

Running Head: THE FIELD OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Project Management

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Assignment 5

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Abstract

Project management can apply to many different fields. This paper will articulate the area of business education and how project management relates. It will also define project management and explain how it relates to performance technology, and instructional design in a technology environment. This paper will also explain the two major areas of project management certifications and how to be successful as a project manager. In addition the common mistakes that attribute to project failure will also be discussed. It will be concluded with an instructional product that focuses upon a specific collaborative method and how it relates to project management.

Area of Expertise

“Business education is a rigorous discipline that challenges learners to develop their creative thinking skills and become independent learners” (.U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p.2). Business education falls under Career and Technology Education (CATE) in which students may choose from several different classes depending on individual school districts. Some of the classes that are offered include business communication, keyboarding, business computer information systems (BCIS) I and II, introduction to business, record keeping, business law, banking and finance, and business information and multimedia (BIMM). High school business education teachers helps students learn real world skills through connecting learning in the classroom with skills needed in the workplace, daily life, and college with hands-on innovative learning experiences for students. According to Wikipedia, business education “is the enterprise of education directed at the study and research of the field of business and is often or almost always oriented toward preparing students for the practice of an occupation in business or business-related fields” (Business education, 2007). The standards set by Texas State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) states that business education teachers must understand and apply the following:

- Standard I- knowledge of accounting, personal finance, record keeping, economics, banking, and financial systems.
- Standard II- principles related to business management, operations, and ownership; business law and ethics; international business; and e-commerce.

- Standard III- principles and methods related to the operation of a broad range of business computer information systems.
- Standard IV- principles and methods related to work-based learning, career development, and the leadership opportunities available through related student organization activities.
- Standard V- knowledge of business communications and interpersonal, employment, and organizational skills in business environments.
- Standard VI- how to work with others in the school and community and with industry representatives to support the business education program.

As a high school business education teacher my area of expertise under the CATE umbrella is BCIS I and II which will satisfy a student's technology credit needed to graduate from high school. BCIS students implement personal and interpersonal skills to strengthen individual performance in the workplace and in society and to make a successful transition to the workforce and /or postsecondary education. Students apply technical skills to address business applications of emerging technologies. I work really hard to ensure that I tie each unit in BCIS to real world business situations. Majority of my students are kinesthetic learners that enjoy applying what they have learned to projects. In order, for business education to be an integral and equal partner within a school's educational community, business education teachers must proactively respond to industry needs and connect with changing student learning styles (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Project Management

Business leaders and experts have proclaimed that “Project management is the wave of the future” (Morris, 1994, p.1). “Project management is the discipline of organizing and managing resources (e.g. people) in such a way that the project is completed within defined scope, quality, time and cost constraints” (Project management, 2007). The project manager’s is responsible for to getting a project back on track by expediting certain activities; figures out ways to solve technical problems; serves as peacemaker when tensions rise; and makes appropriate trade-offs among time, cost, and scope of the project (Gray, 2001). Project managers are also responsible for integrating assigned resources to complete the project according to plan while making necessary adjustments along the way when necessary.

The project management process is the management process of planning and controlling the performance or execution of a project (Project management, 2007). Project management processes are organized into five process groups which either interacts with the other process groups within a system development phase or across phases. These process groups are known as initiating, planning, executing, controlling, and closing (American Academy of Project Management, 2007). Ten tips for managing a project include:

1. Understanding the project objectives and ensure they address the needs of the business
2. Creating and maintaining a set of procedures and guidelines that support project management efforts
3. Planning for the unexpected

4. Deciding how problems which cannot be resolved promptly will be handled before beginning the project.
5. Establishing effective tools for monitoring project performance
6. Managing the project scope
7. Understanding project risks and take appropriate action when necessary
8. Keeping your team happy and focused
9. Gaining senior management support
10. Communicating project successes

(Power, 2001). As a business education teacher on my campus, I see myself as a project manager in the classroom with my students as well as on the campus as the business and technology specialist. In the classroom, I am responsible for ensuring that my students can apply the Microsoft Suite (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, & Access) and emerging technologies in the workforce and/or in college. I also manage the business department resources and budget and train teachers on integrating technology in the classroom. Reflecting back on the definition of project management, I organize and manage resources such as teachers and students and ensure they receive knowledge and resources to be successful in the classroom. With that in mind, my definition of project management is using several resources and technology tools to accomplish a clear goal within the project boundaries.

