The workshop proposed in this document was delivered at the Teaching and Learning Conference at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting (TLC@AOM) on 11 August 2013 in Orlando (FL) USA.

Title of Submission: **ENABLING AND ASSESSING CLASS PARTICIPATION**

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Co-Presenters: **George A. HRIVNAK** (ghrivnak@bond.edu.au);

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**Peter MORGAN** (Peter.Morgan@nottingham.edu.cn).

Submission Type: Topical (60 M)

Submission Theme: (6) Assessing learning and all its associated challenges

Proposed Audience: Doctoral Students; New faculty; Adjunct faculty; Mid / Senior faculty;

Room Set-Up: Small groups around tables in one larger room

Audio/Visual Needs: Projector
COMMITTED CO-LEARNERS

**Dirk** has assessed in-class participation in his most recent teaching and has used qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating NUBS China’s introduction of this assessment method, and in doing so is supported by UK HEA Teaching Development Grant GENTDG155. He is an AMLE EB member and seeks to complete his UK Post Graduate Certificate of Higher Education (PGCHE) soon.

**George** has researched and experimented with a variety of approaches to assessing participation in the United States and Australia at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level and has a master’s degree in adult education and instructional design. He currently teaches at a small, private university in Australia that is highly regarded for its teaching quality where his own teaching evaluations are routinely highly rated. Most recently, he was awarded the Faculty of Business’ Teacher of the Year Award for 2012.

**Thomas** has taught modules related to the teaching and learning of business management and has researched in this field, in addition to his key academic discipline in entrepreneurship. He has a general interest in business and management education with also a specific focus on entrepreneurship education. Recently he has been involved in teaching modules where class participation is assessed and has joined a team for researching in this area.

**Peter** has been involved in HE innovation for some years, initially as an MED student and then recently as member of the Programmes Committee of the UK’s Association of Business Schools, as Learning and Teaching Co-ordinator at the University of Bradford School of Management, UK and currently as Visiting Associate Professor in Organisational Behaviour at NUBS, Ningbo, China. He has been nominated for awards nationally, has received the University of Bradford’s Excellence in Teaching Award and has had extensive experience of interactive teaching and the training of faculty in India, Singapore, China and the UK.

BACKGROUND

Management education research’s focus has shifted from teaching to learning (Bok, 1988). Accordingly, students are moved into the center of educational activity and students’ active participation has become a desirable process aim in this context. This is based on the assumption that participation in discussions facilitates student learning (Elmore, 1991). In class discussions also allow students to have greater control over their learning experience (Wilson, Pollock, &
Hamann, 2007), and multiple positive effects have been identified as consequences: Students acquire more content (Weaver & Qi 2005) and usually perform better in traditional assessments (Bonwell & Eisen, 1991). Less quantifiable effects include increased knowledge sharing among students, better retention of learned information (Ewens, 2000), and development of independent learning skills (Sivan, Leung, Woon, & Kember, 2000). Davis (1993: 63) summarizes the practical relevance of class discussions as gaining “practice in thinking through problems and organizing concepts, formulating arguments and counter arguments, testing (…) ideas in a public setting, evaluating the evidence for their own and others’ positions”. Acquiring such soft skills is particularly relevant for business students who in their future role as managers need to “think through problems, organize concepts, analyze information, formulate arguments, synthesize and evaluate evidence, and respond to diverse points of view” (Dallimore, Hertenstein, & Platt, 2010: 615).

SESSION AIMS AND CONTENTS

In this TLC@AOM session, we want to invite participants to explore five topic areas with us:

A. Teacher expectations from students regarding class participation.
B. Fostering and managing student participation (Non-participants; Over-participants).
C. Methods and challenges for assessing class participation (Large to very large classes; Online).
D. Pros and cons of formal assessment of participation.
E. Practical challenges in the classroom experience.

For pursuing these aims, we will split the participants in four groups and each of the groups will be facilitated by one committed co-learner. Each committed co-learner comes with two questions to which he is seeking further insight. In the session, participants are of course free to develop and pursue further questions. Using two questions should allow many participants to find a group where they feel comfortable to contribute more to one topic and learn more on the other topic.

Group Questions

Dirk: How can non-participants be addressed and supported in a way that contributes most to the learning of all students in class? (Topic area B)

Does assessing class participation actually improve student learning, and how can we substantiate our answer? (Topic area D)
George: How can over-participants be addressed and supported in a way that contributes most to the learning of all students in class? (Topic area B)

How can Class Participation be enabled and assessed online learning environments? (Topic area C)

Thomas: How can class participation be properly and fairly assessed in larger classes (with more than 40 participants)? (Topic area C)

Compared with other student-centered learning and assessment methods, under what circumstances does assessing class participation fit most? (Topic area D)

Peter: How do you actually transform a spoken contribution into a grade? (Topic area A)

What are practical difficulties in the classroom when implementing participatory teaching formats? (Topic area E)

Group Inputs (Examples)

For stimulating the discussion, each of the four committed co-learners will illustrate his questions with a short input from own experiences and research to the group. For example:

- In support of Thomas’ first question: When assessment of class participation was introduced at Nottingham Business School China (NUBS China), qualitative interviews with 20 students after the first semester showed that opportunities to participate in class are important for students’ fairness perceptions and their self-efficacy of learning. However, due to resource restrictions, students were often assessed in classes with 70 students and thus perceived opportunities to participate as being limited and assessment as unfair. How could we as teacher improve this situation without additional human resources?

- In support of Peter’s first question: When introducing assessment of class participation, we found that participation grades correlate only by 0.18 with marks for traditional forms (exam or coursework). Is this expected or surprising? In other words: What do we evaluate when we assess class participation? How do we balance quantity and quality?

Intended Take-Aways

Participants should receive impulses for introducing and improving interactive elements in their teaching and take home new ideas how assessment can help or not. The workshop provides space for reflection and learning from participants who will co-create the take-aways. One concrete
take-away is a network of co-learners who are interested in improving learning by making classroom environments more participatory, and hopefully concrete next steps for teaching and perhaps even research on class participation.

**SESSION FLOW**

1. Introduction to Workshop and overview over topics 5 min
2. Discussion Groups 30 min
   2.1. Group Dirk – Non-participants and Limits
   2.2. Group George – Over-participants and Online environments
   2.3. Group Thomas – Large classes and Other assessments methods
   2.4. Group Peter – Grading and Practical difficulties
3. Summary from Discussion Groups 15 min
4. Workshop Summary & Next Steps 10 min

**TARGET AUDIENCES**

Engaging students in class participation is not a division specific aim. We thus believe that the workshop may be of interest to teaching faculty from any division. Although some may argue that this workshop is not relevant for more quantitatively oriented subjects, NUBS China introduces the assessment of class participation in a wide area of subjects such as Accounting, Marketing, OB, International Business, HRM, Economics, and Strategy. We believe that this cross-divisional perspective can contribute to the value that the workshop creates for the participants.
REFERENCES


