

Using CoachingOurselves as a Management Development Tool in an Experiential MBA Course: A Case Study in Applying Reflection as a Learning Strategy for Enhancing Engagement

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Abstract

This paper describes a case study of experiential learning and the application of learner generated reflection journals, (learning journals). The context of this case was an MBA course called Corporate Coaching Conversations offered at Westminster College's Bill and Vieve Gore School of Business in Salt Lake City, UT. The purpose of this exploratory and explanatory case was to report on the observations of the application of experiential-based CoachingOurselves topics in a traditional MBA classroom environment. Consequently, the paper describes an approach for the use of experiential techniques to improve classroom engagement and generate reflective learning.

Keywords: coaching; student engagement; reflection; reflective journal; experiential learning

1. Introduction

This paper describes a case study of the experiences encompassing an MBA course, from the perspective of both the instructor and the learners. In order to discuss the case and observations of learning outcomes, the authors delineate a framework of andragogy associated with experiential learning and the use of reflective journals. The course applied some resource material not normally slated for use in the classroom, (*CoachingOurselves* topics), and combined experiential learning with traditional textbook material, learner-led presentations, learner-led discussions, and learner-authored personal reflection journals. The purpose of this paper is to:

- contribute to the andragogy of MBA course design;
- describe a case where learners applied theoretical material immediately to pragmatic business situations and experienced a classroom environment encompassing increased intimacy, trust, and engagement;
- highlight the benefits and value of using reflection journals in a graduate class;
- propose improvements that could increase classroom engagement; and
- explore and explain some of the self-perceived learner outcomes.

The President of an Intermountain Region liberal arts college proposed that faculty need to move away from teacher-centric courses to a more engaging student-centric learning, i.e., “from the ‘Sage on the Stage’ to the ‘Guide on the Side’ ” (Bassis, 2008, p. 1). This innovative approach requires increased activity and engagement with the learners than was previously expected of traditional “classroom-based” faculty. When learners are more actively engaged in the classroom, then the ‘Guide on the Side’ emerges to replace the ‘Sage on the Stage.’ The guide, or coach, facilitates and stimulates the learner-centric experience. Business schools are currently engaged in an intensive battle for market share, brand, and competitive learning methods. Many learners feel that if they can apply theoretical material immediately to pragmatic business situations, then learners perceive that the schooling is worth the investment, (Schneider, 2001).

2. Case Study Method

Case study analysis is a broad approach to the studying of a phenomenon. Cases can be expressed and studied quantitatively or qualitatively. The research value in quantitative case studies is the statistical generalizations that may be used to prove or disprove hypotheses or theory. The value depends primarily upon the size and variation within the sample. On the other hand, qualitative case studies do not rely on sampling units, per se, since they are often rich descriptions of one, two, or several cases. The potential research value in qualitative case studies does not rest in statistical generalizations. Qualitative case studies “rely on analytical generalization. In analytical generalization, the investigator is striving to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory” (Yin 1994, p. 36).

The authors combined Yin’s (1994) *exploratory* and *explanatory* case study approaches in order to describe the classroom experience. An *exploratory* case study approach supported the investigation of an unexplored territory and helped establish familiarity and a deeper understanding with a new subject, (i.e., the influence of experiential and reflective journaling techniques on the perceived learning outcomes of MBA learners). An *explanatory* case study approach supported the observation of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive changes in the learners.

The authors proposed one primary and three secondary research questions as the catalyst for the investigation. The research questions support the responses to the *how* and *what* questions associated with experiential learning and personal reflection. The research questions were:

1. How did the learners accept and incorporate experiential learning and personal reflection into their classroom interaction and daily work practice?
2. What new knowledge was created by experiential learning and personal reflection?
3. What specific learning outcomes were proposed and achieved in the course in order to convey new learning?
4. What suggestions could be proposed for MBA instructors to be able to incorporate experiential learning techniques and personal reflective journals in order to increase learner engagement in the classroom?

3. Background to Experiential Learning and Personal Reflection

3.1 Experiential Learning in a Course

Kolb (1984) introduced a seminal work over 25 years ago, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, which framed renewed interest on experiential learning. The text focused on the process of learning, rather than the environment or the characteristics of adult learners. Kolb defined learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (1984, p. 38). The *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* (2011) defines *experience* in a number of ways, but the most relevant to this case are:

- direct observation of or participation in events as a basis of knowledge;
- the fact or state of having been affected by or gained knowledge through direct observation or participation;
- practical knowledge, skill, or practice derived from direct observation of or participation in events or in a particular activity;
- something personally encountered, undergone, or lived through; and
- the act or process of directly perceiving events or reality.