Certifications

Project management is not limited to the private sector. Project management is also a vehicle in solving social problems and prominent in the classroom (Gray, 2001). Project management is no longer a special-need management because it is rapidly becoming a standard way of doing business. The future promises an increase in the importance and the role of projects in contributing to the strategic direction of organizations. (No Author, 2004)

Successful project management provides tremendous return on investment. Project Management Professional (PMP) certification and the Comp TIA Project+ certification are certifications that can be obtained to ensure qualified project managers are hired.

In the world of project management, the PMP certification from the Project Management Institute is respected and held in high regard (Dulaney, 2003). Project Management Professional (PMP) is a certification that is globally recognized and promotes professional development and maintains an ISO 9001 certification in Quality Management Systems. (No Author, 2004). PMP is one of the most value credentials in project management. It assures employers that you are committed to project management and earning and maintaining this credential demonstrates a solid foundation of experience in effectively managing projects. (Project Management Certifications, 2007) Candidates for the PMP credential perform their duties under general supervision and are responsible for all aspects of the project for the life of the project, lead and direct cross-functional teams to deliver projects within the constraints of schedule, budget and

resources, and demonstrate sufficient knowledge and experience to appropriately apply a methodology to projects that have reasonably well-defined project requirements and deliverables. (No Author, 2004) Candidates working to achieve the PMP certification can attend the Project Management Institute that is ranked one of the best. When studying for the exam, “the PMBOK Guide is considered one of the most essential tools in the profession and is the de facto global standard for the industry” (A guide, 2007).

In addition, the Comp TIA Project+ Certification is a global certificate that validates the knowledge required to effectively manage information technology-related projects throughout the entire project life cycle (CompTIA Project+, 2007) Based on best practices of project management the exam for the Comp TIA Project+ Certification incorporates project management concepts including important soft skills such as conflict resolution, negotiation, communication, team building/leadership and setting and mapping expectations (Dulaney, 2003) . A CompTIA Project+ certification can be an important credential for individuals leading projects, as it demonstrates knowledge of critical project management and business concepts. When an individual has an interest in project management, they must receive a certification in order to advance and be more knowledgeable about project management.

Support and Project Management

As I reflect on my first year of teaching, I remember having a great mentor who gave me great advice and resources to be successful both in and out the classroom. When new to the field of project management, individuals need a

foundation to be successful. In any field in which an individual takes a new journey, there is always room for professional growth and development even when an individual has a certification. To be successful in the field of project management, project managers must first build a cooperative network among a diverse set of allies (Gray, 2001). Effective project managers are skilled at acquiring and exercising a wide range of influence and use their influence and a highly interactive management style to monitor project performance and initiate appropriate changes in project plans and direction. According to Greer (2006), there are fourteen key principles to be successful as project managers. They include:

1. Focusing on the three dimensions of project success: time, budget, & quality
2. Planning is detailed and systematic and is ongoing.
3. Keeping team members focused on project
4. Implementing a successful project that uses a time-tested, proven project life cycle.
5. All project deliverables and all project activities must be visualized and communicated in vivid detail.
6. Deliverables must evolve gradually, in successive approximations.
7. Projects require clear approvals and sign-off by sponsors.
8. Project success is correlated with thorough analyses of the need for project deliverables.
9. Project managers must fight for time to do things right.
10. Project manager responsibility must be matched by equivalent authority.
11. Project sponsors and stakeholders must be active participants, not passive customers.

