Investigating Innovations in Curriculum Design

A UNICON RESEARCH STUDY
DECEMBER, 2009

MARIE EITER
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY
CONSORTIUM
FOR EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

Purpose of the Study

- to explore alternative approaches to executive program design

- to identify innovations in program design offered by non-university providers

- to discuss implications of findings for university-based executive programs

Research Methods

- 10 in-depth interviews with executive development professionals across a range of consulting companies

- 5 interviews with senior executives of client firms

- Review of selected published articles

Results of Study

- Different underlying assumptions drive different program design choices
- University-based designs tend to be content-driven
- Consultant-based designs tend to be application-driven
- Universities focus on innovation in ideas, non-university providers focus on innovation in application
- Application-driven programs seek to facilitate the discovery of ideas from within the organization
- University-based programs were found lacking in sufficient application-type activities

Approaches to Program Design

Different underlying assumptions drive different program designs.

Content-driven	Application-driven
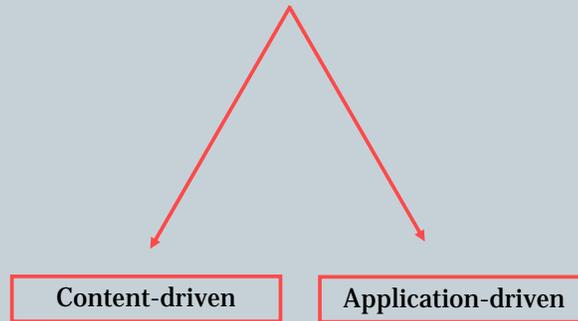
Underlying Assumptions

Content-driven Design
- Underlying assumption: new knowledge or skills are needed to meet organization challenge

- Role of the program is to impart new concepts, frameworks, models to address issues

Application-driven Design
- Underlying assumption: the answer to the organization's challenges lie within the organization

- Role of the program is to unlock leadership and organizational capabilities through learner-centered experiences, reflection and dialogue

Assumptions Drive Design Choices

- University-based programs favor content-driven designs

- Consultant-based programs focus more explicitly on the application of learning to company issues

The same set of objectives can produce two different program designs based on different underlying assumptions.
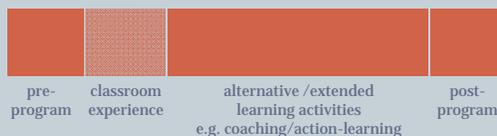

Content-driven Design

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Learning Synthesis	Learning Synthesis	Learning Synthesis	Learning Synthesis	Learning Synthesis
	Three Perspectives on Organizations Professor A	Faculty Panel on Global Energy Futures Implications for the Future: Group Discussion	Global and Regional Strategies for Growth Professor D	Building Social Capital Professor A	Building Possible Futures: Implications for our Strategic Plan *Facilitated Discussion*
			Lunch daily at ~ 12: 00 – 13:00		Program Wrap-up
	Growth of Global Markets: The Macro-Economic Picture Professor B	The Changing Energy Business and Markets Professor C	Creating, Capturing and Delivering Value Professor D	Leading Change in Complex Organizations Simulation	Lunch
Program Registration Reception: CEO Welcome Opening Session Dinner	Energy Guest Faculty: *Renewables*	Reception & Dinner at Museum	Energy Guest Speaker *Global Gas Markets*	Energy Guest Speaker *The Future of Energy*	

Application-driven Design

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Learning Teams	**Learning Teams**	**Learning Teams**	**Learning Teams**	**Learning Teams**
	Understanding Our Competitive Environment *Senior Task Team Report*	Industry Review: The Changing Market External Research Report Implications for our Strategic Plan	Creating an Environment for Innovation *Experiential Group Activity*	Becoming the Ambidextrous Organization Thought Leader Presentation	Continuing the Work Begun *Task Teams Report on Projects and Receive Sponsor Commitments*
	Lunch daily at ~ 12: 00 – 13:00				
	Delivering on the Strategic Plan: Opportunities and Barriers *Cross-unit Conversations in Groups*	Creating Alternative Futures: Scenario Planning *Facilitated Cross-unit Teams*	Leading the Growth Process: Individual Feedback on Personal Leadership Styles	Provocation as a Tool for Creative Growth *Task Team Workshop*	Lunch
Check-in Reception CEO Welcome: The Challenge Ahead Dinner	Energy Executive Guest Speaker: *Renewables*	Lessons from the Futurists: Dialogue and Dinner at Museum	Enhancing Communications Through Improvisation	Task Team Workshops: Transferring Learning	

