

CREATING AND SELLING POSTCARDS: AN INTEGRATIVE PROJECT CLASS

Angeline W. McArthur
University of Wisconsin–Parkside

Roger Hudson
Western State College of Colorado

Gail Lynn Cook
Brock University

Harlan Spotts
Western New England College

Alan Goldsmith
University of Wisconsin–Parkside

This article describes an innovative venture wherein students and faculty from business and graphic arts joined together in an interdisciplinary course to design, produce, and sell university postcards. Students managed a complete project from start to finish. The project included conducting market research; gathering photographs; creating postcard prototypes; working with a commercial printer; producing, selling, and distributing postcards; and keeping track of orders, revenues, and expenses. Furthermore, the course incorporated the specific management skills of running meetings, leadership, teamwork, communication, presentations, project management, and cross-functional integration.

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Conceptual Foundation

This class was created in response to an internal request by administration. However, it was designed to address some of the criticisms directed at business schools for not effectively preparing students with the management skills required to function in today's business world (Byrne, 1993; Doyle, 1995; Hill, 1997; Mason, 1992; National Association of Colleges and Employers, 1995; Siegel & Sorensen, 1994; Verderber & Serey, 1996). In fact, Lamont and Friedman (1997) argued that workplace success depends more on management ability than knowledge in a particular functional area. Management ability includes being proficient in specific skills including written and interpersonal communication, presentations, leadership, teamwork, problem solving, running meetings, and conflict management. They further argue that without these skills, college graduates are unable to manage or participate effectively in complex assignments that require well-organized team efforts. A management skill that is often overlooked is project management (Verderber & Serey, 1996). Students experience frustration in team environments due to their inability to manage process issues such as logistics, workload, motivation, and group dynamics (Feichner & Davis, 1985). One study found that project management requires leadership, interpersonal, technical, and administrative skills (Thamhain, 1991).

In addition, this course incorporated cross-functional integration because many organizations report that they operate as integrated units requiring employees to work in cross-functional teams (Alden, Laxton, Patzer, & Howard, 1991; Lamont & Friedman, 1997; Pharr & Morris, 1997). Some business schools recognized the need for cross-functional training and responded with an integrated and holistic approach to education (Williams, 1996).

A critical issue surrounding management skills is how to effectively teach them. All too often, professors such as Young and Kram (1996) "expect that students will learn skills in leadership, collaboration, communication, handling conflict, and valuing diversity through experiences in their teams" (p. 500). But, as Fisher, Shaw, and Ryder (1994) point out, "it is rather optimistic to expect that . . . effective team skills will develop spontaneously while students struggle . . . under time and grade pressure" (p. 351). Thus, sending student teams off on their own to learn these important skills may not result in the desired behavior changes.

There is a wealth of literature on learning styles and techniques that point to the use of experiential learning in education. Although the volume of literature is too large to review in this article, it is important to identify what is meant by experiential learning. Hoover and Whitehead (1975) defined experiential learning as

riential learning as existing when a student "cognitively, affectively and behaviorally processes knowledge, skills and or attitudes in a learning situation characterized by a high level of active involvement" (p. 25). Kolb (1984) more simply defined it as "a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 38).

These definitions indicate that active involvement is important to learn and reinforce knowledge acquisition. But, learning is more than just activity. Barr and Tagg (1995) pointed out that this "learning paradigm" is student centered and controlled rather than instructor centered and content controlled. A fundamental belief underlying this paradigm is that learning occurs when an individual is actively involved with concrete experience (Walters & Marks, 1981).

Considering the demands placed on students as they enter the workforce and the experiential learning paradigm benefits, teaching management skills and cross-functional integration in an experiential format is extremely effective. The postcards course was designed to specifically teach students management skills. Furthermore, the diversity of the students and the complexity of the task provided a natural, unforced situation that required cross-functional integration and project management. Finally, the experiential nature of the project provided a realistic, concrete learning experience.