12. Keep team focused
13. Project managers should acquire the best people
14. Top management must actively set priorities.

Project Mission

As a educator, you are often told to begin with the end in mind which means, prepare assessments up front and teach to prepare students to successfully master assessments. Educators continuously receive professional development to enhance knowledge in a specific field. In project management, the goal is to successfully complete a project. A projects mission should be reflected in the first stage of the project. The mission of the project “should be a clear and succinct representation of the enterprise's purpose for existence. It should incorporate socially meaningful and measurable criteria addressing concepts such as the moral/ethical position of the enterprise, public image, the target market, products/services, the geographic domain and expectations of growth and profitability” (Mission Statement, 2007). However, the end result can be success or failure.

“Project management is all about people” (Bernard, 2007). However, project managers can learn from historical data, experiences of peer companies, and project management organizations. Taking a proactive approach to preventing project failure is a necessary first step to overcoming repeated failure. Sufficient research and planning as well as patience in establishing necessary project processes are essential to developing a solid project management foundation. Project managers must ensure that the initial project plan is strong enough to sustain the project throughout its life cycle. A project plan should be

assessed on the project's alignment with business strategies, budget, the cost/benefit analysis, relevance, resource requirements, and scope to help determine its value contribution to the enterprise. According to Bernard (2007) the top ten reasons projects fail include: poorly defined project requirements, lack of project planning, poorly developed budget forecast, lack of stakeholder involvement, lack of executive support, frequent changes to project scope, lack of change management process, failure to establish appropriate client/user expectations, unrealistic deadlines and insufficient resources. To successfully complete a project, all the factors of project management must be considered.

Project Life Cycle

The project management (PM) process covers all phases within the life cycle of any project. Project Management is accomplished through the use of the processes such as initiating, planning, executing, controlling, and closing. "It is important to note that many of the processes within project management are iterative in nature. This is in part due to the existence of and the necessity for progressive elaboration in a project throughout the project life cycle" (Netway, 2007).

The first phase of the project life cycle is the initiation phase. This phase is the beginning of the project in which the objectives and requirements should be well defined for a successful completion. The second phase of the project life cycle is the planning phase. In this phase, the project scope is identified with specific requirements. During this phase, the project manager carries out the project management processes in areas such as resource management and

risk management. In the third phase, execution phase, the project manager ensures that the assigned activities are being carried out on schedule by the responsible resources. The next phase is the control phase which must be monitored. The main events that occur in this phase include scope change control, risk monitoring and control, cost control and performance reporting. The final phase is the closing phase in which quality management is performed. This is to ensure that the project has been executed with high quality. The implemented system will undergo various levels of testing to assess if the goal could be accomplished.

Performance and Project Management

Business education teachers must assess the performance of their students. Project managers are constantly assessing the performance of their teams throughout the project phases. Performance is a “quantified result or the accomplishment, execution of something ordered or undertaken, including accomplishment of work” (Reiser, & Dempsey, 2007). Students in BCIS integrate the use of several technology tools to complete real world projects which are used as a form of assessment. According to Driscoll 2005, “a new skill must be performed dependably before most teachers will agree that it has been well learned. Therefore after learners have had opportunities to demonstrate and refine their knowledge, it may be formally assessed” (p.377).

Students who complete BCIS are expected to perform well in the workforce, military, and/or college where they will be able to apply the skills

learned in the classroom. Throughout the learning process teachers need to provide students with feedback to provide them with information about performance and this will give the learner the opportunity to modify performance and what is stored in memory to continuously improve academics. (Learning Theories Knowledgebase, 2007) As project managers, I think of the execution phase in which feedback is the most crucial. In this phase project managers ensures that the assigned activities are being carried out. In the classroom, teachers must ensure that a variety of instructional methods with technology integration are used to ensure that every student is being engage and meaningful learning is taking place. With that in mind, project managers and teachers where the same hat in that they both manage individuals in such a way that the goal is met within a defined set of boundaires.

