



BUSINESS EDUCATION INNOVATIONS

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10 PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATIONS FROM BUSINESS
SCHOOL PROFESSORS AROUND THE WORLD



INTRODUCTION

In the early 19th century, first business schools emerged to help foster the skills necessary to succeed in the world of industry. The idea caught on and business schools spread across the world.

Fast forward two hundred years. Industry has changed drastically. Business schools and teaching have not always kept pace. Part of the blame can rest at the push, following World War 2, to make academia value research to a higher degree. The pressure to publish frequently can devalue other considerations such as teaching and pedagogy. International rankings feed this cycle, relying on criteria such as academic reputation, the impact of research and the percentage of faculty with PhDs. Teaching methods and pedagogy have been devalued.

Creating business schools that are fit-for-purpose in a world of exponential change, ones which prepare business leaders of the future who can deal with the complexity and change and who value more than just the single bottom line, require a student-centred approach. How well students learn should be at least as important—if not more—as how many papers are published each year.

At LearnSpace, we want to see pedagogy take centre stage. We know great work is underway across the world, pedagogy that values critical elements (novelty, autonomy, creativity, collaboration, personalisation and engagement).

With these considerations in mind, the call went out to discover and highlight pedagogy placing students at the heart of instruction. 153 nominations came in, representing 32 countries and 85 business schools.

To evaluate these nominations, we enlisted four distinguished judges:

- Bernard Belletante, Former Dean of EMlyon Business School
- Caryn Beck-Dudley, CEO of AACSB International
- Dan LeClair, CEO at Global Business School Network (GBSN)
- Andrew Jack, Global Education Editor at Financial Times

Those judges brought their own lens and experience, helping us whittle 153 down to ten finalists (with one additional space reserved for a tech innovation award).

“I was thrilled to see so many efforts to personalize learning, helping each and every student get the most out of a course or experience,” said Leclair. “These efforts include strategies for engaging students in designing the course or experience, deepening reflection, creating and implementing individual professional plans, and generating performance data so students can immediately see the results of their digital strategies.”

As we sifted through the finalists, with the help of our judges, we noticed a few themes across the finalists:



Value for Money

Business schools are expensive. Students want the prestige of attending a top school, but they expect a fuller learning experience that cannot be replicated via a MOOC or on a Youtube video. Finalists spoke of the need to bring value to the learning experience, experiences that could only be found in their classrooms and learning environments.



Formats Matter

The virtues of a traditional lecture have been fading for years. Finalists understood that creating a memorable learning experience began with understanding the desired learning outcome and creating a format that would best achieve those goals. This might involve dropping students into an intensive crisis simulation (Professor Tyler Shepher, Ohio State University), incorporating elements of clown and theatre (Ralf Wetzels, Vlerick Business School), booking them on a bus journey to experience slow fashion first-hand (Professor Alice Riou, EM Lyon Business School), or using Dungeons and Dragons to teach business management.



The Heart of Business

The push for moving from purely shareholder focused management to one that takes impact of businesses on all key stakeholders into account has been underway for years. Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance are no longer a nice to have but a critical part of any modern company. We were curious to see how innovative pedagogy teaches students to understand their role as an ethical and responsible member of a global society. Finalists used different approaches such as art installations to teach students about sustainability and engaging with their local community or role-playing to help students understand the wider range of stakeholders and concerns they would be addressing.



Purpose-Driven Gamification

Gamification has been an education buzzword for a few years now. Finalists leveraged gamification to not just engage students for the sake of engagement, but to help drive the learning journey. Gamification allowed students to better engage with the content, overcome their own self-belief and apply the knowledge that they were acquiring in a safe and constructive environment. In some cases, as with Professor Helene Michel (Grenoble Business School), gamification actually propelled her students into entrepreneurial careers.



Frugal Innovation

The technology used by these educators was less science fiction and more real-life practicality. Some innovations were time-intensive and expensive to replicate, but many leveraged practical, existing tools and products, whether Learning Management Systems (LMS) or older board games. Students emerged with practical skills that could help them land their first job, like with Professor Kai-Yu Wang at Brock University. Scarcity of resources was no constraint of a lack of imagination or creativity.

The finalists came from across the world including South Africa, France, Belgium, Switzerland and the US. Along with the comprehensive entries and details on their pedagogy, we spent time talking with each of the finalists, learning about their pedagogical journey and how other teachers could learn from them. Finalists were eager to help and support other teachers (time-permitting) and were happy to respond to outreach. All finalists cared deeply about designing a learning experience that was memorable, engaging and provided real value for their students.

We hope to see the next two hundred years of business schools marked by a focus on the student and on pedagogy. Along with highlighting innovations, we need to find better ways to measure what works in experiential, student-centred pedagogy. These profiles scratch the surface of that new world of teaching and learning.

We hope it will spark collaboration, learning and new pedagogical experiences.

10 FINALISTS + 1 SPECIAL TECHNOLOGY AWARD

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: TEAM-BASED INNOVATION CHALLENGES

Cyril Bouquet
Institute for Management Development
Lausanne, Switzerland

ART THINKING: EXPANDING BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES THROUGH CREATING ART

Sylvain Bureau
ESCP Business School
Paris, France

SERIOUS GAMING FOR INTERCULTURAL MANAGEMENT & LEARNING

Marion Festing
ESCP Business School
Berlin, Germany

LEARNING MANAGERIAL THEORY THROUGH ROLE PLAY GAMES AND MORE

Philippe Lépinard
Université Paris-Est Créteil
Paris, France

DESIGNING GAMES TO SUPPORT INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Hélène Michel
Grenoble Business School
Grenoble, France

SPECIAL TECH INNOVATION AWARD: DELIVERING THE WORLD'S FIRST HOLOGRAPHIC UNIVERSITY LECTURE

David Lefevre, Director of Edtech Lab Imperial College Business School,
London, United Kingdom

GAMIFYING SOFT SKILLS FOR BUSINESS

Hayley Pearson
The Gordon Institute of Business Science
Johannesburg, South Africa

TRAJECTORY: MICRO-EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING JOURNEYS

Alice Riou
EM Lyon Business School
Lyon, France

CRISIS SIMULATION FOR MANAGERIAL TRAINING

Tyler Shepfer
Ohio State University
Ohio, United States

JOB-READY SOCIAL MARKETING TRAINING THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Kai-Yu Wang
Goodman School of Business Brock University
Ontario, Canada

ART-BASED LEARNING FOR EMBODIED LEADERSHIP

Ralf Wetzel
Vlerick Business School
Brussels, Belgium

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: TEAM-BASED INNOVATION CHALLENGES

Cyril Bouquet
Institute for Management Development (IMD)
Lausanne, Switzerland



The Professor

Cyril Bouquet is a professor of innovation and strategy at IMD (Lausanne, Switzerland) where he orchestrates all kinds of innovation journeys for companies. His new book, *ALIEN Thinking: The Unconventional Path to Breakthrough Ideas*, explores how pioneering thinkers and change makers in a wide range of professions - inventors, scientists, doctors, entrepreneurs, and artists - are able to make great leaps of creativity, offering a model that reveals a recurrent pattern in the way creative solutions evolve and survive. Cyril also created the program TransformTech, in collaboration with the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, for senior leaders to explore how new technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and the internet of things are transforming the world of business.