Kolb's model, (Smith, 2001, as viewed at <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-explrn.htm>), generated a new, emerging field of measurement, assessment, and evaluation for learning. Kolb labeled his model *experiential learning* because he wanted to relate its intellectual foundation to the work of Dewey, Piaget, and Whitehead. The new model emphasized the critical characteristic that experience plays in the learning process. He expressed his holistic integrating perspective in terms of "concrete experience" that encompasses a combination of experience, perception, cognition, and behavior (Kolb, 1984). The model served this case as a conceptual framework to describe the experiences and perspective of the learners.

Over a decade ago, Knowles et al. (1998, p. 139) suggested that the role of experience in adult learning was critical to professional development. He outlined four ways that the experiences of an adult influence learning outcomes:

- (a) create a wider range of individual differences,
- (b) provide a rich resource for learning,
- (c) create biases that can inhibit or shape learning, and
- (d) provide grounding for the self-identity of adults.

Others have voiced their opinions in the debate on experiential learning. Lindeman (1961) prophesized that "the resource of highest value in adult education is the learner's experience" (p. 6). Kolb, (1984) stated, "Knowledge is continuously derived from and tested out in the experiences of the learner" (p. 21). Chickering (1977, p. 86-87) suggested, "There is no question that issues raised by experiential learning go to the heart of the academic enterprise. Experiential learning leads us to question the assumptions and conventions underlying many of our practices." Kayes (2002) argued for "preserving experience-based approaches to management learning by revising the concept of experience to more closely account for the relationship between personal and social (i.e., tacit/explicit) knowledge" (p. 137). The observations from this case suggest that the learner experiences derived from the techniques associated with *CoachingOurselves* topics and reflective journals stimulated experiential learning in both the workplace and the classroom. Most notably, experiential learning reinvigorates the traditional classroom experiences that might be considered redeeming for MBA educational programs, which are often ridiculed and maligned for good reasons, (Armstrong, 2005; Chia, 2005; Dehler & Edmonds, 2006; Mintzberg, 2004).

3.2 Personal Reflection in a Course

Next, the authors focus on reflective learning within a course. Comprehending and acting upon the external world generates knowledge and meaning, which can also be generated by internal reflection upon the attributes of the experiences in the external world (Kolb, 1984). Jung (1990) proposed that the subjective internal world of concepts, ideas, and fantasy have equivalent status with the objective reality of the external world. Jung and others suggested that the active mode tends to dominate the reflective mode, at least in Western society. Kolb was convinced that the acting and reflecting could not be placed in a single dimension within his model. Reflection, according to relevant entries in the *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* (2011), may be defined as:

- something produced by reflecting: ...an effect produced by an influence,
- an often obscure or indirect criticism [careful consideration],
- a thought, idea, or opinion formed or a remark made as a result of meditation [mental concentration],
- consideration of some subject matter, idea, or purpose.

According to Kolb's (1984) learning model, information taken into the mind through concrete experience is reflected upon to *make sense* of the experience. During reflection, while the mind is thinking about old information, the mind is not distracted by new information. The purpose of reflection is making sense and finding meaning from current or recent experiences.

Learners make sense of their experience through numerous channels: discussions with friends and colleagues, collaboration with colleagues, or through communities of practice (Merriam, et al., 2007).

A number of scholars have reported significant value to learning outcomes, where learning journals (personal reflection journals) formed an integral part of their work or their learners' work (Hedberg, 2009; Moon, 1999; Weedon & Cowan, 2002). Cunliffe (2002) concluded:

Reflexive dialogical practice can enhance learning by helping us to connect tacit knowing and explicit knowledge and become more aware of how we create the imagined from the imaginary... This involves engaging in dialogue (spoken or written) with self/others/other to highlight the tacit assumptions and ideologies that subsist in our ways of talking, and exploring how our own actions, conversational practices, and ways of making sense (as managers, educators, and learners)... (p. 57).

4. Class Context

The course offered at the Gore School of Business of Westminster College was MBA 660EPP-01: *Corporate Coaching Conversations*. The course dates ran from May 9, 2011 – June 27, 2011 and comprised seven seminar format sessions in a traditional classroom environment. The instructor was Dr. Michael Sutton. The course originally had seven registered learners, but permission from the Dean was received to continue the class after Week 1 with only three enrolled learners in order to assess this kind of offering and its future potential value in the MBA curriculum.