In the Background section, we describe how the course came about. Our thoughts and vision for the course are presented in the Initial Course Design section. Course objectives and course structure are delineated in the next sections. Following these are a description of the content and process of the course including management skills, organizational meetings, and the specific classes. The next section discusses the value of the course to the students. We then offer suggestions for teaching a project course. We conclude this article by offering other possible projects.

Postcards: The Class

BACKGROUND

One day, our chancellor approached us in the university cafeteria. "I have a project for you," he said and then went on to relate a conversation he had had with a staff member who had complained that there were no university postcards for sale in the bookstore. "Can you make this part of your Introduction to Business class?"

At the time, we were team-teaching a cross-functionally integrative Introduction to Business class. We had completely redesigned the course based on

our shared interest in cross-disciplinary business education. We came together as a team because of common interests; it was by chance that we came from the four disciplines of Accounting, Business Policy, Management, and Marketing.

Due to the magnitude of the project and the knowledge required for its completion, the postcard project would be too complicated for the Introduction to Business students. However, we agreed to design an upper level course around producing university postcards. The chancellor agreed to provide a \$2,000 loan from the University Benevolent Foundation.

As we discussed our vision for the class, we knew the four of us could cover the business side of the project, but not the artistic side. One meeting with a graphic arts professor and we had an enthusiastic new team teacher and his promise to recruit graphic arts students. To design the course, we met as a team four times in the semester prior to when the course was offered.

INITIAL COURSE DESIGN

In designing the course, we attempted to emulate the business world by including opportunities to learn and practice management skills, project management, and integration across functional areas. Drawing on our previous experiences, we built in the skills and experiences that students would need to make this a successful project. To understand the project requirements, we created a general management timeline that included completion or due dates for what we thought were the major activities. These activities included market research, prototypes, the accounting system, finished product, and selling and ordering processes. The timeline convinced us that the project could be completed in a semester and helped us identify when project management or specific disciplinary skills would be needed by the students. This timeline was not presented to the students; they would be developing their own activities and timeline as part of the class.

The syllabus contained little more than the course objectives and class meeting dates because the project was designed to be student centered and controlled. The class was designed as a totally hands-on experience; thus, there were no lectures, reading assignments, quizzes, examinations, or required textbooks. Relevant project management and discipline-specific materials were delivered in a just-in-time format. Assessment was based on each student's contribution to the overall project in comparison with the other students' contributions and improvement in students' management skills. The art professor graded the performance of the art students, and the business professors graded the performance of the business students.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Four business and three pedagogical objectives were established for the course. The four business objectives were for the students to (a) design, (b) produce, and (c) sell postcards (d) at a profit after repaying the loan. The three pedagogical objectives were to (a) learn and practice management skills of running meetings, leadership, oral and written communication including feedback, and preparing and giving presentations; (b) work effectively as a team leader and member in managing a complex project that requires extensive planning and coordination; and (c) apply and integrate knowledge from the functional areas of graphic arts, accounting, marketing, and management to the project.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Two organizational meetings were held with the students during the winter break. Time was going to be tight in terms of completing the postcards within the confines of a 15-week semester. There was no resistance to attending these meetings because the students were eager to get started. This class was unusual in the art and business departments. The students were recruited into the course, and they felt special to be involved.

There were 15 students in the class: 7 students majoring in graphic arts and 8 students majoring in accounting, marketing, finance, or general business. The structure of the class was nonhierarchical because all students shared ultimate responsibility for the project.

An overview of the major activities is provided in Table 1. It does not include the formal weekly meeting or many minor activities performed by the students. The students used some class time to work on activities, but they also spent considerable time working outside of class.

The class met weekly for 3 hours, with the 1st hour of the class devoted to a formal group meeting that served two purposes. First, it was crucial for keeping the project on track. Second, it was the vehicle we used to teach the management skills. After the formal meeting, the class broke into subgroups to work on specific aspects of the project.

MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Skill building was an integral part of the weekly meetings. Emphasis was placed on running effective meetings, leadership, communication, presentations, and project management.