The Approach

Alongside the MBA course at IMD, Bouquet designed an innovation and leadership lab that helps participants cultivate their creativity skills, as they approach complex and ambiguous real-world challenges requiring them to function effectively as a team as part of an intensive experiential course at IMD, the MBA Innovation Week.

Launched in 2017, the MBAs learn the principles of innovation and successful team collaboration by engaging in an experiential learning activity across the week-long activity. The week follows a journey of innovation from discovery, idea creation, and business model identification to pitching the idea to a jury, who can make or break the initiatives.

Throughout the four years that the Innovation Week has run, the IMD MBA participants have been teamed up with students from UNIL HEC, EPFL, ECAL/University of Art and Design Lausanne. Teams have developed innovative solutions in the field of hospital patient care, new ways for fans to experience the Euro football tournament (in collaboration with the Switzerland-based UEFA) and ways to drive engagement to the largest Aquarium-Vivarium in Europe.



“We’re trying to have a real impact on the world that we live in. We are not just an academic institution,” said Bouquet. “We are bringing some knowledge that can make a difference to the world that we live in. Learning with impact. So we are trying to not just teach people knowledge, we want to help them understand something that can make a difference to the world that they live in and help them transform their teams.”





The Innovation

This approach marries classroom learning with real-world practice at the highest level. It equips students with innovation “tools” but then encourages them to put them into practice working with external organisations.

“The more complex things that you want to learn are, the more you need this type of experiential learning. You don’t want to perform surgery on a live patient for the first time. You have to create experiments beforehand that are safe. At IMD, from a management context, we want to create a place where you’re free to experiment, where you’re free to make mistakes and you know where people will not punish you for your mistakes. You know you will have an opportunity to bring some very complicated sets of expertise and knowledge to the situation, develop your skills, and then transform yourself as a result.”

Bouquet said that his students must get out of the building, to “immerse and throw themselves in the world, not just see it through a case study.” Practically that means truly understanding the nature of a problem and having a wide lens for the solution. For the Debiopharm challenge, students were tasked with thinking about what makes exceptional customer care. That quest led them to spend time with tech startups and experts alongside patients, their families, nurses, hospital administrators, and hospital janitors in designing the solution.



The Impact

The approach is measured across a number of methods. Impact is measured by traditional grading and pre/post evaluations, but Bouquet stressed that evaluating the learning objectives needed to be more than simply “a sheet that people will fill out at the end of the week saying have you been happy?” This course looks to include real world evaluations and feedback on the students’ work. The jury of the partner organisation, whether UEFA or a hospital, judges the pitches and solutions of the students.

Reflection is another critical part of evaluating impact. “We ask people to write an essay, and again to take a week or two to digest the experience and to ask themselves ‘what is it that I’ve learned, how is it that I’ve changed?’”

For Stephanie Hurry, MBA participant, this experience resonated with her learning journey. She said, “I experienced the positive impact that creating upfront alignment and trust can have on the success of a team... Innovation week was one of the unique elements that had attracted me to IMD last year. Building a prototype and bringing small innovations to healthcare is a very exciting idea on paper. What actually transpired was something so much more impactful.”



The Lessons

“The biggest thing that I’ve learned is that often you try to script too much,” said Bouquet, stressing the point of the autonomy and agency of students. “We provide the means for students to connect with all kinds of interesting people, they figure when is the right time to talk to them... The more you iterate those kinds of experiments, the more you realise that you have to sometimes de-emphasise a structure to create a little bit more empowerment or a bit more freedom.

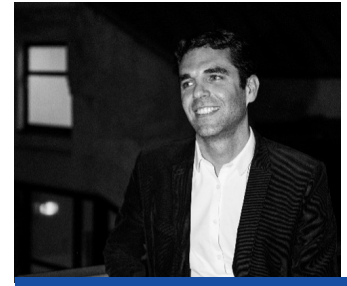
The agenda is not always as neat as you would like it to be... Often as academics we tend to spend too much time on conveying the knowledge required for the action and not enough time on the action. We interrupt learning rather than let them apply it as they need to.”

Bouquet provided three tips for incorporating this approach in the classroom: follow your passions (“Start with something you care passionately about), seek out partners (“partner with people who can help you out because the networks are very important”) and ask for help ((If a professor approaches me and says) “I’ve always wanted to do X, Y and Z and I’m facing those kinds of issues do you mind sharing, of course I will say yes.”)



ART THINKING: EXPANDING BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES THROUGH CREATING ART

Sylvain Bureau
ESCP Business School
Paris, France



The Professor

Sylvain is a Professor at the JB Say Institute of ESCP Business School. Ph.D. from Ecole Polytechnique, Sylvain is the co-founder of the Art Thinking Collective. His key research topic is related to creative practices in organizations. He has a particular interest in making creativity accessible to the “non-creative”. His approach draws from observing similar patterns in all types of creative activities, whether in art, science or entrepreneurship.



The Approach

Bureau's innovative approach is known as Improbable: An Art Thinking seminar (created alongside Pierre Tectin, an artist). Improbable mixes conferences, workshops and feedback sessions forcing participants to leave their comfort zone by creating a piece of art. They show their final creation during unique openings in locations like Centre Pompidou or Grand Palais in Paris; Beaux Arts Museum of Montreal in Canada; Block House in Tokyo.

Creation might encourage the viewer to reflect on consumption in society by having gallery viewers served drinks out of a toilet. Another piece might use augmented reality to add a Black Mirror-esque sugar-focused lens to choosing a snack from a vending machine.

“We tell them that at some point you’re going to feel lost and maybe you’re going to hate your processes. That’s normal. That’s good, that’s the way it should be,” said Bureau. “Trust the process, trust the method, and trust your peers, this is a method... once they see the final opening, they fully understand it.”



The Innovation

Much has been made of preparing workers to succeed in an era of automation. Human skills (i.e. creativity, problem-solving, collaboration) are held up as examples of those traits which cannot be replaced by machines. Improbable (and the accompanying innovation) is embedded in the theory of practice known as Art Thinking, an attempt to embed the teaching of human skills in formalised education. Art Thinking follows an approach labelled as the “6 Ds,”

Donation: Gift-giving practices to foster new and unusual partnerships.

