

## **“LET’S MAKE PEOPLE MANAGEMENT VISIBLE”**

Rebeca Cordero Verdugo  
Lourdes García Salmones  
Fátima Gómez Sota  
Rocío Moldes Farelo  
Blanca Rodríguez Polo

Universidad Europea de Madrid



Laureate International Universities

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## **PROJECT: LET'S MAKE PEOPLE MANAGEMENT VISIBLE**

### **1. ABSTRACT**

“Let’s make people management visible” is an innovation project that was run in all 2<sup>nd</sup> year groups for the Managing People courses, within the Social Science Faculty. The project involved all the teachers who taught this course, and was organized around cooperative learning. The objective of this project was the students to understand and learn, in a playful way, the basics of People Management. To this end, students organized in teams, created a video documentary and a business case that should reflect one of the following areas of knowledge contained in the syllabus: job design, recruitment and selection, training, performance appraisal and motivation. To prepare the content for the video, students used bibliographic and audiovisual resources and they worked with the role- playing technique. After the videos were finished, students shared their acquired knowledge by putting in common their work and by solving the business cases developed by the other groups.

The competencies developed were: teamwork, empathy, tolerance, decision making, responsibility and creativity.

Thirty videos were submitted to the contest and published in the V Seminar on Human Resources, "Talentum."

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The Bologna Process is an all-inclusive structural reform of the European Higher Education System. It calls for deep reforms of education instruction, modernization of curricula and methods of teaching to promote lifelong learning. The Social Science Faculty is aware of the need to keep working to make this new educational environment a reality and is committed to promote new alternatives to traditional teaching methods and to look for innovative approaches. So forth, this project was born under the teachers' willingness to explore new teaching methodologies and it was found that the elements and fundamentals of cooperation learning fitted very well in this context.

Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement. Students work through the assignment until all group members successfully understand and complete it.

Cooperative efforts result in participants striving for mutual benefit so that all group members:

- Gain from each other's efforts.
- Recognize that all group members share a common fate.
- Know that one's performance is mutually caused by oneself and one's team members.
- Feel proud and jointly celebrate when a group member is recognized for achievement.

Research has shown that cooperative learning techniques promote student learning and academic achievement, increase student retention, enhance student satisfaction with their

learning experience, help students develop skills in oral communication and develop students' social skills.

In cooperative learning situations there is a positive interdependence among students' goal attainments; students perceive that they can reach their learning goals if and only if the other students in the learning group also reach their goals. No one group member will possess all of the information, skills, or resources necessary for the highest possible quality result.

The essential components of cooperation are positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual and group accountability, interpersonal and small group skills, and group processing. Systematically structuring those basic elements into group learning situations helps ensure cooperative efforts and enables the disciplined implementation of cooperative learning for long-term success.

The first and most important element in structuring cooperative learning is positive interdependence. Positive interdependence is successfully structured when group members perceive that they are linked with each other in a way that one cannot succeed unless everyone succeeds. Group goals and tasks, therefore, must be designed and communicated to students in ways that make them believe they sink or swim together. If there is no positive interdependence, there is no cooperation.

The second basic element of cooperative learning is promotive interaction, preferably face-to-face. Students need to do real work together in which they promote each other's success by sharing resources and helping, supporting, encouraging, and applauding each other's efforts to achieve. It is through promoting each other's learning face-to-face that members become personally committed to each other as well as to their mutual goals.

The third basic element of cooperative learning is individual and group accountability. Two levels of accountability must be structured into cooperative lessons. The group must be accountable for achieving its goals and each member must be accountable for contributing his or her share of the work. Individual accountability exists when the performance of each individual is assessed and the results are given back to the group and

the individual in order to ascertain who needs more assistance, support, and encouragement in learning. The purpose of cooperative learning groups is to make each member a stronger individual in his or her right.

The fourth basic element of cooperative learning is teaching students the required interpersonal and small group skills. Cooperative learning is inherently more complex than competitive or individualistic learning because students have to engage simultaneously in task work (learning academic subject matter) and teamwork (functioning effectively as a group). Social skills for effective cooperative work do not magically appear when cooperative lessons are employed. Instead, social skills must be taught to students just as purposefully and precisely as academic skills. Leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management skills empower students to manage both teamwork and task work successfully.

The fifth basic element of cooperative learning is group processing. Group processing exists when group members discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships. Groups need to describe what member actions are helpful and unhelpful and make decisions about what behaviors to continue or change. Continuous improvement of the processes of learning results from the careful analysis of how members are working together and determining how group effectiveness can be enhanced.