Running effective meetings. Because students tend to have a difficult time staying on track when holding meetings, a brief review of why an agenda is

TABLE 1
Major Course Activities

December 12	Introductions, overview, running meetings, course structure, marketing (research, sales plan), accounting (projected costs, bid proposals, system design, financial results, and analysis), art (types of postcards, cost records, logo, and copyright)
December 20	Develop market research questionnaire
January 21	Name the company and design a logo, work on focus group moderator's guide, develop a timeline
January 28	Identify two potential buyer groups—consumer and business Form groups to develop questionnaire for each group Form groups to search photo archives Review logo design
February 4	Work on focus group script for student groups Work group to photo archives Work on timeline Form groups for concept testing, accounting and finance, sales, marketing research review, and prototypes
February 11	Photo group presentation to identify 15 prototypes
February 18	Focus group—students (consumer) Work on prototypes
February 25	Focus group—administrators (business) Work on prototypes
March 11	Tour Johnson's Graphic Design Studio
March 25	Tour TruLine Lithographing, Inc. Prototypes ready
April 1	Work on timeline Review campus pictures taken by students Presentation of letter versus postcard pricing
April 8	Focus group to choose final six postcards Presentation of postcard quote from printing company Work on sales plan
April 15	Work on sales plan and develop a sales flyer Develop larger prototypes for sales tool
April 22	Postcards to printer Sell postcards
April 29	Sell postcards Orders due
May 6	Debrief
May 11	Package and deliver postcard orders

important and why minutes need to be recorded was delivered before starting the first meeting. One professor ran the first meeting with a predeveloped agenda. The first agenda item was to identify a note taker. The note taker for one meeting developed the agenda and ran the next meeting. This format was

used throughout the semester so that all students served as both note taker and meeting leader. Each week, the students were given feedback on their minutes in terms of clarity and amount of detail. Students learned from other's mistakes and heard examples of how to give constructive feedback. At the end of the formal meeting, students were given feedback on how well they ran the meetings. A typical meeting agenda is shown in the appendix.

Students learned the value of meeting minutes through experience. In one class, a question about whether they had voted on a particular logo was raised, which resulted in students arguing one side or the other. The arguing stopped after they checked the minutes from the prior meeting. As the semester progressed, students automatically referred to earlier minutes to help them keep track of the decisions they had made and which activities were left to be done.

Leadership. Students were given ample opportunity to provide leadership. Formal leadership roles were provided in the weekly meetings as the students rotated taking minutes and chairing meetings. Less formal leadership evolved as the students volunteered to lead subgroups or assumed responsibility for various activities. All but one of the students voluntarily took on leadership roles. We attempted to keep the workload somewhat evenly divided among the students by encouraging individuals to volunteer. However, keeping the workload evenly divided proved to be difficult because students were involved in multiple subgroups and tasks.

Communication. Communication was a major issue throughout the semester. Many students had difficulty expressing their ideas. Faculty called on individual students to make sure that everyone was giving input. Fortunately, this soon became unnecessary. However, if there were communication problems, the meeting stopped until these problems were resolved. Often, it was as simple as making sure people were listening to each other. Sometimes it involved clarifying or correcting information.

When dealing with communication issues, we did not pull individual students aside, tell them what to say, and send them off to say it. Rather, communication issues were addressed in front of the whole class. Sometimes students would have to make their meeting presentations twice. At other times, we literally walked students through what to say when confronting a teammate about inappropriate behavior. We were present during the whole interaction, prompting and coaching the student(s) as needed.

Presentations. A number of subgroups were formed to complete different aspects of the project. As tasks were completed, subgroups were disbanded and new ones were formed. We took advantage of the subgroup structure to

develop presentation skills. At each meeting, a member of each subgroup was required to present an update of the group's activities and accomplishments since the last meeting. These presentations served three functions. Students became more comfortable speaking in front of the group. They were forced to organize their material before presenting it. If students did not organize their material, they were asked many questions, and they suffered through our constructive feedback. And, of great practical importance, the presentations kept all members informed about all aspects of the project.