Deviation: “Steal” from others to create unique propositions.

Drift: Follow a journey without a clear goal but which will eventually make a lot of sense.

Destruction: Challenge existing rules and values as well as unlearn taken-for-granted assumptions.

Dialogue: Discuss to learn, understand and change what has been created.

Display: Exhibit works to get feedback.

There is nothing passive about this learning process. Bureau forces a complete engagement with the material and the process. For a student from a more traditional background, say a larger consulting firm, this can be a jarring encounter.

“Participants have no choice but to be fully involved in the process of creation. They have to be authentic and involved in the making of the piece of art,” said Bureau. “The 6 workshops lead them to practices which require a distributed leadership. To achieve their work, they have to contact unknown people in the streets, in the shops, online... They also have to get support from their networks. They need to leverage their competencies and develop bricolage to materialize their ideas. More importantly they have to express themselves and find a fit between them and their project. They discuss with their teammates about societal challenges, to question certainties and taken for granted assumptions.”



The Impact

The work produced by Bureau's students is impressive. The portfolio at Art Collective bustles with provocation and colourful visions of the future that are even more impressive when one understands the individuals creating the art.

“The Improbable workshop provides many insights that are super relevant for my own practice as a consultant,” said Isabell Schastok, Manager at Capgemini Invent. “I was really surprised by how many connections I could make - and how much fun it can be to create the future by applying Art Thinking.”

The breaking down of barriers between the culture of the world and that of the classroom is no small feat. Bureau has published on the subject, “Learning subversion in the business school: An ‘improbable’ encounter”

But Bureau remains wary of evaluating the success of his work by traditional measures of impact.

“I am very concerned by the increase in terms of formalised evaluation. There was this quote from Paul Valéry, he said something like ‘diplomas kill culture.’ Some of my students have told me, “this was ...one of the best days of my life. “My first criteria is that people have light in their eyes. That's it. And of course nobody will understand that in the rankings. “How can you measure light?” I don't know, but, for me, that's my best reward.”



The Lessons

Replicating this type of approach might seem daunting, but Bureau and his team have worked to provide as much support as possible, providing a book of 85 pages to explain how it works.

“We’ve provided scripts to master the process,” said Bureau. “We are about learning, we try to formalise the process, we welcome professors, they experience the process, and then they start to become instructors from the partial part of the workshop and then they can do it by themselves.”

That commitment to continuous learning helped create the collective, as a place to share resources, videos, a community of practice and an open source collective committed to learning.

“It’s really hard to make people understand what it is,” said Bureau “Unless you do it by yourself. To teach it, at some point you really need to experience that for yourself.”



SERIOUS GAMING FOR INTERCULTURAL MANAGEMENT & LEARNING

Marion Festing
ESCP Business School
Berlin, Germany



The Professor

Marion Festing is Professor of Human Resource Management and Intercultural Leadership at the **Berlin Campus of** ESCP Business School. She has contributed to ESCP's development in recent years as the Rector/Dean of the Berlin campus, the former European Associate Dean for Research of ESCP and the holder of the Renault Chair of Intercultural Management and founded ESCP's Excellence Centre for Intercultural Management. In terms of teaching innovations she contributed to a MOOC on Intercultural Management and developed the award winning Serious Game Series 'Moving Tomorrow' together with PhD student Tobias Schumacher.



The Approach

One mark of modern business is the need to work effectively across cultures, with coworkers and customers of different backgrounds and age ranges. Marion and her team developed a novel approach towards teaching diversity and inclusion via an immersive learning experience. Moving Tomorrow is a serious game series aiming to enhance the players' intercultural understanding and their diversity competence.

The Moving Tomorrow series is built upon core mechanisms of gaming, where the players will engage in conversations with other characters (non-player characters) and make important decisions that will ultimately affect how the story pans out. In eight hours of gameplay, the players as "Lucy" embark on a virtual journey from the Berlin-based start-up "Runergy" and its subsidiaries in Russia, China and India, where they will unravel an evil plot that endangers Runergy's future.

The game itself was a team collaboration as Marion worked with Tobias Schumacher, PhD student, Waza! Game who programmed the game, the Renault Groupe, which contributed to content and financing the game in the context of the Renault Chair of Intercultural Management, and the ESCP Foundation, which also contributed to financing the game.

The game is sold to other schools under both a student and professional license.



Moving Tomorrow is a stellar example of game-based serious learning. Festing brought her own previous experience with classroom teaching and MOOCs, when she started building a more innovative course on intercultural management with the desire to drive greater student interaction and engagement in 2016.

“With the idea of designing a serious game for teaching intercultural management we had the unique chance to bring together the benefits of classroom training and exposure to an intercultural environment,” said Festing. “I had published on experiential learning theory. If you immerse students in a situation and provide academic insights at the same time, they learn more. So, we started to design a completely new learning experience including the storyline, characters and academic insights.

“The game is incorporated into the curriculum of intercultural management courses in many cases, playing the game in-class. However, it can also be played at home. The professor will then debrief, also in a gamified format, after each episode of the game. However, it can also be used stand alone. The game offers a unique learning experience to the students, allowing them to make their own decisions that have an impact on how the story pans out and thus, “to make their own decisions that have an impact on how the story pans out and thus,”

“While creating intercultural learning experiences was our major objective, we wanted to go beyond simplified stereotyping of national differences. We wanted to train empathy, we wanted to train perspective taking in many different ways. For example, we embedded sustainability as a core value into the game (the company Runergy produces shoes that produce energy...), thus, leading students to focus on sustainability in their actions. The organization also has a very modern design using holacracy elements as cornerstones in their organization culture, so it’s not top-down decision-making. It’s a new work-setting, a purpose-driven environment, where the students have to adapt to. Further, we also highlight various diversity dimensions such as gender or race and sensitize for (unconscious) biases with the storyline of our game. All of this happens in various countries, for which we explicitly address cultural specificities, sometimes also for showing how typical stereotypes can be misleading. As a basis, we used latest insights from intercultural, diversity and inclusion research and backed up the storyline by including experts from academia and the corporate world in the geographic cultures concerned, e.g. managers from Renault.”

Designing such a serious game for education is very complex. We tried to put as much in the game as possible. We worked with actors, composers and tested it intensively with executives and colleagues. We were especially concerned with the realism of our storyline and asked many experts to double check the ideas we developed to map the Russian, Chinese, Indian or even the new work context.” In the end, that commitment to the game and story led to a memorable experience and greater learning, not only for the students, but also for us and all parties involved.