The teachers involved in the processes, found that making the students work together pursuing the goal of coming up with a video and a business case was complex enough to require everyone's effort but concrete enough for them to get committed and to be forced to work face to face promoting for continuous feedback. The project allowed, also, individual and group accountability, so the five elements were covered.

### **3. GOALS AND COMPETENCIES**

The main objective of this project was the students to understand and learn, in a playful way, the basics of People Management.

By participating in this project, students were expected to develop the following competencies:

Teamwork: Works cooperatively and productively with others to achieve results.

Empathy: A deep appreciation for another's situation and point of view.

Tolerance: Willingness to recognize and respect the beliefs or practices of others.

Decision Making. Generates and evaluates alternatives before making a decision or taking action, considers the risks associated with each option and selects the option that has the best balance of risk and reward.

Responsibility: Acknowledges and accepts the choices made, the actions taken, and the results they led to.

Creativity: Generates many new and unique ideas, makes connections among previously unrelated notions, unafraid to use unorthodox methods.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

The students, organized in teams, used bibliographic and audiovisual resources and they worked with the role- playing technique. After the videos were finished, students shared their acquired knowledge by putting in common their work and by solving the business cases developed by the other groups.

Upon completion, five finalists were selected and their videos were showed at the V edition of TALENTUM, with two objectives: promote an approach to the HR profession and encourage students´ presence and participation in the seminar.

##### **4.1 WORKING PLAN**

The teacher explained the project in class and allowed plenty of time for questions and comments. Once the students had a clear picture of what they had to do and what was expected from them, groups were formed. The teacher led the process but gave freedom to the students to choose their team mates. Divided in groups, they had to work in one of the following topics:

1. Work Design
2. Recruitment and Selection
3. Training
4. Performance Appraisal
5. Motivation

Each group chose a topic and they had to start searching for bibliography resources and selecting the most relevant information of the subject. In this phase, the teacher will provide a theoretical base and will recommend some reference material. The students wrote few drafts, following the teacher's revisions and comments. Finally, with the acquired knowledge and after the elaboration of a final script, the students had to make a highly creative video with an approximate duration of 12 minutes. The video had to have three parts:

- First: theoretical approach (see annex I, for the basic content)
- Second: A presentation of a company's real example, that illustrates the topic assigned.
- Third: The students will role-play a sketch describing a specific situation related to the topic assigned.

Upon the video completion, each group had to present the video to the rest of the groups. All students had to evaluate their peers' work.

As A Second part of the project, each group had to elaborate a business case using the concepts learned in the previous part. Later, these business cases should have to be solved by the rest of the groups. The business cases had to have an international approach and should be delivered as a Word file.

#### 4.2 KEY DATES / SCHEDULE

The project was developed according to the following schedule:

<b>DATES</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>
First week of October	The teacher presented the project and groups were formed.
Fourth week of October	The teacher reviewed the bibliographic resources consulted by the students and the script that the students will later use in the video.
Third week of November	The students presented points a & b in the classroom .
First week of December	Final videos were presented in the classroom. Videos selection for TALENTUM
Second week of December	Videos presentation in TALENTUM
Second week of January	Business Cases deadline
Third week of January	Business Cases have to be resolved by the rest of the groups. Students answered the satisfaction survey.

#### 4.3 EVALUATION



It was unanimously agreed that the project should have a significant weight in the final course grade. So, it was decided it to count as much as 60% of the final grade. This 60% would be split as follows:

25% Video

10% Presentation

25% Business cases development and resolutions

Few assessment tools were used along the project. Please, see annex II for the rubrics used by the teachers to evaluate the students' work: the videos, the business case development and the business case resolutions. Please, see annex III for the grids the students used to evaluate their peers and see annex IV for the satisfaction survey the students filled out at the end of the project.

## **5. EXPERIENCE DESCRIPTION**

After the project was completed, the teachers felt overly very satisfied. First and foremost, the objectives were achieved. All the groups had been able, with more or less difficulty, to meet the different deadlines established along the project and finally present their videos, create their business cases and resolve the other groups' business cases.

The students (as we will see later when we present the satisfaction surveys) got very much involved in the project; they learnt a lot and had fun. Nevertheless, we must say that it was not an easy process. At the beginning, the students felt quite reluctant as they doubted about their abilities and capacity to do the work assigned. We have to have in mind that most of the students were new to each other and some of them were only familiar with traditional teaching methodologies. It took time (longer than expected) till they truly understand the project and get really committed to the project.

