Flexible Practices in the Strategic Management Classroom

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Teaching Goals

Interactive Classes
- By engaging students in exercises that encourage them to apply knowledge in their own ways, I can facilitate rich learning and insightful discussion.

Flexible Learning Environments
- In the business world, strategy must adapt to accommodate changes from the external environment. I arrange my classes around the same principle; the discussions, exercises, and content are designed to change in response to dynamic contexts like weather-related changes to the schedule, external events that disrupt markets, and individual students' learning styles.

Life-long Learning Practices
- My goal is to provide evidence of the effectiveness of behaviors that create quality managers and leaders. I use a variety of technologies to demonstrate how learning can fit seamlessly into the busy and complex lives our students lead even after they leave the University.

Social Media in the Classroom

To meet my goal of inspiring lifelong learning, I use Twitter to demonstrate to my students how social media can be a valuable tool for learning and making connections. In class, one of the benefits is that we talk about up-to-the-minute news that affects business's strategies, and my students pick which news they want us to focus on in our discussions. This further allows them to apply class content to real-world events and shows how they can filter and focus Twitter and other social media to inform and enrich critical thinking.

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Dyson's #multibusiness firm gets a business bigger by applying their core competency in moving air around to healthcare. They may not stay in this business, but a lot of people will benefit from this #diversification #halo #ECU4842 #business4good

James Dyson designed a new ventilator in 10 days. He's making 15,000 for the p...
Dyson has received an order from the UK government for 10,000 ventilators to support efforts by the country's National Health Service to treat coronavirus ...
cnn.com

10:53 PM · Mar 26, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

Integrating Research and Teaching: Engaged Learning Exercises to Increase Flexibility

Focusing on the flexibility offered by various technologies influences my course design for face-to-face and online classes. I aim to generate an adaptive classroom culture early in the semester through experiential learning activities that get students to communicate, think critically, and approach strategy through personally-relevant applications such as those described below.

Strategy Flies By!

Early in the semester, students compete in teams to generate strategies to complete a simple task: make the best paper airplane. This facilitates team engagement, critical thinking, creative problem solving, and the application of several core concepts for strategy, including goal setting, crafting, execution, and evaluation. I display the variety in my office throughout the semester, and we make reference throughout the class to the strategy process that students use to create their entries. In addition, I often hear from former students when I tweet a video of the current year's competition. This exercise is particularly valuable to a flexible classroom because it generates collaboration and facilitates social connections early in the semester that students can refer to throughout the class. It also allows students to tangibly understand and appreciate the diversity of skills and talents in the classroom, which helps to create a tolerant, open classroom culture vital to spirited in-class discussions.
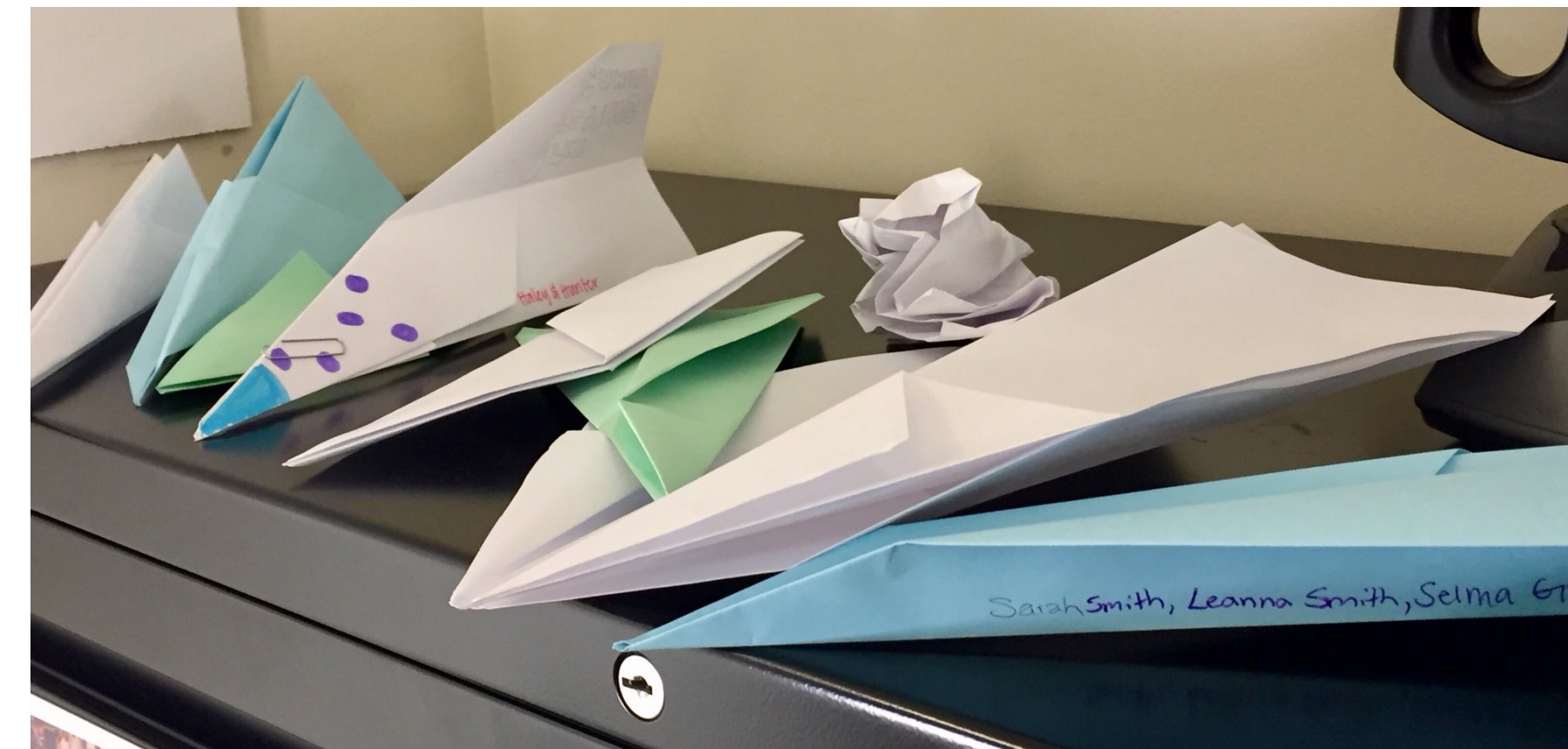
Builderific!