“A student might forget 100,000 PowerPoints, but the experience of being Lucy, of being a character and taking decisions is very unique to them. We saw that this immersion in the story has a very strong learning effect.”





The Impact

The game has been nominated and won a number of awards.

“We designed the game following a design science approach. For each of the construction elements and steps we defined beforehand how they lead at the end to reach the learning goals.”

One student offered this feedback, “I really enjoyed playing the game as a part of the course. It was a very refreshing change from all the lectures and presentations we had in other courses. The context of the game also helped me better understand the intricacies of different cultures and leadership styles. Especially during the Covid-19 lockdown when everyone was exhausted by online lectures, this game definitely grabbed my attention.”



The Lessons

The creation of the game itself was a team effort and replicating it would be no small feat. Festing was quick to give credit to the host of individuals and organisations who helped make the game a success, ranging from the PHD student supporting her chair to the games company, founders and colleagues.

“You need a lot of time, you need a huge network. You need people to give you insights and to help you with various things and you need a lot of resources as well. It’s good that you don’t know it at the beginning. My recommendation would be to find people who have already accomplished this type of serious game... We were very lucky that we didn’t fail going on the adventure journey ourselves... It was learning by doing. It was a long journey and it took a lot of time.”



LEARNING MANAGERIAL THEORY THROUGH ROLE PLAY GAMES AND MORE

Philippe Lépinard
Université Paris-Est Créteil
Paris, France



The Professor

After a first career as a helicopter pilot in the Army, including more than 12 years in the field of simulation-based training, Philippe Lépinard joined the University Paris-Est Créteil (UPEC) in 2015 as an associate professor in management sciences. His research deals with game-oriented learning in higher education. He is the founder of the GamiXlab (<https://www.facebook.com/gamixlab/>) and the manager of the EdUTeam project (<https://eduteam.fr/>). He also participates in several professional and scientific networks interested in pedagogical transformation.



The Approach

Philippe takes traditional role-playing games, ranging from Dungeons and Dragons to Star Wars, and imbues the experience with a focus on skills necessary to grasp managerial theory. While classes will use other creative experiences like playing Minecraft with students in India, Ukraine, Canada and Germany, this approach focuses on two types of games, wargames and table role play. These types of games allow the instructor to set up relationships between the participants (i.e. game master, antagonist/protagonist) as well as construct scenarios for them to work in. There is then a point of reflection at the end of the game to evaluate the different dynamics emerging in the game and instill theory to the practice.

“The personalisation of the learning is achieved through several roles taken by the student during the entire course conducted through experiential learning: manager, collaborator and observer. Thanks to these three roles, which each student will take at least twice, the increase in competence can be achieved in several ways. Some students will prefer to live the experience, others to observe it and then discuss it in debriefing.”



The Innovation

The term for this type of innovation is, “ludo-pedagogy,” an approach utilising games to teach serious skills to adults. Philippe has written extensively on this subject and his own website, Eduteam.Fr, provides links to his papers, theory and definitions.

The innovation and pedagogical approach is deceptively simple but, as one starts to dig underneath the turns and game-mechanics, the deeper mechanics and theory starts to emerge.

“What is really interesting is that the theory is given at the end of the course to allow us to understand what happened,” said one of the students who went through the course. “Personally (but all my classmates say the same), I have never retained new things so well!”

This includes the use of attractive imaginary worlds as “bait” to drive deeper engagement from the learners, the social constructs necessary to enter into this world, and, most importantly, the trojan horse approach to teach critical skills. It is a manner of subverting misconceptions or unhelpful stereotypes of who is or is not a managerial candidate.

“I have a completely different view of the business worth,” said Hiba Kihel, a student on Lépinard's courses. “I can analyse the people around me and their behaviour... this type of course is very promising and visionary. The fact of learning in a playful way and a good mood is the best thing for us as students. It is a pleasure to know that we are not judged when we make mistakes”



The Impact

The impact first and foremost comes in the glowing testimonials and feedback from the students who have taken these courses.

“Playing in fictional worlds gives everyone a chance,” said another student. “We are on the same level from the start. The debriefings, which are very long, are really important times that allow us to understand what we have experienced. There is also a lot of goodwill between all the students.”

Alongside the growing body of research on game-based learning of this inclusive and engaging pedagogy, Philippe has published extensively, with 76 academic and popular scientific references (13 accepted and 4 currently under assessment) and is gathering a usable collection of evidence and material at Eduteam.Fr.



The Lessons

For professors looking to integrate this approach into their own classroom, Philippe cautioned that the choice of game was critical.

“What was the most difficult was the game's choice. At the beginning, I tried a lot of games, board games and so on. To make this pedagogical method work, it needs a lot of freedom. That is why we ended up using wargames.”

The Eduteam.fr website is a growing set of resources for professors looking to integrate this pedagogy into the classroom, including marking up the most-cited academic papers, presentations and videos.

DESIGNING GAMES TO SUPPORT INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Hélène Michel
Grenoble Business School
Grenoble, France



The Professor

Hélène Michel is a professor and game designer at Grenoble Ecole de Management (France). Her aim is to design game mechanisms to support innovation and inspire entrepreneurship. To do this, she has developed a collection of serious games, several training certificates and a dedicated lab named “the Playground” in which students, teachers and companies can co-design their games. In a “Games for Good” perspective, she is now creating events – such as the Medical Game Jam - to encourage citizen science through gamification.



The Approach

Michel has created a serious game laboratory where students co-design games and use game mechanisms to solve a problem or improve a situation related to business (innovation, HRM etc). The course taught is Human Resource Management (HRM) in the Digital Age. These games might start with a playful moniker or name, but take students through a design process delivering real business skills and creating a usable product and game. The students earn and retain Intellectual Property in the games they create and a number of games have gone on to be sold and used worldwide.

“During last month’s seminar with 24 students, we have done a “Zoombies Vs Zoomanagers” seminar,” said Michel. “This means one week to gamify online collaboration tools such as Zoom, Teams or Mural in order to make them more interactive, stimulating, efficient and even fun! At the end of this sprint they have created, tested and iterated 6 games: Monotony (a game to avoid boring meetings by defining clear objectives), What’s your Background? (a way to use Teams and Zoom images background as an ice breaker and a team building), Tutti Frutti (a game which keeps all the participants engaged during a seminar) etc. All these games have been introduced to members of our staff and faculty during a “train the trainer” session led by the students themselves. Several tutorials were recorded and students earned a Serious Game Designer Certificate.”

For longer courses, students develop fuller-formed out games that go through a design and production process and are meant to be used at the highest levels.