Teamwork. Based on experience in the Introduction to Business course, we had found that student teams need agreed-on team rules as the basis for monitoring and regulating appropriate team member behavior. Some students do not attempt to correct other team members' behavior even though they eventually carry a disproportionate amount of the workload. Each team member was responsible for monitoring inappropriate behavior.

At first, students saw no need for establishing team rules, but after some coaxing, they developed and unanimously agreed to the following rules: (a) All tasks and assignments will be completed on time; (b) All participants will be on time for all meetings; (c) If a teammate must be unavoidably late or miss a meeting, he or she will notify team members in advance; (d) Teammates will share phone numbers and make arrangements for easy communication; and (e) All work will be completed to the best of one's ability, and a team member will obtain help if necessary to meet team expectations.

An important part of the learning process for students was the realization that when team rules are broken by those who created and agreed to the rules, the other team members are the aggrieved parties. This enabled the students to deal with the offenders in a candid manner. Team rules provided students with a mechanism whereby they could frankly explain the nature of their disappointment to the offender and remind him or her of the team rules. They could then move on to a more positive interaction by offering the offender an opportunity to be responsible for another assignment. This process not only helped with communication but also encouraged productive team behavior without ostracizing individuals.

Subsequent violations, if they occur, are obviously more serious, and we were prepared to allow teammates to "fire" a colleague after three serious violations. The two of us who used this approach in previous classes could think of only two instances in which this had occurred in our many years of teaching. In both cases, the students were allowed to withdraw from the course. No one was fired from the postcard project.

Throughout the postcard project, there was only one serious problem involving two students. These two students decided that they did not want to

sell postcards and hoped that by creating a scrapbook about the class, they would be excused from selling. The subgroup responsible for the sales plan divided up the sales calls among all the business students, including the two who had declined to sell. These two students were very angry. At a meeting with the rest of the group, the students reminded each other of the group rules, pointing out that everyone had agreed to sell and the team expected everyone to follow through on their prior commitment. They also discussed how group needs took priority over individual needs. It was important that all students be given the opportunity to express their feelings. It was a very long and exhausting but productive discussion. Although the two students were still not happy about having to sell, the discussion was successful in reinforcing the team.

PROJECT PLANNING

Most of the business students had studied project management and planning; however, none had actually managed a lengthy, complex, ill-defined, interdisciplinary project such as the postcards. The art students had no project management experience. During the first class, the students developed a timeline for the project by identifying end deliverables, activities, and subtasks. It was through this process that students realized the magnitude of the project, its complexity, and their responsibilities to define and manage the project. Because they did not know the exact nature of the final product, the market, the cost, or any of the parameters, we encouraged them to adopt an incremental approach to project planning (Kerzner & Thamhain, 1984).

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS

At the start of the project, the students knew only that they were going to make university postcards and that they were responsible for managing the specifics. As a class, students discussed potential markets and concluded that they needed more specific information before they could make project-defining decisions. Focus group research was the agreed-on methodology. Student enthusiasm was high after these organizational meetings. However, group cohesion was problematic. From the first meeting, the business students sat together, and the art students sat together at opposite ends of the table. There was virtually no informal and little formal communication between the two groups.

There were two major factors working against creating a cohesive team. First, it was a relatively large team. Second, we were trying to merge two very disparate groups of students—art and business. A team-building exercise was needed to create a unified group. Naming the postcard company and designing a company logo was used to accomplish this objective.

CLASSES

A brainstorming technique was used to select a name for the postcard company. The business students were comfortable generating a long list of names ranging in quality from silly to excellent. The art students were not familiar with brainstorming and were less comfortable generating names. Agreement was reached on a company name, but the logo required more time due to its artistic nature. The art students agreed to bring sample logos to the next meeting.