Builderific is an experiential strategic management exercise based on Coff and Hatfield's (2003) "Tinker Toy Exercise." Teams of students use Builderific-brand construction toys to create the tallest free-standing tower within a given time frame. I have adapted this exercise for use in a variety of class settings and it consistently provides an opportunity to discuss abstract strategic management topics including:

- intellectual property
- the role of resources
- first-mover advantages
- protecting competitive advantage
- organizational learning
- hypercompetitive environments
- strategy implementation
- dynamic adaptation
- team communication
- bricolage

Technologies for Class Flexibility

- CATME – team-performance feedback throughout the semester
- Canvas – gathering and sharing learning resources
- Twitter – contemporary contexts for applying class content through concise analysis
- Video- and podcast-distributed lectures – allows for accessible learning across media

Scholarly Publications on Flexible Classrooms

- Rogers, B., **Madden, L. T.,** Grubb, L., & Karriker, J. (forthcoming). "Shouting across the digital divide: The import of social interactions in virtual teams." *Team Performance Management*. Accepted for publication: 13 July 2020.

- Bendickson, J., **Madden, L. T.,** & Matherne, C. (2020). "Graduate students mentoring undergraduate students' business innovation pitches." *The International Journal of Management Education,* 18(2): 100390.

- Barber, D., **Madden, L. T.,** Mayo, D., & Agarwal, R. (2020). "Two-course integration with student collaboration: Rapid prototyping and entrepreneurship." *Entrepreneurship Education*, 3: 57-76.

- Madden, T. M., **Madden, L. T.,** & Solanelles, P. "In-class student participation: A self-assessment approach." Southern Management Association, Norfolk, VA – October, 2019

- Madden, T. M., McMillan, A., & **Madden, L. T.** (2018). "This is not a vacation: The shadow side of study abroad programs for faculty." Journal of Management Education, 43: 185-199.

- McMillan, A. & **Madden, L. T.** (2018). "Using Twitter to apply concepts from a strategy course." *Journal of Strategic Management Education*, 14: 19-35.

- Katell, L. A., Serban, A., **Madden, L. T.,** Karriker, J. "Teamwork in the classroom: Effects of class modality on team performance." Southern Management Association, St. Petersburg Beach, FL – October, 2017

- Karriker, J., **Madden, L. T.,** & Katell, L. A. (2017). "Team composition, distributed leadership, and performance: It's good to share." *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 24(4): 507-518.

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- **Madden, L. T.,** & Smith, A. D. (2015). "Using photographs to integrate liberal arts learning in business education." *Journal of Management Education*, 39: 116-140.

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- Meixner, C., Kruck, S. E., & **Madden, L. T.** (2010). "Inclusion of part-time faculty for the benefit of faculty and students." *College Teaching*, 58: 141-147.