

'Student as Manager' Model in Business Studies – Three-Pronged Teaching Approach

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v11-i1/11946>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v11-i1/11946

Published Online: 05 January 2022

Abstract

The Three-Pronged teaching approach was introduced to undergraduate business studies. It is mixed with the game, problem, and challenge-based learning strategy that aims to prepare business students to manage unexpected and complex global or industrial issues. It encourages an active and reliable learning environment that requires students' creative input, collaboration, and industrial involvement. This teaching approach uses an immersive learning method to introduce the "Student as Manager" model at higher education institutions. Therefore, the Strategic Management subject at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) implemented this teaching approach. The Course Learning Outcome result shows the subject performance was 75.1 percent. The teaching approach is beneficial for undergraduate students to get to know about industrial phenomena with 21st-century learning skills.

Keywords: Three-Pronged Teaching Approach, Game-based Learning, Problem-based Learning, Challenge-based Learning, Student as Manager Model

Introduction

Recent years have seen a rise in the number of lecture methods at the tertiary level in teaching business courses to make students understand concepts, but learners become passive because it is one-way communication (Roberts, 2019). The challenges with current methods are behind the growing relevance of teaching methods to make students understand the complexity of business from a practical point of view, where non-lecture methods are useful (Albaqami, 2016). Besides, students prefer students' centered learning when compared to lecturer-centered learning (Taub et al., 2020), especially, the subjects need students to sit for long hours to listen and focus in the lecture hall. At the end of the lesson, students cannot achieve learning objectives as constructed by the lecturer. This scenario happens to most universities. Therefore, current lecturing methods must be restructured to focus on students' centered learning that involves autonomous learning and is responsible for their learning, which requires specific performance (Taub et al., 2020; Wright et al., 2019; Yusof & Ghouri, 2013).

In this paper, we introduce a Three-Pronged teaching approach with the 'Student as Manager' model taking into consideration of the quality business education programs in universities for undergraduates (Clark & Walsh, 2007). The quality mention was students are unable to fit their knowledge in the industrial needs because they lack industrial environment exposure during the study period (Lorange & Thomas, 2016). Furthermore, this Three-Pronged teaching approach to introduce the 'Student as a Manager' model, for business studies at higher educational institutions, deals with business studies pedagogy in their virtual learning environment (Holmes, 2018) and is blended with game-based learning (GBL), problem-based learning (PBL), and challenge-based learning (CBL), which supports the 21st learning skills for business students.

Literature Review

Business Studies

This heading reviews the teaching approach in the literature that is the most immediately relevant to business studies. Modern business environments are a style of living; industry requires university graduates with a high level of professional integrity, outstanding management and organizational qualities, strong communication abilities, and outstanding public relations problem solve, problem-solving and critical capabilities deemed to be graduates' strengths (Hossain et al., 2020). Business education can also concentrate on ties with undergraduate students, rather than memorizing principles and ideas in a complex market environment. To do this, a tertiary education framework must follow more realistic methods of teaching (Jackson et al., 2011; Lorange & Thomas, 2016). In business studies, the key explanation for adopting a realistic view is that market practices influence the regular lives of everybody as they work, spend, earn, save, ride, and play. It increases employment, wages, and personal business prospects. The corporation, therefore, has a profound impact on human living conditions and quality of life and on the world in which they work and which potential generations will inherit (Hossain et al., 2020). In this sense, all students, whether employed in urban or rural areas, would face the business environment. They must also train students to conduct business with trust and performance. To confront the difficulties, graduates have to understand how businesses run, their position in industrial scenarios, their development of resources, their need for talent, and their effect on their own lives (Monllor & Soto-Simeone, 2019).

However, one of the often neglected facets of academics of business is a combination of instructional approaches in their targeted business programs during the lecturing period (Mohammad, 2015). This area should pay more attention than usual. Business teaching methods are important in ensuring that students' investment - time and effort (and money) - in business studies is appropriate and maximized (Albaqami, 2016). It will also help to recognize how learning from these business faculties' teaching strategies will transform a student's real-world experience (Olalla & Merino, 2019). Some 21st-century business teaching methods are, GBL, PBL, CBL, case study, role play, simulation and business games, peer tutoring, workshop and conferences, industry visit, and others that focus more on student-centered learning (Consalvo & David, 2016). However, as discussed in the literature, this teaching approach introduces to fills the gaps in business educational pedagogy which is needed for undergraduate students.