The next class discussion was not productive. The art students provided a number of logo designs, but the evaluation of the logos was frustrating for all. The business students preferred one that depicted "who we are," whereas the art students preferred one because it was more artistic. The problems were that both sets of students were applying judgment based on their professional knowledge and values and that these values supported divergent conclusions. We settled the dispute with a vote, which caused more problems because the business students outnumbered the art students. The fallout from this exercise decreased rather than increased group cohesion. Neither group of students was happy with the outcome.

Fortunately, the project provided a better opportunity for students to experience success. As the design of the focus group research evolved during the first four classes, the students demonstrated commitment and disciplinary skills. The art students prepared a set of excellent prototypes. The accounting students developed cost data. The marketing students prepared the moderator's guide, selected participants, and organized the facilities.

The implementation of the focus groups during Classes 5 and 6 was a success. The students obtained the information they needed to complete the overall postcard project design. They discovered that their primary market consisted of university administrative departments, which could be considered the more traditional business customers. The secondary market contained students, faculty, and staff, a more traditional consumer market. Furthermore, the design of the postcards was settled. From here, students set deadlines and assigned task responsibilities.

The focus groups helped the students learn they could depend on each other to accomplish a task. The art students delivered a good product, and it did not hurt that one of the business students supplied a photo that was popular with the focus groups. The marketing students had done an excellent job recruiting participants and running the focus groups. The accounting students knew production lead times and the cost of letters and postcards to a fraction of a penny under a variety of contingencies. They also had set up a financial record-keeping system to track project costs and had arranged for

the art students to obtain the supplies they needed for their creative work. Disciplinary competence had been convincingly displayed with these successes, and team cohesiveness was on the rise.

The focus groups also resolved issues of art and business students' not talking with each other. The students, except for the few running the focus group, were jammed into a small observation room so that they could see and hear how focus groups were conducted. They had no choice but to talk to each other—there was no room to sit in their disciplinary groups.

During the focus groups, team cohesion was apparent. This cohesion was evidenced by a general lighthearted banter that included reference to an after-hours meeting at the local pub. Interestingly, several of the business students became more involved with the technical aspects of graphic arts. A few art and business students began working together on other projects.

During the seventh and eighth classes, we arranged for the students to tour a graphic arts studio and a printing company. Whereas the art students were most interested in the graphic arts studio, the business students were more interested in the printing company. During these tours, some students regressed into their disciplinary groups.

Once the focus groups were completed, the students realized they had lost track of their timeline because it contained too little information. They were discouraged when they discovered they needed to update the timeline and once again identify activities and subtasks to incorporate new information. After struggling with the development of a more realistic and detailed timeline, the students once again pulled together and took ownership of the project. They finally understood what an incremental approach to planning meant.

Students learned the value of project planning when they determined the major decision points, identified the type of information required to make decisions, and assigned subteams to collect the information. As subteams reported through presentations, the students monitored progress and updated the plan on a weekly basis. One of the greatest benefits of project planning was that students were able to chart their progress and learn firsthand how even the largest project is less daunting once it has been divided into manageable subtasks.

The intermediate deadlines and milestones provided critical pressure to keep the project moving without intervention from the faculty. As deadlines approached and work was incomplete, students realized they had to pitch in and help complete assignments. In a few cases, students realized the information they needed could not be obtained in time to keep the project on track. Thus, the students had to decide whether to proceed with incomplete information or wait until more complete information could be obtained.

At this point, the project appeared to be under control. The art students were refining the postcard prototypes; the market research group was organizing the last focus group with administrators to choose the final postcard designs; the accounting group was finalizing the printing arrangements and costs and working out the details for the transfer of funds to the postcard accounts so administrative departments could pay for their purchases; the sales group was working on the sales protocol; a group was working out a last-minute problem with the size of the standard university mailing label; the computer group was making sure that the postcards would run through campus printers by developing a program for the secretaries; and two students were putting together a scrapbook of the course. Things were running smoothly until the scrapbook students decided, as previously discussed, that they would not participate in selling.

