

Towards an Innovation Model in Teaching Management

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This study discusses an innovation to management teaching called Learning-Activity-Based Experience Model (LAB-E Model). The perspective is that the entire learning process in a course will be experienced through sets of activities designed by the faculty. These sets or clusters of problems and activities are unique to the contents and objectives of the course as well as to the varying needs and capabilities of the students. Through management activities created and designed by the faculty, learning takes place. This innovative teaching model incorporates other common teaching methodologies which include small group presentation, facilitated discussion of cases, and lecture-discussion approach.

Keywords: Learning, teaching, innovations, management

The field of management is a discipline that applies contextual concepts and theories to the sciences and the art of organizational and business processes. The management discipline, which concerns the academicians and educators, incorporates these art and science (processes) and contextual perspectives (concepts and theories) in the profession of teaching. Management teaching shifts from classical and scientific approaches and methodologies to experiential methodology which would have direct effect to the learner.

Depositario (2006) presented some of the common methodologies utilized by faculties of management in selected schools, including small group presentation, facilitated discussion of cases, and lecture-discussion approach. Other methodologies include group research projects, Internet search, lecture method, students'

reporting, and group brainstorming. The less common teaching methodologies used include short paper writing and journal activity, field trips, integrated information technology (IT) in teaching, fieldwork, self-assessment, business games and simulation, resource persons lecturing, and group planned activities.

The environment of teaching, learning, and academic experiences in all types of institutions is reinforced directly or indirectly by the information and communication technologies accessible to all. Knowledge is no longer a power of information created and processed but the power of information and the process of learning. This study will present the Learning-Activity-Based Experience Model (LAB-E Model) to address the pressing challenge of continuously innovating teaching strategies in management.

Initially, the model was designed for an innovative approach and method in teaching basic management courses in 2000. This was further developed in 2001 to 2005 to cover other management courses (in the undergraduate and graduate levels) like human resource management, organizational behavior, organizational decision-making, leadership, and entrepreneurship.

PRESENTATION OF THE INNOVATION IN TEACHING

In most instances, the faculty is concerned with the essential standards of teaching – meeting course objectives, evaluating students, coming up with exciting and new activities, and preparing and improving instructional materials to be used in class. These are the essentials of ensuring that the course is handled and managed effectively according to the standards of the academe. There is a need to address not only these essentials but also the differentiation of these standards according to the types and levels of students who enroll in the course. Activities that are not necessarily standards every semester, regardless of the types and levels of students, may provide opportunities for students to maximize learning.

Students have to experience the importance and the essence of the course through actual management activities. They should be part of the designed activities that would facilitate learning. Activities in class are not just requirements designed by the faculty. The students should create in themselves the accountability and responsibility of learning. This sense of accountability and responsibility are realized through their participation in the implementation and realization of course activities that would meet their learning needs.

The faculty needs to be creative and innovative in introducing methodologies that would respond to the types of students who enroll every semester. The students are not subjected to the standards of the course per se. The course should be designed to set standards that are unique to the types of students. These are achieved through differentiated

activities. The activities are not the same every semester.

