

# Teaching Management in a Recreation Curriculum: Application of Reality-Based Learning

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## Abstract

*Teaching recreation management to a classroom of students with little or no management experience creates a challenge for instructors of these courses. Reality-based learning is one way to more fully engage students in the classroom environment as well as encourage students to take more responsibility for their learning. The purpose of this study was to introduce a reality-based learning method designed to teach human resource management to recreation students as well as assess its effectiveness upon students' learning. The reality-based learning method integrated technology and a popular television show in an attempt to build on current levels of student competency, encourage students to be more responsible for their learning, draw upon knowledge and skills beyond the classroom, and transfer learning to real-life situations outside of the classroom. Findings indicated that students perceived their learning to be higher and application of their learning to be meaningful to their future roles as managers.*

*Keywords:* human resource management, reality-based learning, active learning, teaching methods, recreation curriculum

You have been assigned to teach an upper-level human resource management course to junior and senior recreation students. The course is a requirement for all recreation majors, and provides students with principles and practices of human resource management in recreation and leisure service (RLS) organizations, emphasizing the skills necessary to manage full-time, part-time, seasonal employees, and volunteers. Up until now, the course had been delivered through a combination of lectures, discussions, case studies, video presentations, and application exercises related to fundamental human resource concepts and laws, job design process, recruitment, interviewing, hiring, training, evaluation, discipline and termination. The feedback had been encouraging with students stating that they finally had taken a course that would help them in the future. Additionally, students stated the course had provided them with valuable practical information for dealing with employees. Although the

overall feedback was positive, students' comments on their course evaluations did not match their in-class actions. During class time, the students just sat and starred, and were generally non-responsive to lecture questions designed to stimulate discussion. Because the majority of the students taking this course had little or no experience in a supervisory role dealing with employees, the information covered appeared foreign, thereby making it difficult for them to formulate a connection between the class discussions and their futures as RLS professionals. Information about human resource management laws, job analysis processes, and employee benefits was quite often interpreted as boring and abstract when in fact the information is crucial to students' success as future managers.

As a professor, if you are thinking "what a nightmare!" you are not alone. The concept of management is so broad that it is often hard for students with little or no work experience to grasp, creating a teaching challenge. Teaching such students elevates the challenge of classroom instruction to a new pedagogical level. Mintzberg (2004) supported this difficulty by stating, "trying to teach management to someone who has never managed is like trying to teach psychology to someone who has never met another human being" (p. 9). In other words, teaching management to undergraduate students who will likely leave college and step directly into entry-level management positions in RLS organizations is difficult. Complicating things further is the fact that there are many different areas of management that fall under the responsibility of a recreation manager. Students will be faced with management of financial, risk, human resource, program, marketing and promotion issues in their role as a recreation manager. Because managing recreation organizations is a complex phenomenon, comprehending what it takes to be successful in this role most often can only be gained in the context of reality.

The challenge for those who teach recreation management courses is to develop creative and innovative methods of delivering the course information while maintaining rigor and offering students opportunities to not only increase knowledge and take responsibility for their learning, but to also apply and transfer what they have learned outside of the classroom. More specifically the research question guiding this study was to develop an online active learning tool designed to facilitate increased engagement opportunities for students in comprehending management course content.

The concept of reality-based learning, developed by Smith and Van Doren (2004), enables students to seize these opportunities. Reality-based learning is an active learning method combining the principles of knowledge acquisition and learning by doing with the concept of transferability. It is the transferability of knowledge, skills and abilities from the classroom to real-world settings that distinguishes the reality-based learning method from other active learning methods, such as peer learning, problem-based learning and participative learning. The purpose of this article is to introduce a reality-based learning method to teach human resource management to recreation students.