“Last year we have co-developed 5 serious games with the students and International Labour Office (ILO) on the COVID cases : right to removal, strike, prevention etc. when facing COVID. These 5 games are to be presented to the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work. All our games are made to be used directly in organisations.”





The Innovation

Soft skills have been praised as the skill-of-the-future for years. Michel is a believer in the power of serious gaming to instil and impart these necessary skills. The gamification process teaches students autonomy and how to effectively leverage gamification to solve HR problems.

“Students define which specific topic they are going to work on. I provide a guideline, they provide the topic. To do this, I use the LEGO Serious Play Method to help students define, in a protected environment, the specific pain point they want to focus on. For example the loneliness feeling of online students. All the topics correspond to very personal situations students face in their online environment and ones that we want to share and make universal.”

The innovation comes particularly in how Michel has systematised the process of not just engaging with serious games but actually becoming a creator of serious games. For the “Zoombies Vs Zoomanagers” seminar, students had 17 work packages to achieve in 5 days in order to deliver a game mechanism with strong validity.

Michel sees game design and game designers as critical to successful businesses of the future. Her work is preparing the way.



The Impact

Michel has published and lectured extensively on serious games and her pedagogical approach. She uses the recognised works of Kirkpatrick (1994) and Phillips (1996) to assess the contribution of this learning method according to 6 levels: (Satisfaction and adoption, Theoretical Learning, Behaviour, Organisational Results, Return on Investment, Innovation).

She evaluates her impact by her primary audience, her students. The students become co-designers at 2 levels (the double loop learning approach) : “They can create games (and develop their skills) thanks to a method that I offer. But they can also challenge the method. “And they continue to teach her lessons.”

“I am lucky : Students teach me a lot ! I have completely given up pretending that I have the (only) expertise and that everything will be perfect during my lecture. I moved completely from a causal approach in innovation to an effectual, frugal approach : I start with what I have. I will build the lecture using students’ skills and needs, by iteration. I accept much more failure now. It makes us human.”



The Lessons

Michel is evangelical about the spread of serious-based games and provided five practical tips for starting serious learning.

- ➔ “Choose a real topic to gamify. Students want to help, to have an impact. Make it real !
- ➔ Be frugal. Start with what you have. It's an effective approach. If you are using Microsoft Teams or Mural or Zoom as your teaching tools, start with gamifying them ! Gamification can be low tech and low cost. As for a printer, the value is in the ink : the key idea, the concept etc.
- ➔ Use emotion. I don't say make it fun. Because you can also use other ranges of feeling. But students need to experiment with it. At the end of the session, what is the emotion you would like your student to feel ?
- ➔ Co-design. Don't do this alone. Collaborate with your students. First because they are our users and also because, let's admit it : they are much more creative with these tools than us.
- ➔ Scale up ! Once you have a good mechanism, whatever your topic (finance, human resource etc.) share your practices (the best ones and your failures also). Students can record tutos, you can organize a webinar with your linkedin community to do a play test etc. This way, you create a community. Game designers say : You come for the game, you stay for the guild !”



GAMIFYING SOFT SKILLS FOR BUSINESS

Hayley Pearson
The Gordon Institute of Business Science
Johannesburg, South Africa



The Professor

Hayley is a full-time faculty member, the Executive Director: Faculty and the Director of the MBA Programme at GIBS. Hayley lectures in the areas of Leadership, Organisation Behaviour and Human Resources with a specific focus on individual level accountability and performance. Prior to joining academia full time, Hayley was a Specialist Project Manager, the AACSB Accreditation Manager and the Assurance of Learning Manager at GIBS.



The Approach

Pearson and her team have designed a games-based course, Differentiate, to help new graduates and young individuals in the early stages of their career develop their desired business knowledge and acumen but also to accelerate them in the workplace - to become professional, responsible, innovative and self-managing leaders.

The programme is focused on improving students' effectiveness in the workplace and includes two noteworthy innovations: 1. an integrated workplace learning experience/ a virtual internship - which requires direct application of course content to real businesses, organisational research and SME engagement and 2. The use of game-based learning (gamification) to drive students through a series of activities to help them develop specific skills required in the workplace.

The team's research identified 40 "micro-skills" as critical to the success of a new graduate recruit entering the workplace and an early career individual. These ranged in difficulty and complexity and included the likes of how to run a meeting, how to pitch an idea, how to handle a performance discussion, or even understanding cultural diversity in the workplace.

Those skills were then mapped into the games platform, to different tasks that the students must complete to earn badges and points. The students then work through the game, earning various prizes and badges, ranging from university apparel to meals with faculty members.

Deep engagement is driven through the application of typical gaming elements (rules of play, point scoring and competing with others) to what may otherwise appear tedious tasks, students actively engage and independently progress through the designed activities. Learning is promoted and competencies are recognised. There are 6 levels to the game and the activities within each level correspond to not only the timing of the course modules but also the content and career development sessions that are delivered during the modules. Activities also require students to work closely with others, provide feedback to their peers, seek information outside of core content and address complex issues resulting from South Africa's context. Students earn points by completing tasks, some tailored to their own particular interests, and progress through the game.



The Innovation

One novel element of the course is that it is not mandatory and is not required for graduation but it has grabbed the attention and time of students. The course teaches needed skills but it faces the challenge of motivating and maintaining engagement amongst students-- a critical challenge for any professor rolling out a new online or blended course.

Pearson and her team settled on game-based learning as an effective and engaging way to assist students in building a portfolio of evidence to close the skills gap graduates face when entering the workforce. Delivered via the ClickUp LMS, the game called Differentiate requires students to work through 40 assigned tasks (all of which can be customised according to market demand and shifting trends) and allows students to compete with their peers, rewarding skill mastery with badges for level completion and points for task completion.

"We measure actual progress through the activities and student's engagement on the platform and the game. It's not a compulsory element. We really want students to deeply engage with activities because it creates a fundamental shift in who they are as an individual and how they will be when they get into the workplace."

Frugal innovation is on display as well as Pearson and her team developed the course on their existing LMS system.

"I think a lot of business schools and faculties think that these kinds of things need to cost a lot of money or have to have huge graphics and big interfaces and need a lot of complexity behind them. We took something that was conceptualised basically in our minds and worked around what we had in order to ensure that it could be realised."



The Impact

While Pearson and her team have not compiled a large body of formalised evidence, they do track student engagement on the platform and completion rates. They track anecdotal data on student satisfaction and, more importantly, those of the employers that hire graduates.

"We know it's anecdotal, but the feedback we had from one employer was that the individual was the most workready individual they've ever seen coming out of grad school. So it's that kind of feedback that gives us encouragement, but we know it certainly needs to be more formalised."