Project Management and ID Process

Instructional design can enhance project management as well as performance technology. Performance technology has a major impact on instructional design. Reiser and Dempsey (2007), states "instructional design (ID) is a systematic process that is employed to develop education and training programs in a consistent and reliable fashion" (p.11). Instructional design is a learner-centered approach to instruction so that learning is effective and meaningful. Instructional designers must design instruction that is engaging to promote successful learner performance. In the recent years, instructional design practices have broadened so that many concepts associated with the performance technology movement are now regularly employed by those

individuals who call themselves instructional designers (Reiser & Dempsey, 2007).

Instructional designers' use several collaborative methods to promote performance improvement. Problem based learning is one collaborative method used in performance technology and instructional design. "Problem-based learning (PBL) is a pedagogical strategy of "active learning" often used in higher education, but it can be adapted for use in K-12 education" (Problem-based learning, 2007). The defining characteristics of PBL are learning is driven by challenging and open-ended problems, students working in small collaborative groups, and teachers take on the role as "facilitators" of learning. The idea behind Problem-Based Learning (PBL) as a teaching method is to engage students actively in meaningful learning (Harper-Marinick & Levine, 2007). A typical sequence looks like the following:

- First, present the students with an authentic problem
- Then have the students (individually or in teams) search for relevant information and methods for solving the problem
- Finally, have the students or teams develop, assess, and present a solution

In contrast, another collaborative method used in performance technology and instructional design is role playing. Role playing involves students interacting with each other and is useful to students because it emphasizes the "real-world" applications. It will allow students to hypothetically learn in the situation and then transfer the skills to real life situations. "Role-playing exercises can be hard work

for the instructor, both in preparation and in execution, but the work tends to pay off in terms of student motivation and accomplishment” (Teed, 2007), For students to benefit from role playing, the teacher must following the steps below.

- Define Objectives
- Choose context and Roles
- Introduce the Exercise
- Student Preparation and Research
- The Role Play
- Conclude Discussion
- Assessment

As a business education teacher I implement role playing in my classroom with interviewing skills and professional dress. Students’ role play what a bad interview looks like verses what a good interview looks like. Students really learn from this role playing activity and it has been very effective in helping students’ successful secure jobs.

Instructional Product & Project Management

In closing, to keep learners engage in a lesson while teaching a new concept, I would create a student video as an instructional product. The collaborative method I would use is role playing. The video would consist of students’ role playing using good techniques in interviewing and using bad techniques in interviewing. The video would be used as an additional method to teach students good interviewing skills. I would choose this method because the students are participating in their own learning and they are learning from their

peers as well. Through this instructional method students would use performance technology by focusing on the outcome of improving their individual interviewing skills. As an educator, I could tie project life cycle to my classroom.

The first phase of the project life cycle is the initiation phase. This phase is the beginning of the project in which the objectives should be well defined. As an educator, your objectives should always be student friendly. The second phase of the project life cycle is the planning phase. In this phase, the project scope is identified with specific requirements. In my classroom, this is where the teacher would have a well organized lesson plan in which students would benefit from an enriched guided practice. In the third phase, execution phase, the project manager ensures that the assigned activities are being carried out on schedule by the responsible resources. In the classroom, students would be completing independent practice in which the teacher would walk around and provide positive feedback. The next phase is the control phase which must be monitored. The main events that occur in this phase include scope change control, risk monitoring and control, cost control and performance reporting. In a classroom, the student may be working on a major project or test related to the guided and independent practice. The final phase is the closing phase in which quality management is performed. During the final stage in the classroom, the teacher grades the project or test to assess if the students have mastered the objectives or not.

Conclusion

As project management, performance technology and instructional design continue to advance, there will be more improved and innovative techniques that will allow the field of instructional technology to flourish. As educators and trainers we must remain abreast with the current and changing trends and issues performance technology and instructional design. I look forward to learning more about performance technology, instructional design and project management as well as applying what I have learned to my future career in training and staff development.

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