### Review of Active Learning Literature

Based upon the belief that having students more involved (what I do, I understand) in the classroom they are able to better retain the content of the course compared to a traditional lecture format (what I hear, I forget), active learning methods are often implemented to engage students. John Dewey (1916), who is credited with first developing the idea of learning by doing, believed that there was a danger in what was taught in traditional classrooms as students would feel isolated and separated from information related to life-experience. Similarly, Valerius, Keller, Doyle, and Collins (1998) reported that in order to motivate students to truly engage in higher level learning, instructors needed to leave the classroom and get students actively involved in the community. Although some instructors may believe active learning is new and innovative, the reality is active learning has been around for over a century (Mattson, 2005). Yet, Prince (2004) found that while the term active learning is widely used, educators define it differently. In his review of the research, Prince defined active learning generally “as any instructional method that engages students in the learning process” (p. 223). While this definition could be interpreted in a number of different ways, the basic premise of active learning involves interspersing activities into the traditional lecture as a way to help students apply theory and concepts while promoting student engagement. Silberman (1996) stated that “learning can’t be swallowed whole. To retain what has been taught, students must chew on it” (p. 4). The introduction of activities in the classroom by both students and teachers provides the opportunity for students to chew, reflect and put together what they hear and see into a meaningful whole. In an attempt to more clearly define active learning, McKeachie (2002) and Prince (2004) categorized this construct more specifically into collaborative, cooperative, peer, and problem-based learning methods.

With a wide variety of active learning techniques available to instructors, there may be confusion when selecting the most appropriate method. Matthews, Cooper, Davidson and Hawkes (1995) compared cooperative and collaborative learning by identifying similarities and differences. They described cooperative learning as “more structured in its approach to small-group instruction” (p. 40). This description was supported by others (McInnerney & Roberts, 2004; Panitz, 1996) comparing and contrasting cooperative versus collaborative learning approaches. The cooperative learning instructor maintains more of an authoritarian and expert role in interacting with students while providing training for students to better function in small-group activities. Collaborative learning, on the other hand, is based upon the premise that “students are responsible participants who already use social skills in undertaking and completing tasks” (Matthews et al., p. 40). Collaborative learning places much more responsibility upon the students to initiate leadership roles in group work, seek answers to their own questions and resolve group conflicts with minimal involvement of the instructor.

The underlying premise for both collaborative and cooperative learning is founded in constructivist theory (Bruner, 1996; Panitz, 1996) meaning course specific knowledge is discovered by students and transformed into concepts to which students can relate. Within the constructivist framework, learning should consist of active participation by students rather than passive acceptance of new information presented by an omniscient instructor.

Peer and problem-based learning are also recognized as active learning methods. McKeachie (2002) described peer learning as “students teaching other students” (p. 188) and adhered to the belief that peer learning encompasses both cooperative and collaborative learning. Barrows and Tamblyn (1980) identified problem-based learning as “learning that results from the process of working toward the understanding or resolution of a problem” (p. 2). More recently, Dunlap (2005) described problem-based learning at the college level as an active learning method that helps “students acquire the knowledge and skills required in the workplace” (p. 65).

When developing an active learning method, it is advantageous to use all available resources in order to capture the attention of students. A powerful resource that all students are familiar with is television programming. D’Ignazio (1992) suggested that use of television in the classroom can be “a powerful spark to the senses, the emotions, and the imagination” (p.40). Using television shows that students are fans of, or at the minimum are familiar with, can become the medium through which the instructor can meet students on their level and then guide them to higher levels of learning through the new material presented. Because students enter the classroom with literally thousands of hours of viewing experience, teaching with television was cited by Owen, Silet and Brown (1998) as one of the more effective ways to cultivate cooperative learning. “With television, the connection between subject matter and the students’ world is already present” (Owen et al., p. 10) while it then becomes the task of the instructor to mold and shape this existing interest. Hunt (2001) was even more specific in her suggestion to utilize specific television shows in teaching management concepts because “students are likely to become more engaged in an activity linked to a television show and will find it relatively easy to relate course material to various aspects of the show” (p. 632).