The first part of the project, when they had to look for information and build up the theoretical part of the video was the toughest. It required the teachers to work very closely with the groups; many revisions were needed till the final drafts were finished.

The presentation of the drafts to the rest of the groups marked the moment when everybody started to be excited about the project. They understood their topics and at this point, they have gained confidence.

The technical part was the most difficult part of creating the videos. The vast majority had no idea of how to start. Coordinating the loans of the cameras and getting them started was quite a challenge. Although some of the videos had sound defects, all the groups were able to finish the work and presented it on time with an acceptable quality. The students reported long hours of work, lot of effort by all team mates and many of difficulties to overcome. Probably due to all this, the students felt proud and highly satisfied with their final outcome.

The teachers selected five videos (one per topic) to be presented at TALENTUM. The teachers took into consideration the rankings that the students had made in class (see annex III). Making the selection was not easy as some of the videos were highly creative and fun to watch but they didn't follow the structure required, so those were not considered as finalists and that was, in some cases, not understood and not easily accepted by some of the groups.

The fact of showing the videos at TALENTUM gave the winning groups great recognition and visibility. But, as it is commonly known, recognition implies empowering some while discouraging others. This is inevitable and the fact of giving this recognition to the best videos was considered a great incentive and a way to obtain high quality results.

## **6. RESULTS**

The results showed that students from the five groups of the People Management course, inserted in the various existing degrees in the Faculty of Social Sciences, had a similar perception with respect to the goal achievement and the level of competencies' development.

After completing the project, the teachers conducted a satisfaction survey with the purpose of knowing the students' opinion about the project. A hundred and seven surveys were collected. The students had to assess how important teamwork, tolerance, empathy,

decision making, responsibility and creativity had been along the project. Competencies all present in the different phases developed.

In addition to this competencies' assessment referred above, the students had to evaluate the contribution of the project to the approach to the business world (a relevant issue in the new European Space for Higher Education) and the contribution of the project to the development of communication skills. Finally, they were asked to evaluate the project overall. This kind of feedback from the students is absolutely essential to advance in the active development of new methodologies in the classroom as the teachers have to use valid tools to ensure the learning process at three levels: academic, international and professional. Also, these tools have to provide the right balance between theory and practice and have to enable the student to have a key role in generating knowledge in the classroom. Knowledge that, in the case of this project, was transferred to other team mates using creative and innovative techniques that ultimately increase motivation and involvement.

*Table 1: Students' overall assessment of the project*

<b>ITEMS ASSESSED</b>	<b>SCALE (1-5)</b>
1. TEAM WORK	4,3
2. TOLERANCE	4,2
3. EMPATHY	3,8
4. DECISION MAKING	4
5. RESPONSIBILITY	3,7
6. CREATIVITY	4,5
7. COMMUNICATION ABILITES	4,3
8. APPROACH TO THE BUSINESS WORLD	3,8
9. USE OF INFORMATION FROM THE SUBJECT STUDIED	4,2
10. USEFULNESS OF THE PROJECT	4
11. ORIGINALITY OF THE PROJECT	4, 2
12. KNOWLEDGE AQUIED	3,8
13. OVERALL EVALUATION	4,8

As shown in table 1, the various aspects worked along the project have been well considered by the students, providing ratings above 3.5. The higher scores and, therefore, those that the students perceived as more developed were: creativity, team work and communication skills.

When asked about the most interesting aspects of the project, making the video was the highest rated activity, but the technical work entailed (editing, assembly, etc.) was perceived as a task for which they felt unprepared.

With respect to the teamwork competency, it was given a high score (above 4). Paradoxically, and probably because of the large number of students required in each

group, it has also been the greatest source of difficulties and conflicts; this competency, therefore, has been one of the most controversial.

Another interesting factor was the different perception that international students had in relation to national students. International students were more critical with some areas such as "approach to the business world", "usefulness of the project" or "empathy" while the Spanish did not give much importance to these issues and what they valued most was the innovative and creative part of the project.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

A good way of teaching to learn and of cooperating to learn is showing enthusiasm and camaraderie among the teachers as this is transmitted to the students and they discover by themselves the advantages of teamwork.

