

Developing Pupils' Analytical, Creative, and Interpersonal Skills

Muhammad Farooq

University Of Lahore at- Izazrty565@gmail.com

Abstract

For academics working in the field of business education, one of the most pressing challenges at the moment is figuring out how to best equip business students with the skills they'll need to succeed in the real world. Skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, dispute resolution, and cooperation are frequently found to be deficient among college students. Employers place a great value on these qualities and place a high value on college graduates who possess them. Traditional methods of teaching, such as giving lectures, might not encourage the development of necessary skills or give sufficient levels of student involvement. It has been demonstrated that utilizing cutting-edge teaching strategies in a variety of academic fields, such as giving students client-based classroom tasks, results in the achievement of remarkable outcomes. The writers of several marketing courses have successfully implemented the Six Thinking Hats® approach, with the intention of improving students' preparedness for working in a business setting. This method serves as the primary foundation for an interactive cognitive and conversational exercise that was designed by the authors and is used by them. Students develop the ability to explore ideas, scenarios, and case studies from a variety of perspectives during the course of their education. This method not only fosters the development of the aforementioned abilities more effectively, but it also makes it more likely that people will engage in conversations that are collaborative, empathetic, and equitable. Students who participated in the online poll have applied the adapted version of the Six Thinking Hats® technique in a variety of their academic classes. According to the primary findings, the participants' impressions of the method indicate that they found it to be interesting as well as simple to put into practice. In addition to this, it was demonstrated to be useful in encouraging creative thinking, boosting comprehension of other points of view, and facilitating concentration on a particular subject matter. After the execution of this particular strategy, a substantial number of participants reported their intention to increase the amount of effort they put into participating in classroom activities in upcoming instances.

Keywords: critical thinking, participation, creativity, teamwork

INTRODUCTION

Employers are frequently concerned that college graduates frequently lack effective interpersonal and critical thinking abilities (Hart Research Associates, Inc., 2008; Ackerman, Gross, & Perner 2003). This is a concern that is shared by many employers. It is common practice in today's times for members of the labor force to be assigned to cross-functional teams. In such groups, the achievement of a successful collective goal depends on the presence of individuals who are creative, who are able to organize their thoughts well, and who are able to communicate effectively.

It may be difficult for business professors to engage students who do not participate in classroom discussions, exhibit dysfunctional behavior within group settings, and have a limited capacity for innovative thinking and an understanding of different points of view (Wooldridge, 2008; Sojka & Fish, 2010). These students may present challenges for professors when trying to motivate students to participate in class. Therefore, it is plausible to suggest that employers' apprehensions concerning the level of preparation displayed by recent graduates in navigating commercial connections may be partially warranted. This is because fresh graduates have less experience navigating commercial interactions than more seasoned employees.

According to the recommendations made by the AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business), essential management competencies should be incorporated into business curricula. These competencies include, but are not limited to, communication, interpersonal skills, multicultural skills, negotiation, leadership development, and change management (Management Education at Risk, 2002). Finding the most efficient approach to teaching new skills is a problem that will never be solved completely.

In order to address the difficulty of teaching critical thinking and the ability to collaborate effectively, educators in business have used a wide variety of active learning pedagogical techniques. According to Snyder and Snyder (2008), the development of students' capacities for critical thinking is contingent upon the students' being actively involved in the process of acquiring new knowledge. Active learning is widely considered as a highly effective strategy for helping the process of learning, according to a consensus among experts (Geissler, 2002; Graeff, 2010;

Norbert, Cater, and Varela, 2009; Snyder and Snyder, 2008; Smart and Csapo, 2007) (Geissler, 2002; Graeff, 2010; Snyder and Snyder, 2008; Smart and Csapo, 2007). Active learning tools include a wide range of pedagogical approaches, such as classroom debates, joint projects, role-playing, simulations, and role-playing games. Other examples of active learning tools include experiential learning, cooperative learning, learning-centered activities, and experiential learning through group projects.

According to the findings of the research that was carried out by McCorkle and colleagues (1999), it was discovered that insufficient planning and organization, premature solutions, difficulties in coordination, and substandard effort from particular individuals can have a significant impact on the activities that are carried out by groups. Students are aware of the need of working together, but the process of developing their abilities to cooperate may come at the expense of acquiring knowledge and skills that are relevant to the subject being studied.

The findings of several further studies point to positive outcomes. The topic that will be concentrated on during this talk is the instructional activity. According to Hernandez (2002), the foundations of marketing course contained a number of collaborative and autonomous exercises, which resulted in increased memory of course knowledge, improved student involvement, and enhanced comprehension. In addition, Laverie (2006) suggests that the deployment of a team-based, active cooperative-learning strategy that integrates activities that have been thoughtfully created has the potential to enhance the acquisition of knowledge as well as the development of skills. Laverie, Madhavan, and McDonald (2008) claim that participating in team-based active learning cultivates a learning orientation and stimulates thinking that goes beyond the constraints of traditional paradigms.