Application-driven Programs

- More fully integrate learning and business objectives
- Rely on highly customized exercises and highly interactive activities
- Create experiences that "draw out' learning
- Utilize an integrated learning platform with multiple learning opportunities, both pre and post-program
- Extend learning experience over longer period of time

pre-program | classroom experience | alternative /extended learning activities e.g. coaching/action-learning | post-program

Executive Programs within the Larger Context

Non-university providers tend to:

- be more deeply embedded in the company
- link education more explicitly with strategic objectives and/or organizational design/architecture
- offer executive program as part of a larger engagement, rather than a stand-alone event
- tie executive development program to other HR systems, e.g. performance management

7 Innovations in Curriculum Design

1. *Metaphoric experience™* allows leaders to see old problems in new ways
2. Powerful, *provocative experiences* spur leaders to think differently
3. *Learning journeys* use the discovery process to identify leadership actions
4. *Improvisation* builds communication skills
5. *Non-verbal media* provide new insights on leadership
6. *Novel approaches to case stories* provide personalized learning
7. *Virtual realties*

Methaphoric Experience™ is a registered trademark of Duke Corporate Education

Metaphoric Experience™

- takes a leader out of a familiar environment

- experiments with new behaviors, skills, and perspectives in an unfamiliar but compelling context

- changes the frame on problems leaders face so they can be seen in a new way

- reaches leaders at a deeper level, with more impact

e.g., auditors at a public accountancy took on the role of doctors engaged in a medical diagnosis

Metaphoric Experience™ is a registered trademark of Duke Corporate Education

---

Provocation

Aravind Eye Clinic video offers a powerful provocative experience that:

- illustrates lateral thinking

- spurs leaders to think differently

- differentiates the unusual from the expected

- provide the basis for aspirational/compelling visions

- enhances leaders' ability to create their own personal, provocative statements

Improvisation Theatre

Improvisation Theatre advances leaders' ability to:

- listen
- focus on subliminal cues
- influence others
- be creative
- engage others at a visceral level
- support fellow team players

Learning Journeys

Learning journeys to non-profits, NGOs, and community organizations, utilize the discovery process to:

- explore how the leader turned around a failing situation
- decide what questions to ask at the learning journey site
- identify the behaviors, attitudes, and characteristics of the leader that led to success
- determine which actions produced the best results
- relate findings to own work environment

Leaders through Art

Leaders through Art experience enables leaders to:

- gather information on leaders depicted in non-verbal media
- observe and find meaning in body language, expression, eye contact, positioning, gestures, etc.
- reflect on qualities that exemplify an "ideal" leader and what qualities make a "bad or failed or flawed" leader

Cases Using Primary Sources

Contemporary documents pieced together create a compelling multimedia story about the company

- U-tube video segments
- annual report
- industry reports
- video clips of customers/employees to trigger dialogue

Enabled leaders to wrestle with real time dilemmas and weigh the trade-offs.
"We all learned a lot more about our own company."

9

Virtual Realities

Virtual realities are immersive, highly visual, multi-sensory learning environments that offer participants a unique opportunity to:

- interact in a highly motivational setting
- make sense of novel experiences
- engage in behavioral simulations that are both rational and emotional, practical and whimsical, organized and spontaneous.

Voice of the Customer

"*Business schools are leaving a lot on the table. Your content is great, but you need to be solution-focused, and content is just one piece. Presenting content is event-focused.*"

"How do we operationalize these ideas to achieve business objectives? How do we integrate them? How do we sustain them over time?"

Senior Director, Leadership & Talent Development,
Global Pharmaceutical Company

Voice of the Customer

"We have always reached out to university programs when we want our management to rub shoulders with managers from other companies so that they become less insular in their thinking."