The Lessons

Pearson encouraged people to experiment with bringing game-based learning into the classroom.

“One way of getting started is building the rules of the game... I literally just wrote down what those rules were and by doing that, that helped me design the game, how the game would be played,” we knew the outcome. It was also important to have a good support system, a good team to be able to just ask the questions. Can this be done and how difficult will it be? But just try it and do it. Just give it a go. It doesn’t have to cost a lot of money and there’s a lot of different ways to engage learners through gamified processes, it changes the pace, keeps motivation.”



TRAJECTORY: MICRO-EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING JOURNEYS

Alice Riou
EM Lyon Business School
Lyon, France



The Professor

Professor Alice RIOU describes herself as a slasher : teacher / researcher / entrepreneur. Member of the EmLyon business school faculty, she has been passionate about creating experiences and memories for students, academics and customers for over 15 years. Her courses, her field of research, as well as her hiking agency, focus on marketing and the optimization of the consumer experience. She is fascinated by the self-transformative narrative experience, from a pedagogical, theoretical and professional perspective. Her motto : reconnecting people with their body and their emotions through a learning situation is key to balancing the digital era virtual social interactions.



The Approach

The course title promises to teach marketing, with a focus on fashion and the circular economy, but the approach, Trajectory, is truly novel and innovative in mixing self-development, the best of experiential learning and hands-on practice. The format is dedicated to experiential “outside the walls” teaching. Riou created a pedagogical micro-learning journey (2 days + 1 night, 50 km max away from departure point): each bus trip is a pretext for a lesson, while students are focused and captive. On the journey there is space for formal learning, engagement (via an app), reflection (silent meditation) and an encounter with subject matter experts (in this case a French embroidery factory).

The teacher explains the key concepts of the day, from an academic and a managerial point of view (using the very funny and vintage microphone of the bus). Students, sitting in pairs with an alumni, search actively for the answers and send them by a gaming system, based on a survey-app. Thus, they learn while discussing key concepts with their peers (alumni, executive ed participants, members of mixed programs). As the topic of the course was to debate about the issues of the fashion industry and its CSR impact, the private bus had two stops : one local “made in France” fabric factory (Lyon) and one factory based on a women’s social reintegration program for when they leave jail. The students visit the factory, experiencing the sights and sounds first-hand. There is a period of reflection overnight in a convent where students are asked to reflect on what they’ve learned and write letters to their future selves.



“We are in a very competitive market, just look to MOOCs and other competitors,” said Riou. “So if you want very good content on consumer behaviour, marketing, digital marketing, you don’t really have to pay for a French Business School. So for me, you need to provide personal transformative experiences to the young students, otherwise, they could get credits or certificates or anything else on the market.”





The Innovation

Riou has been at the cusp of innovation in teaching for years. She has been the pedagogical manager of a class made for 1200 people at a time, synchronously taught in a big empty theatre (back in 2017-19). She remains searching for what she calls the “Wow” effect.

“Back in 2010, I used to be very fond of digital experiments, I won prizes for those experiments. So I tried online, direct forums, people would answer while you teach. I tried collaborative screens, and people put lots of digital posts on it, and comments on it. But that was before the pandemic, that was 10 years ago, and the Wow effect is totally over. Students don’t care anymore about posting fake comments, as they used to. But nowadays, it’s the contrary - when you experiment without PowerPoint, without any digital tools, that’s the Wow effect.”

The magic of this method comes in the format.

“The content of the class had to be linked to the format of the class and the content of the class was slow fashion industry, slow market, slow food, slow, all of that. I decided to have a look at the new techniques in the slow industry. So for a departure point, if I can say that, it has to be slow in itself. I wanted to avoid the hundreds of PowerPoint slide shows and the kind, where you sit three hours every day. So I asked for a specific format, a format that would match the content.”

The format of this course brought out four pedagogical values.

- ➔ TRANSGENERATION : Nostalgia and the mixed audience is one of the key innovative concepts and helps the course turn a profit as students pay very little while the ExecEd and alumni pay much more.
- ➔ EMBODY the learner experience. Students have a body. Emotions and memories are bodily-driven. Touching and experiencing the factory matters.
- ➔ COLLABORATION. Students are driven to collaborate. To work together.
- ➔ REFLECTIVE WORK. The convent offers a setting without screens where students are encouraged to reflect on their future selves. Students then woke the next morning at 5am to share a lesson while hiking for two hours. As Riou says, “walking is the ancestor of all philosophical courses.”



The Impact

Riou incorporated testing during the course, but predominantly as formative testing tools. While Riou has not published on this methodology, the impact of her course and class came out in the experiences of her students, particularly as they returned from the bus.

“Some of them cried while leaving the bus. I knew I had reached my pedagogical objectives : make them dream of a responsible fashion industry they could work for, without naivety, and with the inner motion it takes to learn all your life long. I will surely not be with them all their lifetime, but my ambition is that these Trajectory memories will be a powerful fuel to update their managerial values.”



The Lessons

“There is a trend nowadays in every kind of institution to fix exactly what are the pedagogical objectives, the competencies, are you in the code number, referring to such and such competencies. But sometimes, the best competencies the students achieve are the ones that you’ve not announced in advance. If you announce them, it’s the end of the mystery. And mystery is part of what makes you commit to a story”



CRISIS SIMULATION FOR MANAGERIAL TRAINING

Tyler Shepfer
Ohio State University
Ohio, United States



The Professor

Ty Shepfer is a Senior Lecturer of Management and Human Resources at the Fisher College of Business at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. He is also the Director of the Honors Cohort Program and the Academic Director of the Master in Human Resource Management Program. Prior to returning to Ohio State in 2015, Ty worked at Royal Dutch Shell holding various strategic HR positions in Houston, Texas, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and New Orleans, Louisiana. Ty is an avid runner and has completed five marathons. He also enjoys biking, reading, food, and traveling to new places.



The Approach

Shepfer created a simulation to experience crisis leadership in turbulent times, to be run as part of his Business Environment & Skills course. Shepfer developed and authored the case placing student teams in the roles of the C-suite at a made up company in the autonomous vehicle and supply and distribution industry. The case is dynamic and automated, developing over the course of the week where student teams have to respond to the crisis (a glitch in the technology of the autonomous vehicles). The case culminates with a presentation to the board of directors where teams present on the actions they have taken to date and the plan for the future. The case has over 1,000 students per semester participate each semester and over 5,000 students have experienced the case overall.

Shepfer spent seven years working for Shell Oil before returning to academia. He brought his own experience and observation of what was present, but also what was needed.

"There's content and research out there about crisis management. The majority of it is on the mitigation side (i.e. how do you stop it from happening in the first place?) but once it does happen, what do you do about it? This class focuses on bridging that gap."