It has been discovered that using this method helps pupils become more creative while also increasing their grasp of different marketing methods. Peer-led team learning has been found to provide beneficial outcomes in terms of critical thinking, as stated by Quitadamo, Brahman, and Crouch (2009). Participating in activities that include debate, as suggested by Roy and Macchiette (2005), might make it easier to pick up transferable skills including planning, managing one's time effectively, and working with others. According to Vander Schee's theory (2007), the incorporation of active learning, in particular through the deployment of The

Exchange Game, not only makes students happier but also efficiently prepares them with the essential abilities to participate in active learning during the course of the semester.

Scholarly research reveals that these issues can be effectively addressed, which is encouraging news given that team-based learning offers a number of challenges that can have an influence on both instructors and students. According to Brutus and Donia (2010), one strategy that can be utilized to improve performance is the employment of peer review. According to McCorkle et al. (1999), the efficiency of group work can be improved by implementing a number of strategies. These include forming smaller groups, establishing interim deadlines for longer assignments, delegating specific tasks to group members, mandating evidence of individual engagement in team projects, and incorporating group member assessments. In order to get the class ready for activities based on teamwork, it is important to first establish the expectations for the team and then organize the group. (Lawrence, 2006). According to Graeff (2010), it is absolutely necessary for all students to participate in active learning while adhering to clearly outlined and established norms.

DESCRIPTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

The authors have successfully implemented and made use of the Six Thinking Hats® approach (DeBono, 1999) in a number of marketing courses, including Principles of Marketing, Marketing Strategy, Marketing Research, Product and Service Strategy, and Brand Management. The methodology can be utilized in a variety of business classes, including those at the introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels of study at the undergraduate and graduate levels, respectively. According to the authors, there is a correlation between students' early development of skills in critical thinking and dialogue and better levels of accomplishment both in their undergraduate studies and in the careers they go on to pursue. In addition, the learning of these abilities will prove useful for students as they navigate the transition into their chosen domains of specialization when they are nearing the end of their academic journey. There is no such thing as a coincidence when it comes to the fact that numerous businesses have utilized the selected method for decades.

The following is a list of the key goals that can be accomplished by implementing the Six Thinking Hats® framework into marketing classes and

incorporating it into the curriculum: 1) enhancing class engagement by fostering increased participation; 2) fostering more efficient collaboration among students; 3) stimulating innovative thinking; 4) fostering cooperation, empathy, and conflict resolution; 5) cultivating the development of abilities in critical thinking; and 6) facilitating well-rounded and intellectually stimulating discussions in the classroom. The technique requires members of the team to engage in a wide variety of ways of thinking and expressing themselves. The term "thinking hats" refers to a framework that incorporates six distinct aspects of cognition, each of which is represented by a different color. It has been discovered that having members of a team engage in the mental process of putting on and taking off different "hats" improves their capacity to concentrate and refocus on the topic at hand whether thinking or having a conversation about it. The following is a list of the six modes, often known as thinking caps:

- 1) The White Hat – calls for information known or needed
- 2) The Red Hat – signifies feelings, hunches, and intuition
- 3) The Black Hat – exercises judgment and plays the devil's advocate or why something may not work
- 4) The Yellow Hat – symbolizes brightness and optimism
- 5) The Green Hat – focuses on creativity, including the possibilities, alternatives, and new ideas
- 6) The Blue Hat – manages the thinking process

Using this method, the authors have created a fun and engaging game that may be used in classroom settings devoted to marketing. Students work in small groups to discuss a specific issue, such as a proposed product idea or the applicability of a particular marketing technique. Each of the six colors was represented on a separate side of a wooden die. One die is rolled by each team. The color that shows is what sets the viewpoint that must be used.

Both a general introduction and detailed guidelines for applying this way of thinking in the classroom are supplied to the students. In addition, playing cards were created that featured each of the thinking categories represented by the colors, along with relevant questions and house rules. The cards serve as a reference guide and

conversation starter for the duration of the game. Figure 1 shows a few of the game cards that are available.

RESULT OF THE METHOD OF TEACHING

The use of the thinking hat game in teaching marketing has many benefits. Every student must exhibit an initial and sustained interest in learning, participate actively in class activities, and voice their opinions and ideas. The prevalence of inactive student behaviors like daydreaming or sitting idle during class should be taken into account despite the seeming simplicity of the problem. In addition, the use of smaller groupings within the classroom promotes critical thinking and facilitates dialogues, giving each student an opportunity to voice their perspectives and ideas. When conducting market research, survey participants may occasionally get correspondence stressing the importance of their responses. Similarly, the thinking hat game is an effective tool for promoting considerate evaluation of the points of view presented by all pupils, rather than giving undue weight to those who are more intellectually or verbally gifted.