From the educational point of view, this project enables and requires greater collaboration and communication between the students and allows them to have a more satisfying experience than working individually. Also, this type of project facilitates bringing students together, creates more interest in the participating subjects and highlights the applied nature of the contents, causing greater motivation of all those involved in the process.

From the students' point of view, this project:

- Promotes an environment of interest and study around the subject. - Identifies students with the issues addressed and allows insight into the different aspects of a problem through a more dynamic and interactive approach than traditional methodologies.
- Develops teamwork, decision making and cross-sectional troubleshooting skills.
- Stimulates students' creative and imaginative potential.

We would like to conclude with some reflections on the areas of improvement for future editions:

- Due to the fact that the Managing People course is a semester course, the time to articulate a project of this kind is scarce. The theoretical contents that the students need to understand to successfully complete the project, are presented in a synthesized way, specially for students who are not familiarized with the subject.

- It would be desirable to establish a collaborative relationship with the Communication Faculty in order to overcome the students' lack of skills when editing the videos.
- It is necessary to seek new formulas to improve teamwork dynamics, focusing on the role of the group at the level of "task manager."

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## **ANNEXS**

### **ANNEX I: BASIC CONTENT FOR THE THEORETICAL APPROACH**

#### **1. WORK DESIGN**

- DEFINITION / IMPORTANCE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER HR AREAS
- OBJECTIVES
- JOB ANALYSIS (JOB DESCRIPTION AND JOB SPECIFICATION).
- METHODS / SOURCES OF JOB INFORMATION
- JOB DESIGN AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

#### **2. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

- DEFINITION / IMPORTANCE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER HR AREAS
- OBJECTIVES
- SOURCES/ METHODS

#### **3. TRAINING**

- DEFINITION / IMPORTANCE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER HR AREAS
- OBJECTIVES
- TRAINING PLAN

#### **4. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL**

- DEFINITION / IMPORTANCE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER HR AREAS



- OBJECTIVES
- THE PROCESS: WHAT, WHO, HOW

## **5. MOTIVATION**

- DEFINITION / IMPORTANCE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER HR AREAS
- OBJECTIVES
- THEORIES
- HOW DO ORGANIZATIONS MOTIVATE? (Corporate initiatives: climate surveys, CSR, flexible work schedules, work-live balance programs, etc.)

**ANNEX II.**

**EVALUATION: LET'S MAKE PEOPLE MANAGEMENT VISIBLE**

<b>PART 1</b>	<b>NOT ACCEPTABLE</b>	<b>ACCEPTABLE</b>	<b>EXCELLENT</b>
<b>Theory</b>			
Subject Knowledge	Subject knowledge is not evident. Information is confusing, incorrect, or flawed.	Subject knowledge is evident in some parts. Some information is clear, appropriate, and correct.	Subject knowledge is evident. All information is clear, appropriate, and correct.
Organization	The sequence of information is not logical. Order is confusing. Ideas, details, and events not shaped yet.	The sequence of information is logical. Most details are in the right place.	The sequence of information is logical and intuitive. Clear direction moves audience through the presentation.
Creativity	Work is flat, stiff. Anyone could have done it.	The work presents some personality, flavor and style.	The work is surprising; it amuses, provokes and delights.
<b>PART 2</b>			
<b>Real example</b>			
Association	It does not illustrate the concepts presented	Somewhat illustrates the concepts presented.	It perfectly illustrates the concepts presented
Evidences (*)	No evidences are provided	Some evidences are provided	More than two evidences are provided
Creativity	Work is flat, stiff. Anyone could have done it.	The work presents some personality, flavor and style.	The work is surprising; it amuses, provokes and delights.
<b>PART 3</b>			
<b>Role playing</b>			
Association	It does not represent any of the concepts presented	Somewhat represents one of the concepts presented.	It perfectly represents one or more of the concepts presented
Creativity	The representation is flat, stiff. Anyone could have done it.	The representation has some personality, flavor and style.	The representation is surprising; it amuses, provokes and delights.

- **Video Evaluation**

	<b>NOT ACCEPTABLE</b>	<b>ACCEPTABLE</b>	<b>EXCELLENT</b>
Basic information	Integrates few or no concepts from the theory. A connection between	Limited integration of the conceptual material from the topic assigned.	Accurately and precisely integrates conceptual material from the topic

(\*) Such as pictures, real documents, brochures, employee involvement, etc.