Armed with knowledge of the different methods of active learning as well as the incorporation of contemporary delivery methods instructors might feel overwhelmed by the options. The challenge then becomes which method best fits student learning, the course content, and the instructor capabilities. In other words, with all these active learning methods the challenge for instructors becomes which one to choose?

### *Reality-Based Learning Method*

Smith and Van Doren (2004) are credited with developing reality-based learning and proposed criteria to assist with the selection and assessment of the most appropriate active learning techniques to implement for a particular course. The four

assertions, or criteria of reality-based learning on which active learning techniques are evaluated are (p. 67):

1. The purpose of each activity is student learning.
2. The student is co-responsible for learning in each activity.
3. Each activity draws on knowledge and skills beyond the classroom and discipline.
4. Transferability of learning from the activity to outside the classroom.

Smith and Van Doren recommended that any active learning technique be critiqued on the basis of achieving these four assertions creating a method that is more “systematic rather than piece-meal” (p. 67). Use of the reality-based learning method helps to create a classroom environment that connects to the students’ world by presenting information that is more meaningful and relevant to them.

Since its inception, a growing number of educators are participating in a virtual internet site promoting the use of reality-based learning methods in schools and colleges (Reality-based learning, n.d.). This consortium of educators presented a conceptual three-level pyramid depicting, what they believed are the essential elements of reality-based learning. The base of the pyramid is identified as engaged learning. In this foundational level, multidisciplinary tasks are linked to real world issues and students begin to take responsibility for learning while teachers act as facilitators guiding students to construct their own meanings. At this level, characteristics of both collaborative and cooperative learning are revealed. The middle level of the pyramid is identified as problem-based learning. Building on the foundational level of engaged learning, a problem is presented that is relevant to the students and fits within the curriculum. Students work to define the problem, locate related information, brainstorm possible solutions, and select the best answer the question. At the highest level of the pyramid lies reality-based learning. It is at this level that students begin to experience the culture of the problem. Additionally, students are exposed to “real world” community or business partners in an attempt to arrive at a mutually beneficial answer to the problem. This method of instruction requires students to engage in critical thinking that advances their problem solving abilities.

### **The Apprenticeship**

Following Smith and Van Doren’s (2004) criteria for reality-based learning a creative learning module for teaching the human resource management course was developed as a way for the instructor to connect the course topic with the students’ interests. The primary goal of creating a different delivery method was to increase student engagement with the material and increase their learning of the material.

Smith and Van Doren's other criteria that students take more responsibility for their learning, incorporate knowledge and skills, and transfer learning were also integrated into the design. An additional goal of the instructor was to change students' impressions of management in general as a boring dimension of the RLS curriculum and allow them to delve deeper into the meanings and importance of human resource management in RLS.

Based upon information gleaned from the literature and from conversations with students, the authors developed a learning module for human resource management based upon the television show, *The Apprentice*. In its sixth season, this popular television show recruits up and coming business professionals to compete for an opportunity to become a manager in a multimillion dollar company. Although contestants are divided into two teams, they live together in a swanky Manhattan apartment. Throughout the show contestants are challenged to use their management and interpersonal skills to complete assignments given to them by their boss, Donald Trump. Following each assignment an evaluative meeting is held at which time the boss fires one of the contestants. Team competitions continue until the time the boss declares the teams dissolved and only the remaining individual contestants are competing against one another. The last contestant remaining at the end of the show wins the managerial position.

The Apprenticeship learning module was designed as an online (web-based) spin-off of the popular television show with a few key differences. While the students would compete against one another, they would not live together, be fired, nor would they always work together in teams. Another difference was that instead of teams gathering information from experts each week and then going out to complete projects, panels of experts came to the students via the course web site. For each of the five units comprising the Apprenticeship, the instructor created a panel of experts representing a variety of positions from the recreation field, who were assembled in a conference room (actually five pictures of different groups of people sitting around a conference room table cleverly disguised as recreation professionals). Each of the panel members provided anecdotal and background information, along with a testament of their own experiences for the particular human resource topics addressed in that particular unit. In reality, the instructor had created the information for each panel member from lecture notes, professional recreation experiences, textbooks, and journal articles pertinent to the topics in the unit. As each online unit was assigned, students were responsible for clicking on the image of each panel member and reading his/her story or testimony related to the particular unit topic.