The selling of the postcards was an energizing experience for the students. They kept daily, sometimes hourly, totals of the number of postcards sold. Funny selling stories were related to both professors and other students. The team was truly enjoying their success in selling orders for more than 34,000 postcards.

The last class session was used to debrief. We discussed what was accomplished and how much was learned in this course. There were a lot of stories—mostly funny, some serious. Early expectations were related and laughed about. The students were reluctant to leave the classroom; they were feeling great about their accomplishments and sad that it was over. The class ended when the postcards were sorted and delivered.

VALUE TO THE STUDENTS

We measured success in terms of value to the students. To make this assessment, we used multidimensional measures.

Management skills and teamwork. The management skills of the students improved throughout the course. They all learned to take meeting notes, set agendas, and run meetings. Presentations with real purpose and real information honed students' skills considerably. Regular constructive feedback was essential in helping everyone on the team learn how to critique without personal attack or defensiveness. Communication skills, especially in the area of conflict resolution, greatly improved. Everyone shared responsibility for project success. The project provided many opportunities for students to take leadership roles, thus enhancing their leadership skills. All students became comfortable with applying project management skills.

Cross-functional integration. These students know firsthand why the design, accounting, marketing, and production departments have to work together seamlessly. Also, they have experienced the difficulties and compromises this can entail and how experiences, skills, and orientation influence the perspective of those on a team. Being able to see how these differences can become divisive, creating a we-they environment, was an important learning experience. The students enjoyed the benefits of successfully working out the problems to produce a completed, well-received product. This project would not have been successful without an interdisciplinary team working together toward the common goal of postcards.

Business objectives. All four business objectives were met. Financially, the postcards were a huge success. The students sold and delivered more than 34,000 postcards. Sales generated \$3,700 in revenue, including a profit of \$1,700. The \$2,000 loan was repaid with an additional \$200 return on investment to the University Benevolent Foundation, and two \$750 scholarships, one in art and one in business, were funded. The students saw these financial measures as an important validation of their success.

Students' course evaluations. Evaluation of the course by the students provided another measure of value. The students were overwhelmingly positive about the course and its learning opportunities. Typical course evaluation comments included "the best class I ever had," "was able to apply previously learned concepts from a variety of classes in different areas," and "really liked working with students from different majors, especially Art." These comments made it clear that students had a greater appreciation for other disciplines than they had had at the beginning of the project.

The one area of student concern was the lack of course structure, even though the students were forewarned that it was their job to determine how to produce postcards. The student concerns resulted from their having little experience in dealing with ambiguity and chaos characteristic of unstructured situations.

The numerical ratings of the instructors and course were based on a 5-point scale. The instructors received an average rating of 4.2; the organization of the course received the lowest average rating of 3.9; the highest average rating of 4.5 was for the item addressing the issue of students' being respected for expressing their own ideas. Average ratings ranging from 4.0 to 4.3 were given for items pertaining to following course objectives: being helpful when students were having difficulties, providing timely feedback, stimulating thinking, and effective use of time. These high ratings indicate that the students derived value from experiencing this course. One of the most gratifying

course evaluations came in the form of students' asking, "When is the next project course going to be?"

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING PROJECT COURSES

In considering a project course, the most important element is the project itself. When possible, select a challenging project with clear-cut external validation of success or failure. Students liked the postcard project for a variety of reasons, not least that it provided an opportunity for them to demonstrate competence, creativity, and commitment. But in the end, selling more than 34,000 postcards at a considerable profit was the ultimate proof that they had completed the assignment successfully.

Provide early opportunities for team success and team building. We mistakenly believed selecting a project name and logo would provide this opportunity. A better approach is to have students undertake tasks whereby they can apply skills and earn the confidence of their teammates through good performance.

Provide sufficient instruction to allow students to succeed. Although most students are exposed to team building, management techniques, project management, public speaking, and so on in earlier courses, do not assume they are prepared to apply this knowledge in the project course. Take the time to hold short refresher sessions and provide plenty of feedback and coaching as they begin applying the skills.