The text used within the course was *Managing* (Mintzberg, 2009a) in pdf format at a cost of \$20 for each learner. The *CoachingOurselves* material is non-traditional learning modules designed to be directly applied in the workplace environment. The instructor consulted with staff at *CoachingOurselves* (<http://www.coachingourselves.com>) on suggested topics, resulting in the selection of: *Reflection; Igniting Momentum with Customer Insights; Ordinary People, Extraordinary Leadership; Lenses for Leadership Insights; Management Styles: Art, Craft, Science; Some Surprising Things About Collaboration; and Crafting Strategy*. A 25% educational discount on the price of the topics resulted in a contractual cost of \$200 per topic, (accommodating up to eight people in the course). Seven topics totaled \$1,400, which for eight learners would have worked out to \$25 per learner, per topic. *CoachingOurselves* is a Canadian company founded in 2007 by four partners: Phil LeNir, Henry Mintzberg, Sasha Sadilova, and Jonathan Gosling to support organizations with a unique approach to professional development.

The learning philosophy behind *CoachingOurselves* was founded upon the International Masters in Practicing Management (IMPM), a program created by Henry Mintzberg, Jonathan Gosling, and others. The IMPM is described in Mintzberg's book, *Managers not MBAs*. An underlying belief of this learning philosophy is that thoughtful personal reflection on natural experiences occurring in the workplace, (with the intrinsic support of new concepts, ideas, and knowledge), is a valuable tool for active management learning. The firm proposes that *CoachingOurselves* topics are a natural extension of the IMPM philosophy: 'managers learning through reflection on their own experiences in the workplace.'

The instructor of the course set out in this case to document observations of the learners throughout the classes because of Mintzberg's widespread reputation in the educational sector. Mintzberg's (2004, 2009a) iconoclastic approach to both MBA educational programs and to academic education associated with the field of management provided an interesting foundation to observe and report on the case.

5. Class Preparation

The course was delivered as an informal seminar. All participants were provided a caveat that due to the need to be more open in the engagement model and develop critical trust early in the class delivery, the course might differ radically from others the learners had experienced. With so few students enrolled, the instructor volunteered as a fourth participant throughout the course in order to increase the interaction and build a trusting environment. A classroom with a round table was the preferred setting, but not available, necessitating the selection of a room that permitted the tables to be set into a square, where all the participants faced each other. No other learner preparation was necessary.

6. Class Process/Delivery

6.1 Coaching Ourselves Process and Material

Coaching Ourselves (2010) propose that the process of using the material is a natural management development method anchored in the workplace. A management team meets every couple of weeks for 90 minutes duration. The team members discuss their own experiences and challenges in terms of major topics of management. CoachingOurselves does not require facilitators, trainers, or formal coaches. The team members must only commit to being engaged in supporting each other to learn from their own practical experience. The members must take accountability for the consequences pursued for change in their organization. CoachingOurselves suggests that the learning material does not require pre-work, and that the only technology required is a copy of the topic and a pen. Laptops and cell phones are discouraged because of the distraction they generate. CoachingOurselves suggests that the critical success factors are common sense, good judgment, and the will to make things happen in the workplace.

The topics repository at <http://www.CoachingOurselves.com> is categorized around the five “Managerial Mindsets” that were described by Gosling and Mintzberg (2003) in the article *The Five Minds of a Manager: Action Mindset, Analytic Mindset, Collaborative Mindset, Reflective Mindset, and Worldly Mindset*. The mindsets encompass the nature of a manager’s work. Gosling and Mintzberg posit that effective managers are always oscillating between grounded action and abstract reflection. Managers are encouraged to discover methods to act, based upon analysis, collaboration, reflection, and a rational perspective of reality—where abstract theories meet practice. Thus, Gosling and Mintzberg propose their perspective on an approach to management that they feel is balanced.