The unit topics of the *Apprenticeship* were: 1) Foundations of HR Management, 2) Finding the Best Employees, 3) Hiring the Best Employees, 4) Training and Performance Evaluation, and 5) Discipline, Grievances, and Termination. The content of the panel members' comments integrated practitioner-based information with academically-based material intended to cover key human resource management

points for each unit. To facilitate the co-responsibility of learning, during class time, the instructor would facilitate discussions about the individual panel members' stories and fill in the gaps with information not covered by the online panel. During these discussions students' integrated personal knowledge and skills through their questions and responses. Each of the units was accompanied by an assignment providing the students with opportunities to apply what they had learned. Students were encouraged to go out into the field to talk with RLS professionals about interviewing, performance evaluations, and to put themselves into the role of a supervisor dealing with a variety of situations such as developing a recruitment strategy or conducting a termination. These community interactions encouraged students to transfer the knowledge they had learned in the classroom to situations they discussed with professionals in the field.

As a way to culminate the online module and provide a reflective learning opportunity, students were given a final assignment of creating a comprehensive portfolio to submit to "the boss" (their instructor). Students were instructed to design their portfolios as if they were recruiting for an actual position in the recreation field. The portfolios were to consist of a job description for the position, recruitment strategy, search and screen process, interview questions and itinerary, training schedule for both orientation and in-service during the first year, performance evaluation form and description of how the evaluation would be administered, and finally, discipline procedures for the job. Prior to submitting their portfolios for a grade by the instructor, students briefly presented their information in class where, in a peer- and collaborative-learning environment, they received written feedback critiquing their ideas, strategies and choices in developing the human resource steps for their chosen position.

### Methods

Implemented in the fall 2004 semester, the *Apprenticeship* debuted in a class of 15 recreation majors enrolled in the human resource management course. Students were asked to complete a short assessment questionnaire consisting of nine items after they completed four of the online units. Six of the items on the questionnaire were statements assessing the students' learning in the unit and the delivery method of the course material using a seven-point Likert scale. The remaining three questions were open-ended and were designed to capture what students liked most and least about using the *Apprenticeship* as a learning tool. Student test scores were also observed as an indicator of learning for the course material corresponding with the *Apprenticeship*. In an attempt to obtain more in-depth reflection of their use of the *Apprenticeship* as an active learning tool, students were asked to write an essay reflecting upon their learning experiences at the end of the course. This same set of procedures was followed again in the spring 2005 semester with a different group of 13 recreation majors enrolled in the course. As a result, data was collected from a group of 28 junior and senior recreation majors over the course of a full academic

year to determine the efficacy of using the *Apprenticeship* as a reality-based learning method.

### Results

Did the *Apprenticeship* work? Did the active learning method engage students in the classroom while helping them to learn the fundamental concepts of human resource management? More specifically, did the *Apprenticeship* meet the criteria of the reality-based learning method? Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in an attempt to answer these questions. In terms of quantitative data, students were asked to respond to in-class assessments throughout the course of the *Apprenticeship* with their perceptions of both their learning and use of the *Apprenticeship* as a learning tool. An aggregate mean score of student responses to five items on the assessment questionnaire are shown in Table 1. While a total of only 28 students were enrolled in the course throughout the fall and spring semesters, the students responded to the assessment questions at four different times throughout the *Apprenticeship* module creating the larger numbers reflected in Table 1. Based upon a seven-point Likert scale with one indicating strongly disagree and seven indicating strongly agree, the mean score for