The Innovation

The course scales action-based learning, that you would normally only see in classes of 30-40 students and scales it across 1000 students. The ability to create an engaging experience, rooted in real life choices and ethics, is one remarkable innovation.

"I have been really pleased with how excited students get about this, because it's not just reading a textbook and responding to a multiple choice quiz, they're actually getting to kind of play this out. And it culminates in a presentation to this fake board of directors, where we just pummel them with questions like why did you do this, what about this and that. That's the process that opens their eyes."

Crisis reveals values and Shepfer stressed that ethics is baked into the heart of the course, using Lynn Payne's ethical decision-making framework. Diversity of opinions and experiences are another part of creating this experience, as each team is designed to try and represent a split of gender, domestic/international and even their own comfort levels on things like presentations.

He also encourages students to understand the shifting nature of crisis management.

"If they are only communicating during the crisis through one medium, they get dinged on that, because it's not going to reach everyone. The other thing that we pay attention to because we know that society takes in information in sound bites is the length. You have to be really concise, and some of the student teams will put out a press release, it's two pages long, it might have great information, but nobody is going to read that. So how do you balance, providing enough information but not so much that you're going to overwhelm the public."

The Impact

Shepfer conducts a pre and post assessment of the course. He has found the retention of learning and efficacy of the case to be very positive. But he also measures impact through student voice and their own experience.

"I believe in focus groups. Four times a semester, I will sit down with about 12 students and ask them how things are going. Their perspective is limited but I generate new ideas from that and I hear what's on their mind."

And his students spoke highly of their learning experience.

"Ty created a learning experience like no other," said one student. "Students were fully immersed in a week-long crisis case that challenged students from leadership, communication, teamwork, and time management perspectives. He created a realistic environment where students truly felt like they were running a company during a crisis. For instance, teams would receive emails from the company board, requests for public statements, and even news videos that they had to respond to in real time. This case was the most impactful learning experience of my college career."

Another student spoke to the wider learning environment created during the course.

"Ty creates a psychologically safe space in class that makes students feel comfortable participating and asking questions. I have never been in a class that has had better participation than Ty. He is truly interested in his students and makes himself available outside of class to chat."

The Lessons

"The biggest message that I wanted to share with other instructors is just like the students, we learn by doing. And it took a little bit of courage to try this, but it's been one of the most rewarding things that I've done during my time at Ohio State. So be willing to try things out, you're going to fail, occasionally, like everybody, and it's the failures that we tend to learn from the most."

JOB-READY SOCIAL MARKETING TRAINING THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Kai-Yu Wang

Goodman School of Business, Brock University
Ontario, Canada



The Professor

Dr. Kai-Yu Wang is a Professor of Marketing and Chair of the Marketing, International Business, and Strategy department at Goodman School of Business, Brock University, Ontario, Canada. He has received several awards in teaching and pedagogical innovation: 2021 Goodman Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award; 2020 Brock University Award for Distinguished Teaching; 2020 Pearson Prentice Hall's Solomon-Marshall-Stuart Award for Innovative Excellence in Marketing Education; 2019 Innovation in Business Education Award (3rd place); 2018 AxxessCapon Teaching Innovation Award.



The Approach

In the first two years of his teaching the Internet and Social Media Marketing course, Wang only required students to propose a digital marketing plan for a community partner. The challenge is how best to gauge the effectiveness of this plan without forcing the community partner into risk- either of reputation or budget. Wang developed a seven-step plan to teach Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and Social Media Marketing (SMM) across a twelve week course.

The course pairs local vetted community partners with students. The students are required to understand the products and services provided by the partner, understand key digital tools (i.e. Google Ads & Keyword Planner) and then build a strategy that will deliver the desired marketing goals for the partner.

After completing five rounds of Mimic Pro Simulation, a paid simulation provided by Stukent, the students are able to gain hands-on experience related to keyword selection, keyword bidding strategies, PPC text ads, and landing pages. Only then will the partner be asked to pay for the execution of that strategy. The budget is agreed upon and paid-for in advance by the provider.



"I interview the partners in-advance to make sure they know what is required of them. It is a frightening thing to ask them to hand their Google Ads accounts, their social media accounts to the students. They are required, as part of this course, to agree to use Google ads, they need to agree to do social media marketing, either Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram. And then they need to have the students to manage their account for at least two weeks."





The Innovation

Much is written and discussed about providing learners with skills that will allow them to be immediately hired when they leave university. This course provides the practical skills and certifications (students earn certification with providers like Google and Hubspot) but also provides them the invaluable space to practice safely and then to implement those lessons in the real-world.

Industry partnership and community engagement are at the heart of the course. Students are able to partner with Ontario organisations, understand their local needs and help bolster that local business environment.

The seven steps (Local Businesses, Google Ads and Keyword Planner, Buyer Personas (BP) and Pay-per-click (PPC) Text Ad, SMM, Simulation, Campaign Implementation, Report and Presentation) provide the structure to bind this practice, job-ready learning with real-world impact.



The Impact

The impact shows up in job-ready students and benefits the Ontario ecosystem.

“I see many of my MBA students earn full-time jobs even before they have finished the course. When they go to an interview for a digital marketing related job, they know what they are doing. One student told me that the interview question for the job was basically what he had already done in the course (creating SEO and SMM campaign). They are already ready to answer those questions.”

But Wang is also focused on providing value to the wider community. That comes in interviewing the partners that apply to work with the programme, examining the ethics and impact of that business and ensuring that the goals of the students and the partners align.

“I want to have my students benefit from the project. I want to give them a great inspirational education experience. But I also have the responsibility to give back to the community. At least in the Niagara region, many of these organisations are understaffed. They may have a budget--from the government or grants-- but they don't have anyone to do this work. So we make sure the community partners provide feedback and a voice and constantly think about the social impact of our work.”



The Lessons

The biggest lesson was to ensure that both the business partner and the educational organisations were aligned on the desired learning outcomes and business work.

“I realised at the start that we weren't always clear to the community partners. And so the community partner might be specifically looking for search engine optimization. At the time, that wasn't the focus, but it could be. So, going forward, I make sure that the community partner understands our goal, our focus and the commitment needed on their end.”

ART-BASED LEARNING FOR EMBODIED LEADERSHIP

Ralf Wetzel
Vlerick Business School
Brussels, Belgium



The Professor

Ralf started as an electrician, delved into social work and coincidentally, studied Business Administration. He was intrigued by social theory and worked as an organizational researcher, consultant, and managing director of a research and consulting group in Switzerland. Today, he works as a Professor of Organization and Applied Arts at Vlerick Business School, Belgium. There, he discovered the power of Performing Arts like improvisation theatre, dance, and clowning for leadership development. He turned into a theatre performer and activist, acknowledged i.e. by the Financial Times. By combining Arts with organization theory, Ralf prepares for high-speed and high-quality decision making by relying on joy, resilience and impact.