6.2 Classroom Delivery

The classes encompassed seven weeks of seminar-like experiences within a classroom; discussion of the application of the learning achieved through assigned textbook readings; and execution of the *CoachingOurselves* topics. Each week the participants were asked to return to the subsequent session with comments on any perceived results from the learning associated with the weekly topic. After Week 1, participants were paired and assigned a chapter from *Managing* to present each week. Three separate journal entries were due by Weeks 3, 5, and 7. Table 1 below provides the details of the activities of each week:

Table 1: Generic Weekly Class Activities

Week	Textbook Chapter	Presentation	Discussion	Review	Topic	Reflection Journal Due
1		Mintzberg's background CoachingOurselves (CO) approach	Introduction of participants		ABC Reflection Model CO Reflection topic	
2	1	Managing Ahead	X	X	CO Igniting Momentum with Customer Insights topic	
3	2	The Dynamics of Managing	X	X	CO Ordinary People, Extraordinary Leadership topic	X
4	3	A Model of Managing	X	X	CO Lenses for Leadership Insights topic	
5	4	The Untold Varieties of Managing	X	X	CO Management Styles: Art, Craft, Science topic	X
6	5	The Inescapable Conundrums of Managing	X	X	CO Some Surprising Things About Collaboration topic	
7	6	Managing Effectively	X	X	CO Crafting Strategy topic	X

Additionally, in Week 1 the instructor introduced the ABC Reflection Model journal format (Welch, 1999) for the learners to document experiences throughout the course. ABC stands for Affect, Behavior, and Cognition. The model has proven itself especially effective to the instructor for adult learners who need to integrate knowledge and skills with their feelings about learning and subsequent behavior. The model elements are presented below in alphabetical order, solely to help the learner remember them:

- **Affect**—the way the learning has influenced how a learner feels about himself or herself, or the topic. The important part of this trait is for the learner to recognize how he/she actually feels because of learning new material or demonstrating a new skill.
- **Behavior**—the learner actually acts upon in the learning (in a way that others could "see"). Many learning moments or learning experiences require a learner to do something besides write a paper, carry out group discussion, or talk to a professor. Learning experiences that require a learner to use a new process for decision-making or practice a different mode of communication provides the learner with more than information.
- **Cognition**—what the learner now knows that helps him/her to understand the learning that took place. *Cognition* includes not only the information itself, but also the cognitive processes involved. Decision-making and critical thinking are central parts of cognition. *Cognition* encompasses continually examining the processes the learner uses to find materials, explore ideas, support arguments, and develop conclusions.

7. Observations and Comments

7.1 Learner Comments and Observations

The authors observed a number of situations that arose during each week's activities. In Week 1, the learners were enthused, but unsure if the course would continue and lobbied to gain permission from the Dean to keep the course from being cancelled. In Week 2, learners commented upon the increased power they experienced by finding ways to reflect upon their work-related situations. Learners did not expend considerable effort on the week's topic, because each learner lacked significant direct experience with front-line customers.

During Week 3, a full-time faculty colleague from the Institute for Entrepreneurship attended the class to observe the *CoachingOurselves* technique, at the instructor's invitation. She participated as a fellow learner, similar to the instructor's participation. The learners positively commented upon the value of two faculty members participating as "fellow learners," revealing information about themselves and previous works situations stimulated by the discussion topics. The learners also reiterated their positive experiences of using the ABC Reflection Method as a means of creating learning journals. The learners appeared to embrace more intimately the invigorated discussion surrounding the topic, since each learner could directly relate to the topic material and the chapter from Mintzberg's text. Finally, very personal experiences from workplace situations were shared and the learners indicated that they felt the trust and integrity amongst the members was developing exceptionally well, (even with a faculty observer present).

In Week 4, another faculty colleague attended the class to observe the *CoachingOurselves* technique at the invitation of the instructor and participated in the same manner as outlined in Week 3. The learners reiterated that the group was continuing to develop cohesiveness and increased trust, mentioning again that personal, work-based experiences were shared without any hesitation concerning confidentiality. In Week 5, participants expended considerable effort on the *CoachingOurselves* topic, since it corresponded directly to material brought up in the textbook chapter. The learners were by this time very comfortable with the intimacy of the topic discussion, because it again provided critical insight about the workplace of each member. The learners also repeated the comment that their experiences were enriched by using the ABC Reflection Method to generate their journal.

In Week 6, learners were exceptionally engaged and animated with the week's topic, since it helped them to remember many challenges of collaboration from work situations. The learner discussion reflected considerable intimacy with the topic material and comfort with the group members. Finally, by Week 7 the learners reflected upon this topic within the context of a previous MBA strategy class with a different instructor, describing a fresh view of strategy differed significantly, based upon the new knowledge they acquired. The learners commented as a whole that they had never encountered a class of this level of depth and self-analysis.

