

Implementing Team-based learning (“TBL”) in an online synchronous environment for a career skills workshop

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INTRODUCTION

- The author developed a series of 120-minute workshops to teach university students: Career Strategy, Pitching, Resume Writing, Networking and Interviewing. The workshops had been delivered in a face-to-face settings using team-based learning (“TBL”) with five batches of students.
- In a one-year Master of Management program, students have very little time to settle into graduate school before the employment recruiting process begins. The author wanted to deliver these workshops in an online format before students arrived on campus to help better prepare them for recruiting.
- The Pitching and Networking workshops were adapted to these modalities:
 - Online asynchronous:** student-paced; non-TBL using www.udemy.com
 - Online synchronous:** teacher-paced; using TBL www.intedashboard.com; learners *not physically co-located*; all learners participate at the *same time*
- A description of the workshops follows below:

Pitching Career Skills Workshop

Objectives

1. Explain what pitching is and why it matters
2. Describe the five steps of pitching
3. Draft and execute your own: positioning matrix, 15-second pitch, five-bullet pitch, 90-second pitch and cover letter

Presentation: PowerPoint presentation (60 slides); ~30 minutes

Individual Readiness Assurance Test (“IRAT”): 10 multiple choice questions (“MCQs”) answered individually; ~10 minutes

Team Readiness Assurance Test (“TRAT”): same 10 MCQs answered as a team with immediate feedback using www.intedashboard.com; ~10 minutes

Clarification: discuss difficult IRAT and TRAT questions: ~10 minutes

Applications: ~60 minutes

1. Rank order the top three skills required for consulting. (free response)
2. Which of the following is the best story to use if you are interested in consulting? (MCQ)
3. Take the story you selected in question two and outline it using the STARI framework (Situation, Task, Action, Result, Implication)

Networking Career Skills Workshop

Objectives

1. Explain what networking is and why it matters
2. Describe the five steps of effective networking
3. Draft and execute your own: LinkedIn profile, targeting list, approach email, informational interview and follow up

Presentation: PowerPoint presentation (68 slides); ~30 minutes

IRAT: 10 MCQs answered individually; ~10 minutes

TRAT: same 10 MCQs answered as a team with immediate feedback using www.intedashboard.com; ~10 minutes

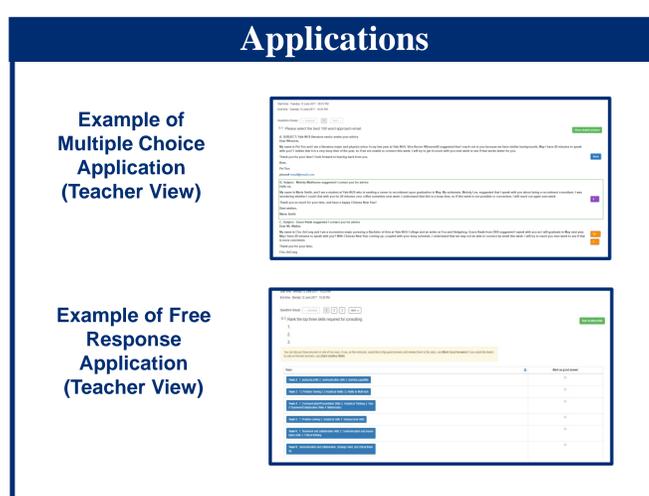
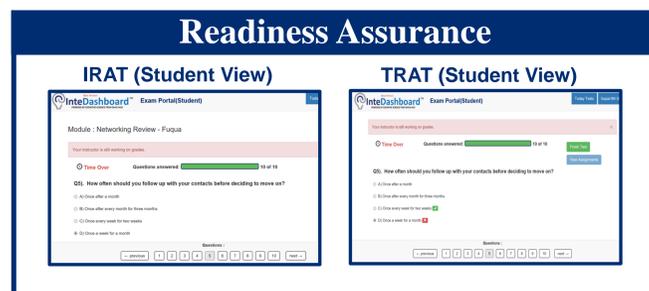
Clarification: discuss difficult IRAT and TRAT questions: ~10 minutes

Applications:

1. Please select the best 100 word approach email (MCQ).
2. Draft a 100 word approach email addressed to an alumnus from your school who is working in the consulting field (free response).

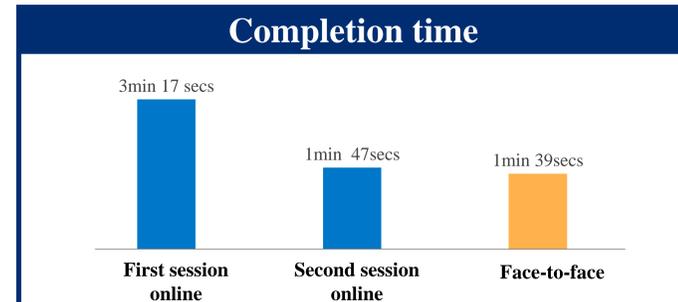
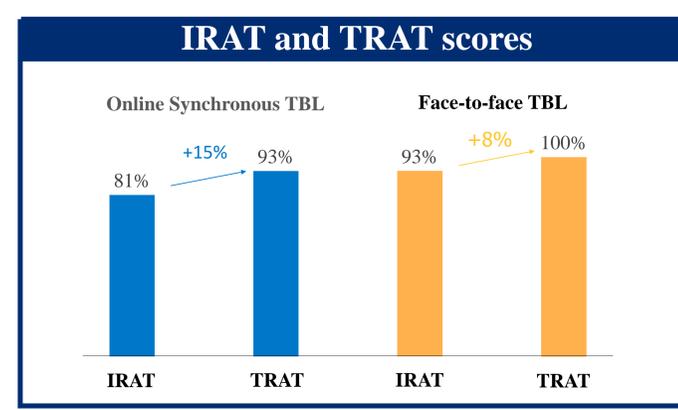
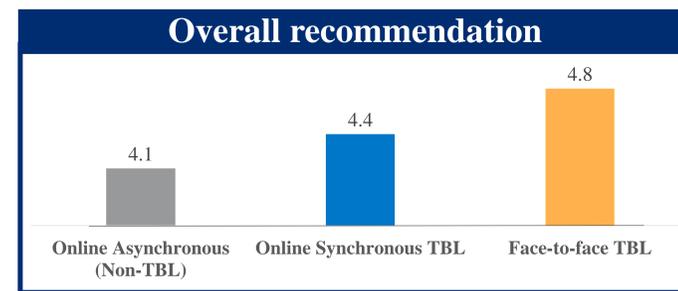
METHOD