The Approach

The session teaches students how to connect and lead by using atypical methodology and techniques (i.e. the virtual application of theatre, clown and dance methods). Students undergo eye-contact experiments used in improvisation theatre, physical leading/following-exercises stemming from dance and explore the exploitation of failure by methods based on the red-nose-clown.

“We started with classic subjects where you can easily introduce improv, which is effective communication, how to listen to someone, how to find out where the other person is emotionally to address your own message, how to find an instant response to your message. We started in those places and went from there.”

Along with bringing participants into playful interaction, the session strengthens the remote physical and emotional connection between participants by means of emotional and physical work. This helps relieve stress and anxiety and supports participants to overcome the fear of judgement and of isolation, to speak truthfully and intuitively. Based on this experience, participants learn to build products, strategies and business models on the spot, turning the fear of the unexpected into a joyful treasure hunt especially under virtual work conditions.



The Innovation

Bringing his own experiences with improv theatre, clown and swing dance, Wetzel devised an approach to teaching leadership that brings the best of movement and human interaction. This provides practical training and role-playing for difficult conversations under uncertainty and disruption, such as performance appraisal talks, bringing bad news like firings, dealing with a reluctant, blocking or low-performance team-member etc, and decision making under conditions of discontinuity and surprise.

“Leadership boils down to effectively guided conversations. To train skills in guiding especially difficult conversations, the classic role-play approach is widely used. In my teaching, I have adapted techniques stemming from Augusto Boal’s Forum Theatre and Keith Johnstone’s improvisation theatre going beyond classic role-playing. In a session about how to lead difficult situations, I ask participants to come up with one personal ‘nightmare’ story about such a conversation, which has already happened or is about to come. Participants take turns telling the story to each other. At any moment, the audience can interfere and ask what’s going on in the mind and hearts of the players and they can provide reflections and suggestions on how to improve the conversation. With this approach, the conversation will be replayed either partly or entirely until a satisfactory idea about the process has been established by all participants. Especially unexpected turns or ‘mistakes’ turn out to be extremely insightful. The case giver has the opportunity for a brief reflection and the next couple plays the next conversation.”

One of Wetzel’s students commented,

“This method was very applicable to the subject and gave us as students a unique insight and approach to how to deal with everyday and long-term strategic issues.”



The Impact

Wetzel has published on the subject (“How To Access Organizational Informality: Using Movement Improvisation To Address Embodied Organizational Knowledge”) and seen his works and Edinburgh show covered in the Financial Times (“The MBA tutor clowning around in the name of business education”) but he’s more interested in seeing a change in behaviour, not just in citations or coverage.

“It should be measured not about what’s happening in the classroom, it should be measured by the difference at the workplace. So if companies are struggling with discontinuities and surprise, and they send students to courses like this, there should be a behavioural impact on when they return. There should be a difference in how people do the process and what kind of results they’re producing.”



The Lessons

This approach is born out of Wetzel’s own experience.

“When I changed from University to Business School context, I completely crashed against the wall. I thought I could rely on my status and experience and the students would just buy the subject because it’s on the menu. That didn’t work. I had a horrible professional experience and experienced burnout. Thankfully, I bumped into people who do applied improvisation, who use methods and tools and exercises from improvisation Theatre in non theatrical settings. And suddenly I experienced how much fun it actually is to drop everything and go to where the fear is, which in that case, is the class... Before that I was perfecting my slides for hours, right, which was absolutely pointless. I was paralysed in the safety that I thought I could have. I was disconnecting from the audience and disconnecting from the place where actually I was most afraid of going!...At the end of the day, people do not care where the methods come from that they apply, if they get the experience that what you provide really helps them in solving their challenges. For that, you need to provide safe spaces for them to experiment and fail, which requires you as a teacher to clearly be vulnerable too. That is what Performing Arts teach you.

SPECIAL TECH INNOVATION AWARD: DELIVERING THE WORLD'S FIRST HOLOGRAPHIC UNIVERSITY LECTURE

David Lefevre, Director of Edtech Lab at Imperial College Business School
Imperial College
London, United Kingdom



The Approach

In November 2018, Imperial became the first university to deliver a lecture via holographic telepresence technology. Three of the five speakers 'appeared' in the lecture hall whilst being physically located in New York and Los Angeles. They were able to make eye contact with students, answer questions in a live Q&A panel and respond in real-time to audience reactions. The result was an interactive learning experience that parallels the 'real world' equivalent whilst offering significant benefits: drawing on a global pool of speakers, maximising academic teaching time whilst travelling and creating an educational experience perfectly tailored to Generation Z students.



The Innovation

The most commonly used interactive technologies for online Higher Education are webinars. Hologram technology takes this a step further, creating the sense of a speaker's presence in the room. To date, its use has been restricted to sectors such as medicine and the performance arts. The Edtech Lab is the first to harness holographic technology for the benefit of Business School students. By adapting current holographic telepresence technology, the School has been able to introduce lecturers as life-size, 3D holographic images interacting with students in real-time, responding to audience reaction and answering questions via a camera link.

The core elements of the system are a 'pop-up' capture studio, a technology 'engine' which live-streams the feed from the capture studio to a third element – a giant portable holographic display in the lecture theatre. The end result is as close to a 'live' lecture as is possible using today's technology, enabling a limitless pool of global speakers to interact with students. Lectures can be beamed to several locations simultaneously and by eliminating travel, more speakers can be accommodated, and faculty can continue teaching whilst travelling, ensuring consistency and quality for students. Most importantly, it enriches the learning experience for students.



There has been extensive publication on the subject in academic journals and mainstream coverage. An evaluation of the holographic lectures was conducted after each event, via a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with students. Almost all participants reported that this was the first time that they ever attended a holographic event and showed a clear sense of enjoyment. “The lecture was very well put together. It was enjoyable and a delight to attend for the first time.” “The whole experience was truly magical! I felt extremely proud as an MSc IHM student to have the opportunity to be part of this pioneering lecture.”

“The lecture was good and very interesting with the hologram; I did feel like it was a lot different from live streaming.” Speakers were equally impressed: “This is amazing. I can see you; I can hear you and I am currently in Los Angeles... Awesome experience, I felt like Princess Leia for 10 mins. (Speaker physically-present in Los Angeles).”





LearnSpace

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LearnSpace is a Learning Innovation Hub based in Paris, with a unique, international expertise in pedagogy & learning innovations.

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