We realize that normally five faculty members are not available to teach a course. We could afford this luxury only because all five faculty members taught the course as an uncompensated overload. Having five faculty members teaching the course lightened the work for all and had the advantage of providing the students with a strong example of teamwork and cross-functional integration. In our case, the postcard project required considerable expertise in art, and the students could not have created a product of comparable quality, nor earned comparable profitability, without the input from a member of the art department faculty. In situations requiring substantial art, engineering, or other technical expertise, one business and one nonbusiness professor should be able to handle enrollments as high as 40 to 50 students engaged in two to four projects. However, one faculty member could teach a similar course, perhaps asking colleagues to provide occasional guest lectures to cover less familiar topics or bringing in a retired executive for more extensive support.

To achieve the objectives, the basic requirements and structure of the course should not change as enrollments increase. Managing multiple project teams could be accomplished by (a) meeting with the groups sequentially

during class; (b) having all groups meet at once with the faculty member roaming between groups; or (c) meeting with different groups on different days. However, if there are any interpersonal problems in a group, that group should take priority in terms of the faculty member's attention. Under these class structures, the groups' minutes are even more important because they keep the faculty member informed about each group's progress.

We were fortunate to receive a \$2,000 loan to provide seed capital for the project through the chancellor's office. But, there are other sources of capital. Local banks are often eager to forge closer relationships with business schools and are willing to provide small loans or even grants for projects. Both banks and other companies may volunteer employees with expertise needed to complete projects. Finally, the amount of capital can be reduced substantially through in-kind donations from suppliers. In our case, the printing company produced our cards at cost and spent considerably more time working with our students than would be the case with their regular customers.

Conclusion

Many business programs have courses that are project based. Some business courses are integrative. Other courses teach management skills or project management. But few courses, in our experience, combine all of these or provide the sense of closure similar to that of the postcard project. The great advantage of this course, and the greatest source of frustration to our students, was that the postcard project required the activities and skills needed for launching a business venture. They are the very skills that have been identified in the literature as critical for functioning in today's business world and that business schools have been criticized for not adequately teaching.

The postcards course was a success. The students designed, produced, and sold university postcards. The students are now more experienced in running meetings, communicating with others in a workgroup, and making presentations. They have a better understanding of what is needed to work on a cross-functional team, assume leadership roles, and manage a complex project. These students have an increased respect for other disciplines and understand the unique contribution each can make to a business venture. Although this project combined business and graphic arts, the skills learned are transferable to other business environments (e.g., healthcare, engineering, theater). The financial success of this project was an absolute thrill for the students. The University Benevolent Foundation was extremely pleased with

the return on its investment both in terms of the value to the students and the financial payback, which builds support for future projects.

Experiences like this class greatly enrich the students' academic programs. Student projects could be developed in many areas, for example, working with the theater department to market and promote a local production, with nursing students to design and implement a promotion of at-cost flu vaccinations, or with the art department to organize and promote the showing of student and faculty works. Projects could also include designing, producing, and selling other campus specialty products such as T-shirts, caps, note cards, posters, calendars, bumper stickers, mugs, and boxer shorts with university, club, or special-order logos. Although it is possible to continue with many other ideas, the important considerations are that the project be unstructured, the needed decision-making information be relatively easy to obtain, and the students be given both authority and responsibility for the project. These projects are out there; one just needs to be opportunistic and willing to make a commitment to a new, innovative approach to teaching and learning.

Appendix Postcards Meeting Agenda—April 1, 1998

1. Select note taker
 2. Prototype group update
 - progress
 - visit to TruLine Lithographing, Inc.
 - review of pictures taken by students
 - other issues
 3. Accounting and finance group update
 - cost analysis of letters versus postcards
 - other issues
 4. Focus group update
 - date and time
 - moderator's guide progress
 - other issues
 5. Sales group update
 - sales plan
 - flyer
 - other issues
 6. Update the timeline
 7. New issues
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