Most importantly, the learners mentioned that they would be continuing with the ABC Reflection Method after the class, some even indicating that they had already created personal written journals to plan responses to situations before they occurred at work. In this case study, the authors have described the observed positive impact on the individual learners through the application of reflective journals. New knowledge acquired by the learners through learning journals has positively influenced the professional development of the learners.

7.2 Instructor Comments and Observations

Two of the learners indicated that before commencing this course they felt quite shy. These learners took up until Week 3 to begin to feel comfortable sharing their perspectives from the workplace. The addition of two faculty observers did not appear to detract from the trust that was genuinely developing. The visiting faculty members were willing to participate in the intimate conversations from their own personal workplace experiences and were well known in the business school for their integrity and trustworthiness. Baker, Jensen, and Kolb (2005) proposed conversational learning as an outcome of Experiential Learning Theory, based upon Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle. They defined conversational learning as "a process whereby learners construct new meaning and transform their collective experiences into knowledge through their conversations (Baker, Jensen, and Kolb, 2005, p. 412). Although the course encompassed a very small sample of learners, the personal reflection journals, (as well as classroom experiences), appeared to affirm that conversational learning took place in this course setting.

7.3 Trust, Integrity, and Intimacy.

Although the richness of observations and discussion of each individual learner's own workplace added depth and dimensions to the discussion, the critical success factor for the course was the attitude, openness, and trustworthiness of each learner. The learners exclaimed that if any member had detected the lack of trustworthiness, integrity, or the potential misuse of the material discussed, then the discussion would have immediately ceased. Building trust and integrity by the 2nd and 3rd sessions was an important prerequisite for eventual success throughout the course.

7.4 ABC Personal Reflection Journals

The journals produced rich narratives with emotive, behavioral, and intellectual depth in the learners' self-analysis. Each learner quickly adapted to the writing style required for the journal entries and generated raw, personal, and insightful material. The journals included reflection upon specific topics, the value of some of the exercises within the topics, material from the text and outside sources, personal experiences in the workplace, and many of the stories conveyed within each topic. The actual content of the ABC Personal Reflection journals will be more closely scrutinized and reported in a subsequent journal article. The learners provided reflective perspectives that were unique and unprecedented when compared to some of the instructor's previous traditional classes, where reflective journals have also been used. The learning journals were not initially shared between the learners, and therefore were constructed as private journal entries originally readable only by the instructor.

8. Findings

The case study began with four research questions:

8.1 Question # 1

"How did the learners accept and incorporate experiential learning and personal reflection into their classroom interaction and daily work practice?"

The learners had never experienced a course such as *Corporate Coaching Conversations* in terms of the course content, class participation, or class engagement. Even with the introduction of outside faculty observers, all participants developed openness towards the members by Week 3. All learners commented on the value of a safe environment that permitted the expression of their fears, joys, anxieties, and insights.

In terms of the three submitted learning journal entries, the learners easily adopted this method for reflective expression from the first week. In fact, launching the course with the *CoachingOurselves Reflection* topic appeared to be a critical success factor for the learners' engagement. Throughout the seven weeks of the course, the learners would often refer to their journals during class and topic discussion, and were willing to share some very personal elements. From a professional development perspective, the instructor saw significant growth in personal insight and in the emotions, behavior, and intellectual appreciation of the course material.

The learners expressed that the course material had a significant, direct, pragmatic effect upon each learner's "practice" in the workplace. Written personal journals were adopted by most learners at the conclusion of the course.

8.2 Question # 2

"What new knowledge was created by experiential learning and personal reflection?"

In the *Concluding Thoughts* section of Baker, Jensen, and Kolb (2005, p. 425), we are left with the following summary:

Understanding is thus an ongoing inquiry of mutual participation among diverse perspectives. In a process of trying to be open to listening to other points of view and the reconsideration of one's own point of view, the integrity of the process of conversational learning emerges. The person cannot remain detached and apart from others or the context. Understanding is gained through ongoing conversations that ask each person to remain open to having his or her own pre-judgments (prejudices) challenged—a process distinctly different from an assumption of detachment.

The learners in the course made sense of their personal and professional experiences through engagement in the classroom, the creative writing element, and active vocal dialogue element of the class. None of the learners demonstrated detachment from the group. Each learner appeared to progress in expressing himself or herself and in overcoming any trust, confidentiality, and honesty issues that could have held back new knowledge creation. Each learner alluded to distinctive new knowledge about his or her workplace, colleagues, themselves, and how new learning and knowledge creation took place in the classroom.