TABLE 1

*Student In-Class Assessment*

Item	M	SD	N
I learned a lot in this unit.	5.73	1.074	77
I feel the concepts we studied in this unit are important to know.	6.31	0.688	80
I liked the way the unit was taught.	5.93	0.963	75
I wish more courses were delivered using a web component.	5.54	1.304	82
The discussion was helpful in pulling the material from the panel of experts together.	5.89	1.039	79

each statement related to learning demonstrated students' perceptions of their learning was high. The mean scores from students responding to their assessment of the *Apprenticeship* as a learning tool also emerged near the high end of the scale. Student test scores were also kept as an indicator of learning for both fall and spring semester classes, and compared to the spring 2004 semester prior to the *Apprenticeship* being implemented. Collectively, the mean test scores for the two exams corresponding to the *Apprenticeship* were four points higher. Although it can be argued that



many factors contribute to students' performance on exams, the higher test scores were consistent for both classes using the *Apprenticeship* compared to the class that did not.

In terms of qualitative data, students were asked three questions: What I liked best about using the *Apprenticeship* to learn? What I liked least? and What improvements I would recommend? The data was analyzed using constant comparison and enumeration techniques. In responding to what students liked the most, three common themes emerged. The first theme focused upon the new, creative method of obtaining information pertinent to the course topics. Comments such as "it was just nice to have something with a little different format...textbooks are so boring," and "I enjoyed it because it was new and not boring like most of the class (other classes) readings" were typical responses. The second theme focused upon the flexibility that was afforded students in choosing when to complete each unit of the *Apprenticeship* because it was available via the course web site. The third theme focused upon the real-life feel that students perceived when reading the stories of the panel members. Student comments such as "using 'real-life' scenarios always puts things in perspective and in a way where understanding a concept can be easier," and "seeing the real life experiences, paired with course content, presented by professionals" supported this theme.

In responding to what students liked the least about the *Apprenticeship*, most comments revolved around technical difficulties of compatibility between dated computer hardware and state-of-the-art software. Some students experienced difficulty in opening the *Apprenticeship* from home if their computer did not have the software used to operate the *Apprenticeship*. Other students expressed problems with gaining access because of a slower modem. Students also did not like the fact that they had to know how to navigate the web site in order to find the assignments that corresponded to each unit. As a result, a few students missed the assignment corresponding to a particular unit topic. Finally, in terms of improvements, student responses were largely non-existent, or in other words, many students left this question blank. While this type of response can be interpreted in a variety of ways, for this study, it was viewed positively because of the comments that were received. For example, when asked what improvements to recommend, a student commented "not much, seems to be running smoothly and easily understood," while another wrote "none, I liked it."

### *Assessing Reality-Based Learning Criteria*

As a way to maintain trustworthiness, Smith and Van Doren's (2004) criteria for reality-based learning was used as a basis of comparison of student responses. They suggested that in order to determine whether or not the reality-based learning method worked, questions should be developed to determine if the four reality-based learning assertions were met. As a result of this suggestion, questions for each of the real-

ity-based assertions were developed a priori to the *Apprenticeship* being implemented. What follows is a discussion of each assertion and the questions posed. In an attempt to answer these questions, students were asked to reflect upon their learning in an essay submitted at the end of the course. Excerpts from these student essays are listed below to provide evidence of answers to the primary questions.

*Student Learning.* The purpose of any college course is to facilitate student learning, but how does the instructor know whether learning has occurred and to what extent? Identifying specific knowledge, skills and abilities students are expected to grasp as a result of the course is one method of assessing learning. In assessing the learning of students participating in the *Apprenticeship*, two questions were posed:

1. To what extent does the *Apprenticeship* build on current levels of student competency in human resource management?
2. After completing the *Apprenticeship* module, what are students able to do that they cannot do prior to completing the module?