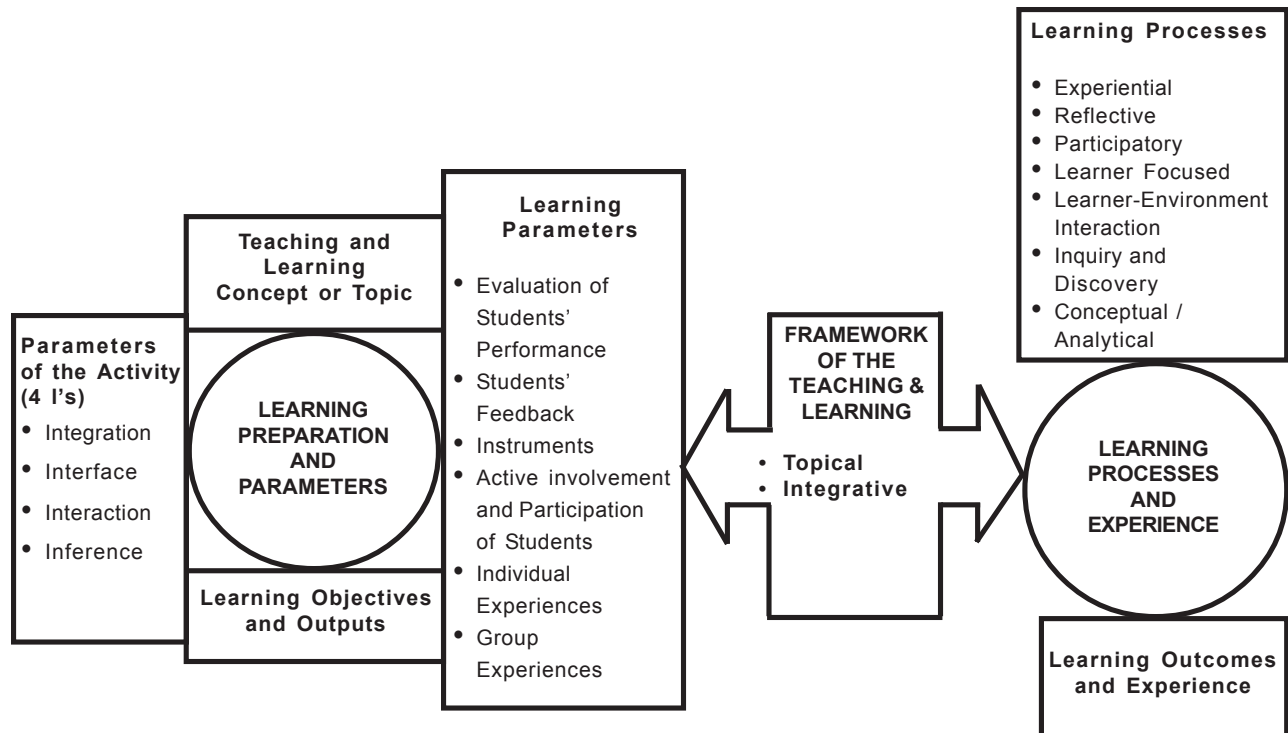
Generally, students may not be able to remember or recall the specific concepts or theories discussed in any course during their entire stay in the university. What they acquire are the discipline and selected extraordinary experiences.

This LAB-E model will provide the learners the experience of learning through the activities experienced in the entire course duration. Appendix A presents the four I's concerning the general teaching processes implied by the model. The principal thesis of the teaching innovation is that teaching is learning-activity-based experiences (LAB-E) where the environment sets the differentiation and development among learners. The learning environment is an interface of students' locus of internal (i.e., self) and external (i.e., discipline, community, and institution) concerns. The learners are both the students and the faculty.

LEARNING-ACTIVITY-BASED EXPERIENCE MODEL

The Learning-Activity-Based Experience Model (LAB-E Model), as shown in Figure 1, is a teaching methodology where the course is being handled and managed by the learners through an entire management learning activity. The perspective is that the entire learning process in the course will be experienced through sets of activities designed by the faculty. These sets or clusters of activities are unique to the contents and objectives of the course as well as to the varying needs and capabilities of the students. These defined activities are not tools to enhance learning, as in a typical teaching approach; rather, the activities themselves are the entirety of the course methodology. Through management activities created and designed by the faculty, learning takes place. In teaching management, for example, typical activities like interviews, case analyses, field observations, interaction with managers, and research in companies and institutions of the industry are all tools to facilitate the discussion.

Figure 1. *The conceptual framework of the LAB-E model.*



MECHANICS OF THE MODEL

The LAB-E model revolves around a management activity, as seen in Figure 2. The faculty prepares and designs the functional requirements of a management activity. This activity is the teaching methodology of the faculty in introducing management concepts, theories, and issues.

The management activity should be characterized by the installation of the teaching and learning environment, integration of management concepts and management experiences, opportunities for interaction among faculty, students, and the learning partners from the industry or business community, and interface of learning process and the experiencing of learning.

The faculty should consider the following pointers in outlining the activities for learning (Bumatay, 2000, 2005, 2006):

1. Understand the learners' needs, profiles, and related learning experiences.
2. Consult the learners' preference of class activities (previous, desired, effective, and recommended).
3. Design related activities that will match learners' interest.
4. Recategorize activities according to topical activity-based or integrative activity-based learning.
5. Identify specific target learning outputs for each activity assigned either topical or integrative.
6. Consider the resource requirements.
7. Have a clear picture of desired learning outcomes and define specific assessment tools and procedures.
8. Follow specific processes and procedures in operationalizing the model.