- **Developing a business case**

	problem/issues and theory is not made.	Makes appropriate but somewhat vague connections between problem/issues and theory.	assigned. Makes appropriate and insightful connections between problem /issues and theory.
Secondary information	A case study narrative is not developed. It doesn't give enough details (relevant and irrelevant) to construct evidence.	A case study narrative is developed, but it doesn't give enough details (relevant and irrelevant) to construct evidence.	A case study narrative is indeed developed. It gives plenty of details (relevant and irrelevant) which make it "very real".
Logic and organization	Information is disorganized. It does not highlight the focus of the study.	Some information is organized and somewhat it highlights the focus of the study.	Information is well organized and structured and it continuously highlights the focus of the study.
International approach	It does not have an international approach	It has some international references.	It is a case with a clear international approach

- **Resolving business cases**

	<b>NOT ACCEPTABLE</b>	<b>ACCEPTABLE</b>	<b>EXCELLENT</b>
<b>Conceptual Understanding</b>	Demonstrates superficial understanding of the theory.	Demonstrates clear understanding of the ideas presented in the theory.	Demonstrates a clear and deep understanding of the theory and the "big ideas" of the topic.
<b>Connections: Theory and Practice</b>	Makes little or no connection between the issue/problem and the theory.	Makes appropriate and insightful connections between the issue/problem and the theory.	Makes appropriate, insightful and powerful connections between the issue/problem and the theory.
<b>Recommendations</b>	Makes realistic or appropriate recommendations with limited support from the	Makes realistic and appropriate recommendations clearly supported by the information presented and the theory.	Makes realistic, appropriate and insightful recommendations clearly supported by the information presented and the theory.

	information presented and the theory		
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**COMPETENCIES' AUTO EVALUATION**

- At what extent do you think that you have developed to the follow competencies?

	<b>STRONGLY DESAGREE</b>	<b>DESAGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
<b>TEAM WORK</b>				
<b>TOLERANCE</b>				
<b>EMPATHY</b>				
<b>DECISION MAKING</b>				
<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>				

**COMPETENCIES' PEERS EVALUATION**

- At what extent do you think that..... have developed to the follow competencies?

	<b>STRONGLY DESAGREE</b>	<b>DESAGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>
<b>TEAM WORK</b>				
<b>TOLERANCE</b>				
<b>EMPATHY</b>				
<b>DECISION MAKING</b>				
<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>				

**ANNEX III. EVALUATION & RANKING**

**LET'S MAKE PEOPLE MANAGEMENT VISIBLE**

- **Video**

**EVALUATION**

	<b>THEORY</b>	<b>REAL EXAMPLE</b>	<b>ROLE PLAYING</b>
<b>GROUP I</b> JOB DESIGN			
<b>GROUP II</b> RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION			
<b>GROUP III</b> TRAINING			
<b>GROUP IV</b> PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL			
<b>GROUP V</b> MOTIVATION			

**GRADES**

- 1- NON ACCEPTABLE
- 2- ACCEPTABLE
- 3- EXCELLENT

**RANKING**

	<b>RANKING</b>
<b>GROUP I</b> JOB DESIGN	
<b>GROUP II</b> RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION	
<b>GROUP III</b> TRAINING	
<b>GROUP IV</b> PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL	
<b>GROUP V</b> MOTIVATION	

**ANNEX IV.**  
**LET'S MAKE PEOPLE MANAGEMENT VISIBLE**  
**SATISFACTION SURVEY**

We would like to have your opinion on the innovation project carried out in this course.

Please, express your level of satisfaction towards the project. Consider if the project has been helpful for you to develop the competencies and the knowledge it aimed to. Being: 1: very unsatisfied and 5: very satisfied.

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. TEAM WORK</b>					
<b>2. TOLERANCE</b>					
<b>3. EMPATHY</b>					
<b>4. DECISION MAKING</b>					
<b>5. RESPONSIBILITY</b>					
<b>6. CREATIVITY</b>					
<b>7. COMMUNICATION ABILITIES</b>					
<b>8. APPROACH TO THE BUSINESS WORLD</b>					
<b>9. USE OF INFORMATION FROM THE SUBJECT STUDIED</b>					
<b>10. USEFULNESS OF THE PROJECT</b>					
<b>11. ORIGINALITY OF THE PROJECT</b>					
<b>12. KNOWLEDGE AQUIRED</b>					
<b>13. OVERALL EVALUATION</b>					

What is the aspect of the project that you most liked?

What is the aspect of the project that you least liked?