Game-based Learning Strategy

This section discusses the literature in GBL. GBL has become more common in the education system which implements game elements as a motivational booster for students (Emblen-Perry, 2018). Besides, these game base elements could be the traditional way or supported by electronic gadgets. Examples of traditional game-based activities are Monopoly, Card games, Guess Who, Scrabble, and others. However, nowadays those traditional games are supported by electronic devices such as smartphones and personal computers to be online games (Troussas et al., 2020). Because of this transformation from traditional to digital, nowadays students prefer to be engaged with their mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets because these gadgets have intervened in their everyday life surpassing the use of personal computers (Lin et al., 2018). Therefore, some game-based activities are Kahoot, Classcraft, Plickers, and other games that support information technologies. Some scholars declare that using GBL in their teaching activities, has significant cognitive, affective, and motivational benefits (Lin et al., 2018). Besides that, previous research papers show that the GBL has a positive effect compared to traditional learning methods, in terms of students' performance, research proved that students who learn to use game-based learning are significantly better than students who learn to use traditional methods (Basuki & Hidayati, 2019; Ismail & Mohammad, 2017; Lin et al., 2018; Wang & Tahir, 2020). This is because, using the GBL, can promote students' learning, further can improve their motivation, promote engagement with learning, and provide effective feedback to them (Basuki & Hidayati, 2019). However, an enormous challenge for lecturers is how to transfer the contents of the subject towards game-based learning for students? Further, the lecturer needs to structure and examine the GBL approach to achieve their learning objectives (Wang & Tahir, 2020). However, based on previous studies, exposing game-based learning motivates students to be engaged in the classroom, especially when supported with technologies. Further, it also encourages students to stay focused on subject matters because if students focus less on the subject, they will not complete their GBL (Tobias et al., 2014; Ismail & Mohammad, 2017).

To solve the current business educational teaching issue, the GBL imposes under the Three-Pronged Teaching Approach as one of the learning strategies. Therefore, Kahoot online game would enforce this completely accessible teaching method, a real-time game-based learning application with over 30 million users worldwide that has achieved global recognition. It enables lecturers to build game-based quizzes, surveys, and several other items in which participants engage. Top interviewees will announce each question and the complete winner(s) will turn up after the Kahoot session. The champions are listed on the screen after the game (Wang & Tahir, 2020). The best thing about Kahoot is, the instructors can export and save the results, including their descriptive analysis data for future reference.

Problem-based Learning Strategy

PBL is a teaching and learning strategy in the 21st-century teaching and learning environment which is a student-centered pedagogy (Silva et al., 2018). It is an instructional strategy that challenges students to work cooperatively in groups to seek solutions to real industrial problems. These problems are used to engage students' curiosity and start learning the subject (Okolie et al., 2020). PBL prepares students to think critically and analytically and to find and use learning resources. The core process for this learning strategy is a focus on problem-solving with some decision-making. Further, it develops business skills among students. Even though this learning approach was developed by medical education and

further cross implemented to other educational fields, such as business studies (Eraña-Rojas et al., 2019). This learning strategy involves three stages: 1st stage- identify the problems. 2nd stage- finding information related to issues, and the final stage- discussion and recent knowledge gained. Therefore, for this learning strategy, a task is given to students to solve the problem whereby the students need to form a small group and each member has an individual task as role play. To solve the problem, each member needs to co-operate and responsibility is highly needed.

A review of the literature found that students were encouraged to take responsibility for their group and organize and direct the learning process with support from a lecturer. Advocates of problem-based learning claim it can enhance content knowledge and foster the development of communication, problem-solving, and self-directed learning skill (O'Brien et al., 2019). However, as discussed in the literature, the PBL strategies blended with CBL and GBL strategies. These learning strategies support the 'Student as Manager' model for business studies which contributes to the 21st learning skills.