Thirdly, the mental activity of assuming numerous roles or views greatly improves pupils' ability to understand the world from a variety of angles. Furthermore, people show heightened sensitivity to the feelings of their peers. People wearing red hats, for instance, are encouraged to share their innermost thoughts, feelings, and reactions. This method's potential to aid in dispute resolution and increase teamwork and empathy among students in the classroom is obvious. Students learn that people see the world in different ways, and that this fact, along with the ability to examine alternatives, greatly improves their decision-making skills. The ability to empathize with others is developed by putting oneself in the shoes of another person or group.

It's also crucial that kids practice critical thinking alongside active thinking. People in black hat roles are tasked with doing in-depth analyses in order to identify the potential weak points in an approach. Advocates of the yellow hat method, on the other hand, zero in on what makes a certain tactic effective. Those who take no side are typically represented by donning white caps. The ability to make educated choices requires an evaluation of the information at hand and the identification of any gaps in understanding. The use of the thinking hat game also encourages the growth of individuality and efficiently facilitates the generation of a plethora of concepts.

Students in the green hat team conduct an in-depth brainstorming session, during which they collect, consider, and rank a wide range of suggestions. It is encouraged that this audience show a great deal of openness to new ideas, regardless of how ridiculous they may seem at first, especially in the early stages of the discussion.

Sixth, class discussions are fair and unbiased because they cover all relevant angles of a given topic. Those in blue hats are in charge of overseeing and administering the other teams, which helps to maintain fairness. The conversations also make you think. The thinking hat game is a great way to help kids develop their critical and active thinking skills, as well as their ability to empathize with and understand the viewpoints of those who are different from themselves.

EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL METHODS

The application of the Six Thinking Hats® technique by students has resulted in numerous positive feedback from the authors, and its implementation has been associated with improved teacher evaluations in relevant courses. A further survey of students was conducted in order to validate these remarks. An online poll was conducted using SurveyMonkey to gather data from students who had been exposed to the method. A total of 128 students, enrolled in several courses including Principles of Marketing (32), Marketing Strategy (26), Product and Service Strategy (22), and Brand Management (48), participated in the survey.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Survey results verify student anecdotes that the Six Thinking Hats® approach is effective. Table 1 shows that 91% of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that the method was easy to apply, 87% that it generated inventive dialogue, and 98% that it could be used in other classrooms. Four of five respondents (80%) said class discussions were getting more interesting. Most students (98%) thought the method was better for seeing what other students thought about a topic or question. The majority (90%) also found the strategy helpful for focusing a topic or "wearing a different hat" when addressing it. Most students (79%) said they would be more or somewhat more likely to participate in class discussions after using the Six Thinking Hats® approach.

Students were also asked to give open-ended input on the Six Thinking Hats® method's ability to develop teams. Again, this shows pupils like the strategy. Few neutral remarks were amid the nearly all complimentary ones. Focusing on class involvement and alternative viewpoints is reoccurring. Examples of comments: "I love it and it keeps me talking." Other students' opinions are always intriguing. Team members are urged to speak up more to persuade others to share their opinion since no two opinions are alike. I think hearing diverse viewpoints is usually helpful. Consider wearing different "hats" to promote multiple perspectives effectively. It's worked to start conversations. Many classroom talks are tough because students are loud or quiet.

Avoid instances where one talkative person dominates the conversation. Understanding alternative viewpoints was thought to help resolve problems, secure collaboration, and promote teamwork. Many say, "It can facilitate classroom discussion in the same way that it can foster teamwork." It also aids dispute resolution by promoting perspective-taking. People can focus better when they know each other's places. Despite disagreements, it unites the team. Learning about your team is key to team development. This is the best approach to learn about your team members' thoughts and opinions—by listening to them." This technique helps develop creativity and investigate and evaluate innovative ideas, according to respondents. Seeing things from different angles helped my creativity. Our team created a more realistic and potentially profitable commercial concept by considering all aspects of a new product idea.

DISCUSSION

The study's positive findings back up the feedback that has been received informally. The authors' successful application of the Six Thinking Hats® technique in numerous marketing courses attests to its utility and popularity as a teaching aid. This method has been shown to be effective in increasing student involvement, encouraging more fair discussion, and easing the way for fruitful group work. Undoubtedly, kids develop more compassion and understanding for their classmates, which has positive effects on conflict resolution and team building. Both creative and critical thinking skills benefit greatly from this strategy being put into practice.

