Team-Based Learning as an effective and engaging teaching method

Abstract

Experience for yourself how Team-Based Learning (TBL) engages students in entrepreneurship studies! This well-established teaching method draws on theory and empirically-grounded practice. Students commit to their own learning and preparation. They are motivated to engage in give-and-take discussion in teams and in the classroom, and the educator's role is to help to consolidate learning. This method engages students, is effective in larger classes, and has a positive impact on learning. The presenter has implemented TBL in more than 15 undergraduate entrepreneurship classes, and is an accredited TBL trainer and mentor.

Rationale for this workshop

Entrepreneurship is a complex field of study, and entrepreneurship education needs to be learner-centred (Jones and Iredale 2010) in order to foster engagement that will help to achieve learning objectives (Coates 2009).

Team-Based Learning (TBL) is a strategy for collaborative learning using student teams that are fixed for the duration of the course. Students learn prescribed course materials in advance of a teaching session. At the start of the teaching session students take an individual multiple-choice test on the prescribed content, followed by completing the same test as a team, using "scratch and win" cards to provide immediate feedback. This creates a motivational framework that encourages team interactions and productive individual and team learning (Michaelson and Sweet, 2008).

The test process for individuals and teams is followed by application exercises where student teams work on the same specific and significant problems and report their decisions

simultaneously; this provides the basis for classroom discussion and elaboration. TBL also includes mechanisms for students to provide feedback on the contribution of their team members to teamwork. There is support for the value of TBL in engaging students (Balan and Metcalfe 2012; Kelly *et al.* 2005) and it has been found to achieve improved learning outcomes (Fatmi et al 2013, Tomcho and Foels 2012).

Important aspects of engagement with TBL have been identified, and these have enabled the refinement of this teaching method for entrepreneurship students (Balan and Balan-Vnuk, 2013). These aspects are highlighted in this workshop.

Workshop overview

The session engages participants by giving them hands-on experience of the way that Team-Based Learning (TBL) is implemented in the classroom.

A short presentation explains the principles underlying TBL, benefits for students in terms of engagement and learning, and benefits to educators (in particular, the positive changes to teaching approach and style that follow from this active and learner-centred method).

Workshop participants are allocated into teams. Each team is given a folder including typical TBL materials. Each person receives a short reading on entrepreneurship education, a set of questions, a personal multiple choice test response form (as well as an information sheet on TBL for each person). Each team has a "scratch-and-win" team answer card.

Participants are given a few minutes for the reading, and then complete the multiple choice test individually. The team then completes the same test, using the "scratch-and-win" card. Team members negotiate the answer for each question, and the card immediately shows if the team has the correct answer. The team-answering process produces real engagement and discussion, teams receive immediate feedback on their decisions, and delegates, like

students, see that team scores are higher than individual scores (the team does better than an individual).

Questions are then discussed in the plenary session. Participants directly experience the lively, entertaining and engaging team and room dynamics that this method creates. In particular, they personally experience the impact of this teaching method.

The presentation concludes with a discussion of the economies of managing large classes, and a short summary of research relating to this method. This grounded research with qualitative data analysed using concept mapping (Balan *et al*. 2015) provides a useful picture of the dimensions of student engagement as perceived by students. Student evaluation results demonstrate impact.

Workshop deliverables

Participants experience first-hand how Team-Based Learning (TBL) method works in the classroom, and learn how it involves and engages students in productive teamwork. They use typical TBL materials, including the "scratch-and-win cards" that are identified with this method. Participants are provided with information describing the method, teaching resources, research references and support networks, and are given access to a website that includes the presentation supporting this session as well as explanatory materials.

The presenter

The presenter has conducted this interactive workshop many times at universities in Australia. He was invited to present this workshop at a recent International Entrepreneurship Educators Conference (UK).

He has delivered more than 15 entrepreneurship classes using this teaching method, and has completed the two-year process for accreditation as a trainer and mentor by the

Team-Based Learning Collaborative. He is a member of the international board of this US-based organisation (www.teambasedlearning.org)

The presenter is currently mentoring educators in the fields of marketing, tourism & hospitality, health management, logistics, and occupational therapy, who are converting their courses to the Team-Based Learning method.

Feedback from participants who attended this workshop at a recent International Entrepreneurship Educators Conference (UK):

"Interesting method explained clearly

Good idea to prove to the students the power of a team

This is a tool I could see myself using

I will take away ideas for engaging my students

Interesting and thought-provoking

Energetic presentation

Held attention throughout the session

Thank you [presenter], very valuable"

References

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