Many of the students enrolled in the course had little or no experience with human resource management, and therefore began the course with low levels of competence in this area. There were a few students, however, who through their work experiences were aware of some human resource management duties and responsibilities. For students in both categories, relatively high levels of learning were perceived which could be translated into building competencies. In support of this finding, one student commented, "Coming into this course I felt that I had a lot of background on the basic ideas behind HR management from past experiences and also from another management course. By the end of this course I have learned way more than I thought I would" (L. S., December 2004). In terms of enabling students to think like a supervisor in a RLS setting, the *Apprenticeship* module helped this student who said, "This is the first class I have ever had that put so much focus on me as the manager. Usually it is the other way around. I'm usually typing up resumes, doing practice interviews, and learning the skills to become an employee. For the first time I have actually started to think about the demands that go into managing employees. My dream is to own my own small business someday and the skills I learned in this class have definitely given me a stepping stone to start my future" (M. B., April, 2005).

*Co-responsible for learning.* Smith and Van Doren (2004) emphasized the importance of students learning how to teach themselves so that long after their classroom experience, they are able to become life-long learners. One of the primary purposes of the *Apprenticeship* was to shift the learning from the traditional teacher-student flow to a student-student-teacher flow. The questions posed to assess completion of this criterion were:

1. Have students participated actively, rather than passively, with the content of the *Apprenticeship*?
2. Do students appear to see the value of the main concepts and content?

In assessing this criterion, the feedback from students made answering these questions easy. Students seemed very positive in their responses to the *Apprenticeship* by stating that it was interactive while the stories of the panel members provided them examples of key concepts. One student addressed this assertion by stating, “This was one of the most unique ways of learning I have ever been involved with. It was also one of the most helpful ways of learning new material. Being able to hear managers in different recreation positions discuss what we had read in our book made the concepts much easier to comprehend. There really is no substitute for the real thing and this exercise gave us the ability to see what managers and employees in RLS have to deal with and the concepts they must be aware of when making decisions” (B. E. December, 2004).

Adapting to an online environment for course information and having more responsibility for their own learning can be challenging for students. One student expressed his appreciation for the different approach by stating, “I loved the *Apprenticeship*. It was different but good. I liked hearing from experts and getting real life perspectives from them. Our class discussions further enhanced what I learned during the *Apprenticeship* assignments. Each assignment was very fun and applicable to real life situations and was applicable to what we were learning at the time. I liked the interactive nature of it” (A. C., December, 2004). Finally, in terms grasping the main content and concepts of the course, this student wrote, “I really liked this new way of learning a unit. Having people talk about the topics in the form of a story or experience helped in putting the terms into context. I remembered things a lot better, and were able to recall the stories during the test” (J. M., December, 2004).

*Draws upon knowledge and skills beyond the classroom.* Recognizing that all students do not enter a course with the same experiences or level of experiences is key to facilitating the learning of individual students. Smith and Van Doren (2004) stated that “learning is unbounded and not hemmed in by classroom activities” (p. 67), and this is particularly true of management courses where experience is a distinct advantage. The questions posed to measure this criterion were:

1. Have the students applied concepts outside of class?
2. Have students reflected on the use of these concepts in their personal or professional lives?

Once again, assessment of this criterion was relatively easy based upon students’ comments. Students seemed energized and eager to test concepts learned from

the *Apprenticeship* to their own work experiences. One student wrote, "The *Apprenticeship* was my favorite aspect of this class. It was a brilliant way to learn of the different aspects of HR management. Our class discussions clarified any questions that I had and were valuable to the learning process. Each assignment that corresponded with the lecture helped me see how real businesses run. This project got me out into the community, talking with business owners, which is valuable knowledge that I would not be able to get in the classroom. I loved the *Apprenticeship* overall" (L. G., April, 2005). Another student discussed how he might use the concepts learned in his future as a RLS professional, "the *Apprenticeship* was definitely my favorite part of the class because you were actually able to see how real businesses operated. I like analyzing job announcements and job descriptions. It was good to see how these businesses implemented these plans and it was educational to know how their interview processes worked. Once again, I was on the other side of the spectrum and was able to see just how things operated in the real world" (M. B. April, 2005).