Concerns and doubts about the strategy's actual application are the key focus. Is it mandatory, for instance, that all teams wear the same cap at the same time? Do you think it's best for each group to have their own hat? Both authors found success after using this strategy. Is it a good idea to tell kids ahead of time which hats each team will be using if they will be using more than one? Alternately, may there be a twist in the discourse? The teacher has the last say on whether or not the other groups will learn this material. One of the many laudable qualities of this approach is its adaptability. One illustrated strategy is keeping team members in the dark about the debate topic categories that were assigned to them in advance. Increased participation throughout the conversation is a common result of this technique. To elaborate, there is awe when groups don't understand one another's anticipations.

When multiple teams roll the same color, what should they do? is another common question. Again, the educator has the final say in making decisions that serve their own goals. The use of contrasting colors by each group appears to increase participation and maintain a sense of stability in the discussion. Therefore, if numerous teams fall on the same color, they are instructed to keep rolling the die until obtaining a separate hue. Based on their experience with this and other marketing programs, the researchers conclude that the Six Thinking Hats® technique can be successfully used in a wide variety of undergraduate and graduate management courses. The aforementioned method has been shown to be effective across a wide range of curriculum areas and grade levels. The subject matter has an extremely high degree of adaptability. The survey's findings also show that there is widespread agreement among the student body about this statement. It is interesting to note that while this strategy can be used in both virtual and traditional classroom settings, some students feel it is more effective in a face-to-face setting. This preference stems from the increased participation, faster feedback, and simpler application that come with this style of teaching.

REFERENCES

Ackerman, D. S., Gross, B. L., and Perner, L. (2003). "Instructor, Student, and Employer Perceptions on Preparing Marketing Students for Changing Business Landscapes." *Journal of Marketing Education*, Volume 25, Number 1, 46-56.

DeBono, E. (1999). *Six Thinking Hats*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

Geissler, G. L. (2002). "A High Involvement Learning Approach: Extensive Use of Business Partners and Business Labs." *AMA Summer Educators' Conference Proceedings: Enhancing Knowledge Development in Marketing*, (William Kehoe and John Lindgren Jr., eds.), Volume 13, Chicago: American Marketing Association, 422-423.

Graeff, T.R. (2010). "Strategic Teaching for Active Learning." *Marketing Education Review*, Volume 20, Number 3, 265-278.

Hernandez, S.A. (2002). "Team Learning in Marketing Principles Course: Cooperative Structures That Facilitate Active Learning and Higher Level Thinking." *Journal of Marketing Education*, Volume 24, Number 1, 73-85.

Laverie, D.A. (2006). "In-Class Active Cooperative Learning: A Way to Build Knowledge and Skills in Marketing Courses." *Marketing Education Review*, Volume 16, Number 2, 59-76.

McCorkle, D.E., Reardon, J., Alexander, J.F., Kling, N.D., Harris, R.C. and Iyer, R. V. (1988). "Undergraduate Marketing Students, Group Projects, and Teamwork: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly?" *Journal of Marketing Education*, Volume 21, Number 2, 106- 117.

Management Education at Risk (August 2002). Report of the Management Education Task Force to the AACSB International Board of Directors. 27.

Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. (2008). *How Should Colleges Assess and Improve Student Learning? Employers' Views on the Accountability Challenge: A Survey of Employers Conducted on Behalf of the Association of American Colleges and Universities*. Washington, DC.

Quitadamo, I.J., Brahler, C.J., and Crouch, G.J. (2009). "Peer-Led Team Learning: A Prospective Method for Increasing Critical Thinking In Undergraduate Science Course." *Science Educator*, Volume 18, Number 1, 29-39.

Roy, A. and Macchiette B. (2005). "Debating the Issus: A Tool for Augmenting Critical Thinking Skills of Marketing Students." *Journal of Marketing Education*, Volume 27, Number 3, 264-267.

Smart, K.L. and Csapo, N. (2007). "Learning by Doing: Engaging Students Through Learner-Centered Activities." *Business Communication Quarterly*, December, 451-457.

Sojka, J. Z. and Fish, M. S. (2008). "Brief In-Class Role Plays: An Experiential Teaching Tool Targeted to Generation Y Students." *Marketing Education Review*, Volume 18, (Spring), 25-31.

Synder, L.G. and Synder M.J. (2008). "Teaching Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills." *The Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*, Volume 2, 90-99.

Vander Schee, B.A. (2007). "Setting the Stage for Active Learning: An Interactive Marketing Class Activity." *Marketing Education Review*, Volume 17, Number 1, 63-67.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887 Online ISSN: 3006-5895

VOL- 2, ISSUE- 3, 2024