Challenge-based Learning Strategy

CBL is a teaching and learning strategy for learning with a challenge in situation tasks, and it is also student-centered learning (Tang & Chow, 2020). This 21st-century teaching strategy is collaborative and hands-on, asking all students to act, engage, and investigate, and share their thoughts with the world (Briguglio, 2007). CBL builds on the foundation of experiential learning, leans heavily on the wisdom of an extensive history of progressive education, and shares many of the goals of service-learning, and critical pedagogy. The framework is informed by innovative ideas from education, media, technology, entertainment, recreation, the workplace, and society.

A systematic review of peer-reviewed literature showed that CBL mixes with the three phases of learning such as engagement, investigation, and act (Yoosomboon & Wannapiroon, 2015). In the engaging phase, students need to get prepared for the next phase. The investigation phase, which is the second phase, requires students to work in groups to identify the topics relevant to industrial issues that relate to the community. Further in the action stage, the group must brainstorm, analyze, and be able to give the best solution for an industrial problem. Students themselves need to start and discuss their ideas with their teammates and get support from the industrial experts. The lecturer's knowledge shared with students is less compared to industrial experts (Tang & Chow, 2020). However, in the current economic situation, the cost is one factor that needs to be considered when students engage in CBL with an industry expert. This is one of the non-beneficial for students because not all industrial experts will support students that engage with CBL. Therefore, it is an advantage to the university if they hire an industrial expert with higher qualifications to support CBL, who can share industry knowledge with business students.

Hence, undergraduates suppose expose to current industrial phenomena which they will face soon. Therefore this Three-pronged teaching method can bring the industrial environment in business studies from the 'Student as Manager Model'.

Method

The Three-Pronged teaching approach is blended with GBL, PBL, and CBL and is applied to a business subject (Strategic Management) in a scheduled semester. The process of this

teaching approach is implemented in a classroom activity as a group assignment that aligns with the subjects' course learning outcomes. As an instruction in the group assignment which underpinned by the "Student as Manager" model, students need to form in a group, and the lecturer needs to provide a brief list of a few types of business and each group needs to select one business type. Further, students' groups are required to form a firm by the selected nature of business and compare it with an existing firm (competitor analysis). At this point, all students will engage themselves in their firm as managers (role play) for example, they can be human resource managers, operational managers, financial managers, and others relevant to managerial positions. This task exposes students to the working scenarios with roles and responsibilities as the manager, which aligned with the course objectives. Besides, the aim to form a firm with unfamiliar types of business is to make students aware and to know other business processes. The activity is such that students in the business process need to identify their competitor and analysis by referring to some analysis tools such as External Factor Evaluation Matrix (EFE), Internal Factor Evaluation Matrix (IFE), Competitive Profile Matrix (CPM), and Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM). For the GBL learning strategy, the online Kahoot application needs to be used, and while for the PBL strategy lecturer gives internal and external industrial issues for each group which they need to find a solution for assigned issues. Further, for a CBL strategy, the tasks involve (investment, discipline, and proactiveness) among their groups. After implementing these teaching strategies by the respective lecturer, he /she can analyze students' performances via the final examination/assessment and business education course learning outcome (CLO) results at the end of the semester. The illustration of the Three-Pronged teaching approach in the application of the 'Student as Manager' Model is shown in Figure 1.