- Accepted students to the Master of Management program at Duke University’s Fuqua School of Business were invited to participate in the online career skills workshop. 40 students registered within 24 hours and 20 students actually participated.
- Students answered questions during registration which was used to pre-assign teams. 45% of the participants were from China, 23% were from the US and 18% were from India.
- The Pitching workshop was held on a Monday at 9am Eastern time and the Networking session was held on a Tuesday at 9am Eastern time.
- The workshop was conducted using the www.zoom.us web video and audio conferencing tool which allowed “breakouts” for team activities. Teams were broken out into separate web conference rooms during the TRAT and application exercises.
- Pre-work:** The session began with an overview presentation of the content.
- Readiness assurance:** After the presentation, an IRAT and TRAT were conducted. Learners took the IRAT and TRAT using www.intedashboard.com. There was a clarification session after the TRAT.
- Application Exercises:** After the IRAT and TRAT, teams worked on MCQ and free response application exercises using www.intedashboard.com. There was a discussion session after the applications.
- Survey:** Several days after the session, a participant feedback survey was distributed to participants using <https://www.qualtrics.com/>.



RESULTS

- Recommendation rates:** Post-event learner surveys showed that 88% of learners would recommend the workshop or a 4.4 rating on a 5.0 scale. This compares to a face-to-face version of a similar workshop which had a 100% recommendation rate with a 4.8 rating on a 5.0 scale. An asynchronous (non-TBL) online version of the workshop is available using www.udemy.com and has been rated 4.1 on a scale of 5.0. Of the 40 learners that registered for the course only 20 students participated and 13 completed the feedback survey.
- IRAT and TRAT scores:** The online synchronous TBL group performed worse on the IRAT than the face-to-face TBL group (81% versus 93%). However, the online synchronous TBL group had a larger increase in TRAT performance (+15%) versus the face-to-face TBL group (+8%).
- Duration:** The duration of the first online IRAT session (Monday) was 3 minutes and 17 seconds. In the second online IRAT session (Tuesday) the duration was 1 minute and 47 seconds. The second session was similar to the face-to-face group duration of 1 minute and 39 seconds.



DISCUSSION

- The results represent more of a starting point for further analysis than a definitive conclusion as the sample sizes are small and there are differences in the learners in the comparison groups. However, the generally trend of the face-to-face session performing better in terms of student recommendations and IRAT and TRAT scores than the synchronous online TBL sessions and the online TBL sessions performing better than asynchronous sessions is not a surprise.
- It was interesting to note that the time to complete the IRAT was significantly less during the second session which suggests that student familiarity with the process lead to a more efficient assessment process.
- From a faculty perspective, conducting a session talking to a blank screen felt incredibly awkward. So awkward that the positive student feedback almost seemed surprising.
- The whole TBL process seemed to take longer and require more administrative attention to the technology involved than in a face-to-face session. The instructor conducted the session with the help of an assistant which seemed almost necessary. In contrast the instructor could easily operate a face-to-face session without assistance. The instructor found MCQ applications much easier to facilitate than free response ones as well.

CONCLUSION

- It is possible to conduct a workshop using TBL in an online synchronous format.
- Certain adaptations should be considered when shifting from offline to online including smaller team sizes, longer time periods and less free response applications.
- This is a newer area of TBL and one where more work could be done.

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The Author is the Commercial Founder of and has a financial interest in CognaLearn. CognaLearn is the company that developed InteDashBoard™ www.intedashboard.com, which is TBL software developed in collaboration with Duke-US Medical School; InteDashBoard™ is one of the technology tools described in this poster.

AUTHOR

 Brian O’Dwyer is a Team-based learning (“TBL”) educator, enthusiast and entrepreneur. He teaches Aeronautical Science for Management, Airline Management and Airport Administration & Finance at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Singapore. He has presented at 28 conferences and workshops on TBL and education technology in Asia, Australia, Latin America and the United States. He worked with a team from Duke-NUS Medical School (“Duke-NUS”) to create www.intedashboard.com specifically for TBL. Previously, he was an Entrepreneur-in-Residence, Learning Technologies at Duke-NUS, CFO of ASX/LSE listed Skywest Airlines, a Credit Suisse investment banker and an A.T. Kearney management consultant. He has a BS from Columbia and an MBA from Duke. Email: odwyerb@erau.edu.