8.3 Question # 3

"What specific learning outcomes were proposed and achieved in the course under study in order to convey new learning?"

According to the syllabus (Sutton, 2011), the goal of this course was to:

...offer managers a process for continuous learning, development and improvement, the opportunity to bond and 'gel' teams, enhance collaboration, and develop new ideas to improve the organization and enhance the services delivered to the community (originally retrieved on March 25, 2011 from <http://www.CoachingOurselves.com>, but no longer available for citation).

Based upon the opinions expressed in the learning journals, this goal was achieved. The instructor generated an experiential learning environment with specific learning outcomes, (see Table 2), that matched closely Mintzberg's concept of *communityship* (Mintzberg, 2009b, 141), "[groupings of individual's with a] sense of belonging to and caring for something larger than themselves."

Table 2: Course Learning Outcomes

#	<i>Learning Outcomes</i>
1	Identify, define, and intelligently discuss the basic, practical, and theoretical principles of management and organizational change.
2	Clarify and apply critical and analytical thinking skills.
3	Demonstrate new, (and improve existing), personal communication competencies in: group discussion, written communication, and oral presentations.
4	Exhibit increased skills to improve your effectiveness at collaboration and teamwork

The learners also highlighted significant positive outcomes in their journals for virtually every specific learning outcome. In fact, the instructor suggests, (based upon the courses initial success), that additional learning outcomes described in Table 3 may be useful for any new offering of this course.

Table 3: Proposed Additional Course Learning Outcomes

#	Additional proposed Learning Outcomes
1	Develop expertise in the expression of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive characteristics associated with a personal reflection journal.
2	Demonstrate increased self-confidence, self-awareness, and self-regard as emotional intelligence traits that can be exercised in the workplace.
3	Discern the similarities and differences of leadership, management, followership, and communityship within the classroom and workplace.
4	Build relationships with class colleagues based upon renewed trust, honesty, and integrity.

8.4 Question # 4

“What suggestions could be proposed for MBA instructors to be able to incorporate experiential learning techniques and personal reflective journals in order to increase learner engagement in the classroom?”

The authors believe that with the exception of one topic, the sequence of the *CoachingOurselves* topics was appropriate and useful, especially kicking off the course in the Week 1 class with the *Reflections* topic. The authors suggest that *Igniting Momentum with Customer Insight* should be replaced. Candidate *CoachingOurselves* topics that might work better within the context of the *Managing* text might include, (strictly in alphabetical order): *Dealing with the Conundrums of Managing*, *Lessons from Machiavelli and Lao Tzu*, *Managing to Lead*, *Some Surprising Things About Collaboration*, or *Visionary Management – The Art of Seeing First*. Although the instructor and learners have no direct experience with these particular *CoachingOurselves* topics, their summaries would suggest relevance to many of the subjects brought up for discussion in the classroom and within the learning journals.

9. Conclusion

Although apparently successful within this experimental case, the seminar approach and content from *CoachingOurselves* might contain above average risks if delivered to learners again in this format. Larger enrollment might also make the delivery unfeasible, because of the volume of separate groups that would need to be created and managed. In the authors' opinions, the potential risk is high for all the learners if any participant is not intimately engaged and trustworthy, especially if competitors or learners with a lack of ethics are members of the class. The lack of a critical mass of learners (6-7) also diminished the learner experience and placed the faculty member at some risk revealing work related situations that corresponded to topic exercises and discussions. The small number of enrolled learners could have resulted in a very stilted and uneven discussion.

The Bill and Vieve Gore School of Business and the Division of New Learning at Westminster College are delivering low-residency programs, (the competency and project-based Bachelor of Business Administration degree completion program and the competency and project-based MBA program). The *CoachingOurselves* material may fit more closely the profiles of the learners in these programs. The instructor would also be interested in trying to apply a prerequisite such as an ethics self-assessment, like Rest's *Defining Issues Test* version 2 (DIT-2), or an emotional intelligence self-assessment, like the *Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i)*, in an attempt to screen learners for the course.

Overall, the course appeared to be a success for the instructor and three learners who participated. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The authors were very encouraged by the changes in attitudes, behavior, cognition, emotions, and the creation of new knowledge. Feedback from the two faculty observers suggested elements from different topics might be useful in some of those faculty member's own classes. A subsequent article will report more on the details of the learners' reflective journals. Finally, the authors concur with Mintzberg (2004, p. 253) when he proposed, “Thoughtful reflection on experience, in the light of conceptual ideas is the key to managerial learning.”

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