*Transferability of learning.* The last criterion of reality-based learning is transferability of learning to real-life situations outside of the classroom. Smith and Van Doren (2004) identified this criteria as the key difference between reality-based learning and other types of active learning. Further, they suggested that transferability is the most difficult criteria to assess. In attempting to assess the transferability of the *Apprenticeship* to students' future roles as RLS managers, the following questions were posed:

1. Are students able to cite situations in their professional futures where application of the *Apprenticeship* concepts and content might be useful?
2. For those students who are working, is there evidence they are thinking about the impact of the *Apprenticeship* on their current position?

Although one semester is not enough time to assess transferability of learning, there was evidence that students were directing their thoughts toward their futures and how what they had learned in the *Apprenticeship* would influence that. One student responded, "I believe that the *Apprenticeship* assignment was a good method of applying what we had learned into actually coming up with a plan of action as to how we would go about hiring new employees. I feel that class discussions were very helpful in helping me apply what I had learned in class to the *Apprenticeship*" (A. B., April, 2005).

Nearing graduation this student reflected on the applicability of the active learning assignments to her future by stating, "Writing job announcements, developing recruitment strategies, etc. might be our job duties someday. Any materials that might be able to go into a portfolio for job interviews are helpful. Though it was a lot of work, I thought the portfolio was the best part of the *Apprenticeship*. It gave me one

last opportunity to do some research on HR processes, and to make something concrete out of my learning” (K. S., April, 2005). Finally, as evidence for students thinking about the impact of the *Apprenticeship* on their future roles, this student wrote, “I really think that it is extremely beneficial to hear from other people’s experiences and that way when something similar happens within my life I can base some of my decisions on what they did. It was also extremely nice to be able to realize that what I am learning in a class is used in the real world. It also made it a lot easier for me to learn when I could use these examples with the legal aspects and what processes to do in the hiring process” (L. S., December, 2004).

### Summary Discussion

The purpose of developing the *Apprenticeship* was to create an active learning method designed to have students not only take more responsibility for their learning, but to also change their impressions of management as a boring course in the RLS curriculum. Admittedly, management is hard to teach students with little experience, but with the use of technology and television the *Apprenticeship* made a connection with students and helped to make the human resource management concepts more real. The use of the *Apprenticeship* gave the course a real-life relevance and provided a stimulus for class discussions of real-life human resource management issues and problems.

The reality-based learning method with its four criteria of student learning, co-responsibility, expanding student experience, and transferability of experience provides instructors a checklist when they are formulating active learning techniques for their courses. Based upon the feedback collected from students involved in the *Apprenticeship* and the diagnostic questions designed to assess the achievement of the criteria, the reality-based learning method appeared to work. Students seemed more alert, excited and positive about their learning of human resource management.

Although deemed a success during the semesters it was tested, the *Apprenticeship* as a reality-based learning method did exhibit some limitations. First, the size of the classes used to collect data for this study were small. As a result, it is not yet known how the *Apprenticeship* will work with larger sized classes and some of the challenges that may come with more students. Another limitation of the reality-based learning method was the transferability of learning criterion. Truly assessing this criterion in the current study was challenging because none of the students were currently employed in management positions, and only a few were employed in non-management positions while engaged in the *Apprenticeship* making it nearly impossible to assess its impact on their current positions. As a result of this limitation, a recommendation for a future study is to follow-up with students as they enter full-time employment to determine whether transferability of learning is perceived.

As the *Apprenticeship* continues into its fourth semester, new challenges will continue to evolve because this project was conceived, from the beginning, as a journey in scholarship and application of the most appropriate active learning methods to engage students in learning about management. Will this learning module work for larger class sizes? Will the *Apprenticeship* continue to build on current levels of student competency? Will students continue to be engaged by the testimonies of the panels of experts and see the value of their content? Although reality-based learning may not be appropriate for all courses, there is a place for this approach in teaching management. The *Apprenticeship* was able to create a classroom environment and learning method that connected to the students' worlds while presenting information that was meaningful and relevant to their future careers in recreation management. Yet, because teaching and learning is constantly evolving, the journey continues.

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