The faculty would have a "cafeteria" of learning activities that have reference to and support of his/her previous and current professional and actual experience in the business and management

environment. The designed activity results from his learned experience as a professor and practitioner of management. Varying and dynamic experiences of the faculty are reflected in the type and kind of learning activities listed. Activities may vary according to the capabilities, needs, talents, skills, and potentials of the learners. There will be less of standard activities passed on every semester.

A management activity would not only have to address a specific topic or cover certain areas of discussion. It is designed to present an expanded and composite management topic as well as a management experience for each activity. The expanded experience according to the topics is different from one student to another. Each activity results in these expanded and composite experiences of the student.

The learner (student and faculty) will identify the key results areas for the management activity. The key results areas pertain to the learning objectives set and desired. As an example, exposure to the work environment (EWE) integrates the management concepts and the entire management experiences according to the set minimum learning objectives incorporated into the activity and the desired learning objectives of the learner in his participation in the activity.

The learner identifies ways on how the performance will be evaluated. This sets the minimum standard of evaluation of performance. The student contributes and participates in identifying ways where one would learn from the activity. As the learner participates in the activity, the identified evaluation parameters will be done and documented. Performance evaluation is done during and after the activity. The learner has established self-assessment. This assessment is validated by and conferred with the learning partners (faculty and the representatives from the business environment).

Individual experiences of students are reflected and documented. These serve as the feedback and account of their accomplishments and related experiences about the activity. Their management experience and ways of assessing the experience are proportionately responding to the key results

areas identified. The response (i.e., academically, scholarly, or insights) of the students to the experience provides consequent outcomes of the learning activity. (The procedures and guidelines in designing and operationalizing the activity-based-learning are presented in Appendix B.)

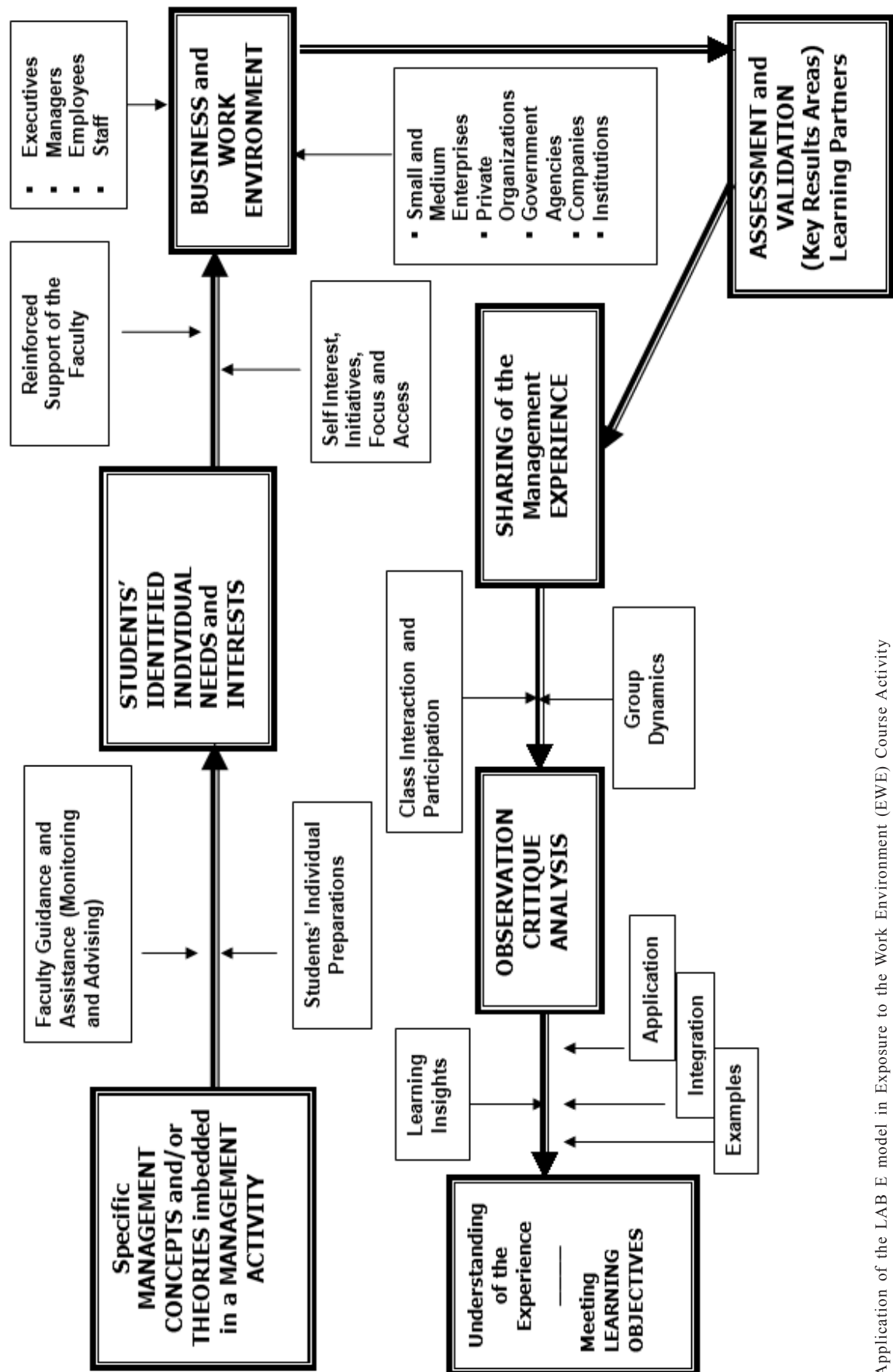
The LAB-E model, as described in Figure 2, provides a differentiated approach and methodology of facilitating understanding of concepts or theories. Aside from the earlier cited options for venues in ensuring understanding of concepts and theories, the LAB-E model addresses the understanding through the integration, interface, and interaction of the learner with himself, the business environment, and the identified learning objectives. It is not a linear process of facilitating understanding. It is a network of experiences focused on a management activity that facilitates learning.

The methodology provides opportunities for the student learner to understand these concepts and theories. The perspective is not on understanding by way of involvement and participation. It is rather facilitating understanding by way of exposure to, involvement in, participation in, synthesis of, interaction with, and integration of experiences.

The faculty necessarily has to be continuously creative and improving in the competence of managing the learners and the learning environment. Understanding of learning has reference with the learner and the experience. The student will discuss with the faculty his understanding about the experience and the experience in understanding the concepts through the management activity.

The student, faculty, and the business partners are considered as the facilitators of learning and understanding the experience. Facilitation is categorized into academic and scholarly, experiencing management, interaction with the business environment, and discovering and enhancing self-talents and potentials. The standards of understanding are not limited to the parameters set in a class environment (exams, recitation, discussion, and paper requirements) but with the evaluation of self-performance in the academic setting and in the learning-activity-based environment.

Figure 2. The process framework of the LAB-E model.



The management concepts and theories are understood as they are actually experienced by the student. The experience, through the activity designed by the faculty, is the outcome of the faculty's scholarly and applied understanding of past and present experience. (The specific mechanics of the model as it was used is presented in Appendix B. Other related questions and issues were also outlined.)

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The LAB-E model, developed for teaching management courses, will always challenge the creativity and resourcefulness of the faculty handling the course. Although it will always demand for continuous creation of new ideas in course activities, the experiences of the student will account for the learning in class.

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Appendix A

The Four I's: General Teaching Process under the LAB-E Model

TOPIC PERSPECTIVES	INTEGRATED PERSPECTIVES
INSTALL	
<p>Setting up of the learning environment. Studying the learning needs of learners.</p> <p>Activities refer to the learners' capabilities and learning needs.</p>	<p>Recall previous learning perspectives and cited examples in class.</p> <p>Designing learning venues and opportunities available for the learners.</p>
INTEGRATION	
<p>Processing of desired learning outcomes with reference to achieving understanding of concepts.</p> <p>Learners are processing self-discovery, learning outputs with learning preparations.</p>	<p>Relate previous topics and ideas shared in class.</p> <p>Relate lessons learned from previous activities.</p> <p>Relate present topics with previous topics discussed.</p>
INTERACTION	
<p>An exchange of information and ideas; reasoning and experience; discovery between the learner and respondents.</p>	<p>Relate present personal experience with previous understandings. Discuss changes in perspectives and understanding.</p> <p>Reinforce present analysis with other learners' analysis.</p>
INTERFACE	
<p>Interface between the concepts as cited and the actual understanding of the learners.</p> <p>Key in the learning experience is the understanding of the topic processed through an activity.</p>	<p>Interface between analytical understanding and experiential learning.</p> <p>Key in the learning experience is review and redefined learned perspectives and understanding that will impact applications of concepts/theories.</p>

Appendix B

Procedures and Guidelines in Designing and Operationalizing the Activity-Based-Learning

	Topical Activity-Based Learning	Integrative Activity-Based Learning
Forms of activities available	Individual, group (2 or 3 members)	Individual and the wide learning environment spectrum outside the class.
Enumeration of activities	Interviews, chat, internet search, role play, games, discussion, and reporting	Observations, interaction, EWE (exposure to the work environment), trips, roundtable discussion, seminars, and workshops.
General Description of the activity	<p>Specific to the topic. The focus is the learner and target learning.</p> <p>The student appreciating the understanding of the topic and lessons being addressed.</p>	<p>Combination of 3 or more other topics. Activities tackle previous or advance topics.</p> <p>The focus is the learner and the experience.</p> <p>Focus on the learning experience and less on the mechanics.</p> <p>The student appreciating the experience and therefore deducing the learned concepts and critical understanding.</p>
Requisites of the Faculty	<p>Creativity</p> <p>Experience</p> <p>Knows or familiar with the learning capabilities of students.</p> <p>Process immediate feedback to and from students.</p>	<p>Integrate concepts and analytical outputs of the topics.</p> <p>Have access or linkages with professionals in the industry and other government and private agencies.</p>
	Role	
The faculty	<p>Focus on the teaching and learning processes and corresponding parameters.</p> <p>Design teaching and learning objectives that are attainable within the time frame allotted for 1-2 contact session with students.</p>	<p>Focus on the potential challenges and enhanced experiences for students.</p> <p>Focus on the interrelationship of understanding and applications of concepts.</p>

The students	<p>Focus on how the learning objectives can be achieved.</p> <p>Identify areas for inquiry and analysis.</p>	Focus on the experiences – challenges and changes – ending up with application of these learning.
	Function	
The faculty	<p>State the target learning objectives.</p> <p>Finalize suggested activities.</p>	Presents varying venues and opportunities for the learning environment of students.
The students	<p>Suggest identified activities that would meet the target outputs.</p> <p>From the learning objectives set by the faculty, students will decipher potential concepts that need to be further explained and studied.</p>	<p>Students maximize opportunities for learning and further challenges.</p> <p>Students extend venues for learning not necessarily limited to the focused targets.</p>
	Assessment	
The faculty	<p>Faculty gives short tools on assessing students learned concepts.</p> <p>Immediate results of the assessment are given.</p>	<p>Faculty extracts and documents all probable changes and challenges of the students as a result of the activity.</p> <p>The assessment is continuum – previous to present and vice-versa.</p>
The students	<p>Self-assessment on the understanding and validation of the concepts.</p> <p>Address immediately the areas of learning difficulties.</p>	<p>Self-assessment on the changes and challenges.</p> <p>Process learning difficulties with understanding of the experience.</p>

Appendix C
Basic Mechanics of the Model (How it was utilized)

Related questions and issues regarding the model.	ACTIVITY-BASED LEARNING	
	Topical	Integrative
Manner on how and when does the faculty utilize the model.	Extent of familiarity with students' learning needs, profiles and experiences.	Series of 3 or 4 topical activity-based learning were done.
When will the faculty utilize the model?	Basic learning topics and concepts with ease understanding.	Complex learning topics and concepts.
What are the conditions when it is effective?	Varying fields of students' degree majors.	Willingness of students on different learning processes (experiential, discovery, inquiry, interactive).
What are the conditions when it is not effective?	Learners' preference on lecture method and textbook-based learning.	Learners' preference on classroom and campus-based access to learning.
What necessary teaching requirements and experience the faculty needs to have?	At least 2 years of teaching experience. Managing inquiry and discovery skills, integrating arguments and issues.	At least three years of teaching experience. With access to local agencies, institutions and organizations in the community.
What are the perceived advantages of the model?	Varying examples available to the learners. Contextual examples and understanding. Focus on self-interest and development of the student. High degree of self-motivation.	Continuity and interrelatedness of learned topics and concepts. Opportunities for actual and real experiences. High degree of motivation and learners' management.
What are the perceived limitations of the model?	Resources requirements available to the learner.	Learners do not access to or previous experience in the industry or community.