"However, when we design a customized program we typically partner with consultants who can create a product around our needs and pull expertise from whichever sources are most appropriate."

Vice President,
Global Financial Institution

Voice of the Customer

"It's all about flexibility. We sent out 20 RFPs and interviewed 5 finalists. Only one business school really displayed the flexibility and willingness to work with us to align the leadership development program with our strategy."

Director, Global Top Talent Management,
Global Software Company

Voice of the Customer

"Only university-based programs can bring unbiased research content to bear on our most pressing problems."

Retired Senior Vice President,
Major Energy Company

Voice of the Customer

"Universities excel in presenting new ideas and cutting-edge research. Consulting firms excel in designing customized programs using experiential learning, action-learning, and leader-led learning where executives apply these ideas to a company's unique challenges."

Senior Vice President,
Global Financial Institution

Voice of the Customer

Business Week Custom Rankings 2003	Business Week Custom Rankings 2009
1. Duke CE	1. Duke CE
2. Harvard	2. INSEAD
3. IMD	3. CCL
4. Wharton	4. ESADE
5. INSEAD	5. IMD
6. Darden	6. Harvard
7. CCL	7. IESE
8. Kellogg	8. IE
9. Michigan	9. Wharton
10. Babson	10. Michigan

Implications of Findings

The core asset of university-based programs remains the research base of the faculty and their ability to generate new concepts and frameworks.

However, there appears to be an increased desire for:

- more application driven vs. content-driven designs
- more learner-centered activities
- more solution-focused vs. event-focused offerings

Do not wait for the faculty to drive these changes.

13

Advice to Schools

Content-driven vs. application-driven approaches

Purely content-driven programs fall short in translating and applying key concepts to a company's unique challenges.

Application-driven approaches provide:
- a more integrated design of content and experiential activities
- a greater focus on the client and their issues
- a more extended learning experience combining residential events, action-learning, team and individual coaching, and social networking.

Advice to Schools

Learning vs. teaching

University-based programs need to incorporate more learner-centered approaches.

Learner-centered programs tend to:
- focus on what the learner needs to know to drive business outcomes
- access a more diverse set of learning activities, using multiple learning methods
- select experiences that support the discovery/reflection process

Advice to Schools

Solution-focused vs. event-focused programs

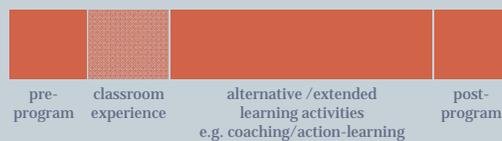University-based programs would benefit from being more solution-focused.

Solution-focused programs:
- link learning objectives more explicitly to company's strategic challenges
- extend learning beyond the classroom with substantive pre and post-program activities to integrate and sustain learning
- tie learning more closely to organization's HR competencies and performance management system

Advice to Schools

- Becoming more learner-centered may require adding a professional instructional designer to develop a diverse set of learning activities.
- Becoming more solution-focused may require adding senior-level consultants to link the learning goals to strategic goals and business results.
- Moving in this direction requires the faculty to be willing to share in co-creation of program.
- Don't think program, *think integrated learning platform.*

pre-program | classroom experience | alternative /extended learning activities e.g. coaching/action-learning | post-program

Acknowledgements

The following individuals contributed to this research effort:

Jane Agar, President, Agar Associates
Celia Berenguer, Instructional Designer, Monitor Executive Education
Josh Brand, Managing Director, Freemont Learning, Inc.
Ashley Chiampo, Director of Learning, iDiscoveri Enterprise 'Crucible'
Jeff Cohen, Principal, Performance Leaders
Racquel Dolson, President, Executive Leverage
Jon Fay, Partner, Wilson Alan LLC
Robert Halperin, President, Halperin Learning Associates
Nancy Keeshan, Executive Director, Duke Corporate Education
Donna McNamara, Consultant, Executive Development Associates
Patricia Stillwell, Principal, Multimedia Services

Questions or Comments?

Thank You

Marie Eiter and Kelly Bean
meiter@mit.edu
kelly.bean@anderson.ucla.edu

2009 UNICON – TEAM DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE