instructor feedback is infrequent, not specific enough to provide learning insights, and/or not constructive, it is less motivating and satisfying as students have less opportunity to learn, develop, and improve their performance.

Two reviews of feedback effectiveness (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996)) offer insights into effective ways of applying the principle of feedback to the classroom context. First, the type of feedback provided is crucial.

2. Note that the conception of feedback as specific, timely, and constructive is very important. Feedback that lacks those characteristics is not as effective in eliciting positive outcomes according to the JCM.

Feedback should be constructive in nature, meaning that it provides information not only about whether the performance met the standard (“feedback about task”), but also why it met/didn’t meet the standard (“feedback about the process”). Feedback that doesn’t communicate information about why something was correct/incorrect is not as effective. Second, feedback should clarify and reinforce challenging learning goals, so that students develop achievement goals and are motivated to strive for them.

A second method is for instructors to provide multiple instances of feedback throughout the course as opposed to just at the end, which gives the students multiple opportunities to improve their performance over time. Additionally, the type of feedback given should also include both formative and summative feedback (Black & William, 1996). Formative feedback consists of both verbal and/or written comments about performance during the early learning of the material that are not tied to grades or other administrative decisions—commonly referred to as “coaching”. Summative feedback consists of formal assessments of mastery given towards the end of learning which are used determine student grades. Using both types of feedback allow the students to effectively gauge their learning throughout the course, which has been shown to be crucially important to learning (William & Black, 1996).

A final suggested method is to allow the students opportunities to assess their own performance and learn from their own successes and mistakes. Activities such as “self-reflection papers” where students reflect on what they have learned and what they feel they haven’t, self-graded quizzes & tests, and other similar projects all provide opportunity for self-generated (i.e. internal) feedback, which can be valuable in helping students develop self-regulation strategies which ultimately lead to more effective learning outcomes (Hattie & Temperley, 2007), and also reinforces the JCM autonomy principle mentioned previously.

4.8. Team Building

One thing most business schools find when they seek input from the business community is that industry wants its future employees to know how to work effectively in groups (GMAC, 2014), which is the primary reason that so many business college courses contain group experiences. However, these group experiences our students are being exposed to often don’t seem to work well and students are frequently resistant to group/team-based work (Coers, Williams, & Duncan, 2010). Employers also perceive this, and then tell the business school administration and/or faculty members that the current efforts aren’t working, as many graduates still don’t have the requisite team-working skills they desire.

Obviously something is causing the students to be resistant to team/group-working environments. The current system creates student groups, gives them goals to achieve, and provides sufficient rewards & penalties to ensure task

completion. What the system doesn't often provide to the student is any direct knowledge of group dynamics, norms, and processes with which to design and operate an effective group experience. Too often we expect our students to work in teams for their assignments (e.g. case studies, simulations) and for discussion purposes without providing them much knowledge and/or opportunity to actually "build" their teams (Chen, Donahue, & Klimoski, 2004). Without a valid knowledge base or opportunity to build cohesion the students are in a "sink or swim" situation, and even when they swim, they often don't know why or how to repeat the successful experience.

The team building processes described in the Organization Development literature offers a solution. Team building is a proven technique used in industry when creating a new group to ensure proper team development and performance. As Cummings & Worley (2008, p. 263) state, these techniques can help problem-solving groups make maximum use of members' resources and contributions. Team building also can help groups overcome specific problems, such as apathy and general lack of member interest. Further, research has shown that team-building techniques such as those commonly used in professional settings can be successfully applied in educational settings as well (Chen et. al., 2004).

The management education literature is rich with specific recommendations for applying traditional OD team-building techniques to the higher education context, with several studies (Bolton, 1999; Chen et. al., 2004; Goltz, Hiatapelto, Reinsch, & Tyrell, 2008; Shimazoe & Aldrich, 2010; Tonn & Milledge, 2002) seeming to suggest a similar set of techniques. The first set of recommended techniques focus on team formation, specifically around developing team norms and processes. One technique is to provide background information in the form of readings, lecture, videos, etc. on team processes, so that students have baseline declarative knowledge about team composition, team-working competencies, and team functioning. A second technique is to then to put these principles in action by having teams meet to develop a team "charter" (Bolton, 1999) which includes defining team member roles, group norms and rules for functioning, and developing specific team goals and performance expectations. Preceding this session (or as a part of it), students may complete self-assessments of their personality or preferred team-working style to help them understand their team composition and identify potential conflicts early (Tonn & Milledge, 2002).

Once team formation activities have been completed, the second set of recommended techniques focus on group functioning, specifically around team assessment and problem solving. One recommended technique from the studies referenced above is to have teams engage in an assessment (formal, informal, or both) of team functioning, which involves identifying the strengths and weaknesses of both the group processes as well as individual team members. This team assessment information can then be shared with the team and its component members, either just amongst themselves or with the instructor facilitating the feedback meeting (Bolton, 1999). Once feedback has been given to the team

members, a final recommended technique is to have the team meet to discuss strategies to resolve any conflicts or address any team weaknesses in order to improve functioning and ultimately performance (Goltz, et. al., 2008).

5. Conclusion

Teaching is at the core of the university professor's job, and enhancing the classroom experience and increasing student-learning outcomes should be an essential goal for professors. When professors look at improving their teaching, they turn to a number of different technologies and tools (e.g. "bells and whistles") in order to create engagement and positive learning outcomes. However, the current discussion suggests professors incorporate OD concepts into the classroom, a field dedicated to improving human performance in organizational settings. OD has proven itself effective in a countless number of different organizations and in countries all around the world. While the individual interventions may not be universal, the OD principles are—as they address a basic need whenever two or more individuals work together: the ability to manage the processes and context behind human interaction.

OD tools, such as culture development, job design, and team building are all logical and practical choices for improving the teaching context and its overall effectiveness. Incorporating OD practices into the classroom to create an active and enriched learning environment will create an intrinsically motivating experience for the students, as they are not simply passive receivers of their education, but are active participants in it who can help shape the context to meet their needs.

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