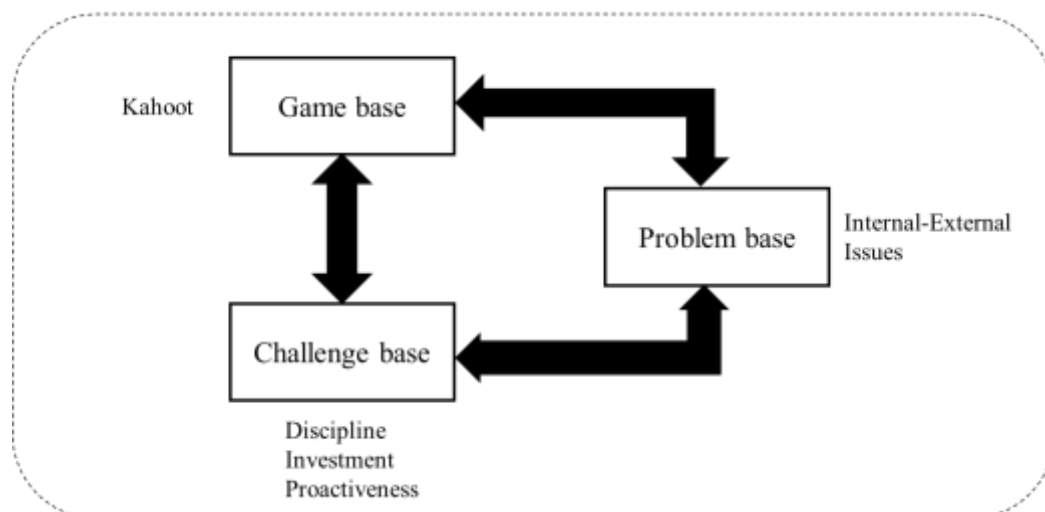


Figure 1. Three-Pronged teaching approach: 'Student as Manager' Model
(This model copyrighted under Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris)

Result

This section outlines the results of the Three-Pronged teaching approach. This result consists of assignments, midterm exams, and final examinations/assessments. Therefore, at the end of the semester, the 2019/2020 (A191) session shows that the overall Course Learning Outcome (CLO) of Strategic Management subject students was 75.1 percent which is good performance (>70 percent), and overall subject performance (student evaluation on the

subject and lecturer) was 96.45 percent. This result shows that students welcome this new teaching approach in business studies.

Discussion

The Three-Pronged teaching approach is generally created for business studies in higher education institutions. This teaching approach motivates, encourages, and focuses on students as previous studies involve GBL, PBL, and CBL strategies (Licorish et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2018; Wang & Tahir, 2020; Zabit, 2010). This was proven from the course learning outcome achievement and the lecturer's overall performance. However, this teaching approach is unable to compare the result with previous scholars because newly introduces. Therefore, upcoming researchers must continue to identify the impacts of this teaching approach and can make the comparison as well.

Overall, this Three-Pronged teaching offers a successful approach to undergraduate business studies. Further, this immersive learning is considered as students' 21st-century learning method in which they act, engage, and investigate (Tang & Chow, 2020). However, in the Three-Pronged teaching approach, some innovations imposed are discipline tasks, pro-activeness tasks, and investment tasks whereby students still need to act, engage, and investigate. The benefits of discipline tasks prepare students to obey industrial rules and regulations, which they will face soon. So, during this task students act as a manager and must follow rules which are decided by a class lecturer. In industrial reality, as an employee he or she must always follow the rules the firm prepares which, if not they will face discipline, action, and impact on their performances (Vercellotti, 2018).

Conclusion

This paper introduces The Three-Pronged teaching approach which blended with GBL, PBL, and CBL strategies, in introducing the 'Student as Manager' model for business studies. Further, this introduced model needs to be implemented in a full semester academic period. This developed model can prepare students to face the challenges in the industry. At the end of the semester, while completing the 'Student as Manager' model task, they can develop their 21st-century learning skills (collaborative, creative, critical thinking, and communication).

Further study is needed to uncover the detail of this phenomenon because this model was introduced and implemented in particular business studies at higher education institutions. Besides, that future research must be carried out to relate with the suitable theories which related with. However, this teaching and learning model still can be applied to other business subjects as well by creating some innovation tasks in Three-Pronged teaching approaches according to the subject's needs. Besides, this teaching approach and model can crossly be implemented in other courses such as engineering, law, or medicine.

Theoretical and Contextual Contribution

This teaching method has made significant contributions to the body of knowledge on a new teaching approach in business studies in the institution of higher education. This study enriched the literature of GBL, PBL, and CBL from the perspective of education. In previous literature, GBL, PBL, and CBL were discussed and gauged separately (Rodríguez et al., 2020; Siagan et al., 2019; Troussas et al., 2020). This is the premier study that integrated the three

learning approaches in one method. Moreover, the unique perspective of the model is the integration of all three approaches with each other. Additionally, this study is providing a new perspective and avenue of learning for academicians. Academicians can integrate this method in many educational subjects and its dynamics are unique and flexible. More interestingly, this model is equally effective in face-to-face and online education as well.

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