

## OBTC 2009: Teaching Conference for Management Educators

JUNE 10-13, 2009 | COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON, CHARLESTON, SC

Logged in as **James G. Clawson** | [Account Home Page](#) | [Log Out](#)**Manuscript Title****Wow Factor Course Designs: How to Engage Today's Students** [Click here if you need to change your manuscript title](#)**Manuscript Abstract**

Culture evolves and shapes the learning styles of our students. How can we keep up with that evolution and respond with course designs that capture the imagination and engagement of each new student cohort? Surely generational characteristics, technology, global influences, institutional cultures along with emerging insights on human nature must be considered. This session is designed to engage participants in the development of a best practices set of design principles to guide instructors in designing courses that not only facilitate learning but give learning a rocket booster.

 Your abstract can be up to 100 words long (**your abstract is currently 87 words long**).**Manuscript File** **I WANT TO USE MY ORIGINALLY SUBMITTED MANUSCRIPT FILE FOR THE PROCEEDINGS** (view file) **I WANT TO SELECT A NEW MANUSCRIPT FOR THE PROCEEDINGS**

Browse to select your manuscript file from your computer (Rich text format or MS Word files only)

 Please ensure that your manuscript adheres to the **proceedings formatting guidelines**. Your manuscript must be submitted as a **single file**. If your submission consists of several documents, please merge them into a single document before submitting.**Author 1 Details****Name:** James G. Clawson**Affiliation / Institution:** University of Virginia[Click here if you need to update this author's details](#)

## Wow Factor Course Designs: How to Engage Today's Students

James Clawson, Darden GSB, University of Virginia

Every cohort of students represents a thin-cross-sectional-slice of cultural evolution that matures at some point into generational patterns. Decades ago Morris Massey's *People Puzzle* gave us a good foundation for thinking about generational characteristics. The literature on Gen X, Y, and Millennials have added to our understanding, but the target--highly engaged, passionately learning students--continues to move. This session is intended and designed to bring the experience of all participants to bear on the question of how to create "Wow Factor" course designs that will be popular, engaging, instructive, rigorous, inspiring, memorable, applicable and sticky. (Participants will have a chance to modify this definition of "wow.")

### Practicing What You Preach

This 60 or 90 minutes session will begin with a rapid-fire introduction of a series of concepts that create a set of contextual realities that all instructors must (or not) deal with. These include the habituality of human nature, the motivational impact of obligation versus choice, cultural legacies (as outlined by Malcolm Gladwell in *Outliers*), rapid advancements in technology and their influence on learning and learners, business model alternatives (sustainable value versus "flip and harvest"), the nature of work (intrinsic vs. extrinsic values), adult learning theory, problem solving legacy (vs. the creation mindset ala Robert Fritz' *The Path of Least Resistance*), the nature of success (introducing a new definition "success is when after it's over, you want to do it again—because then you'll get better at it"), and university institutional culture and constraints. All of these will be put, one per page, on POST-IT flip charts and posted in the room *prior* to starting (to save time) so that they are available for constant review. Participants will be invited to offer additions to this list of contextual factors in the first segment of the session. The discussion will be augmented on-demand with quotes on slides and video clips.

The second, very short, module will focus on the resources or raw materials available to instructors as they design courses. A starter list will be on the wall. Participants will be invited to add to it. These materials and techniques include lectures, cases, experiential exercises, web-sites, self-assessments, etc.

The real fun begins in the third module. Here the goal is to capture the collective wisdom of the participants in order to develop a picture of best practices in creating high Wow Factor courses. I plan to shape the discussion broadly into chunks that relate to class preparation (assignments, readings, etc.), in-class activity, and post-class activity (like grading, counseling, exams and papers). See Figure 1. We will capture the highlights of the discussion on POST-IT (sticky) flip charts and distribute a summary to participants after the conference.

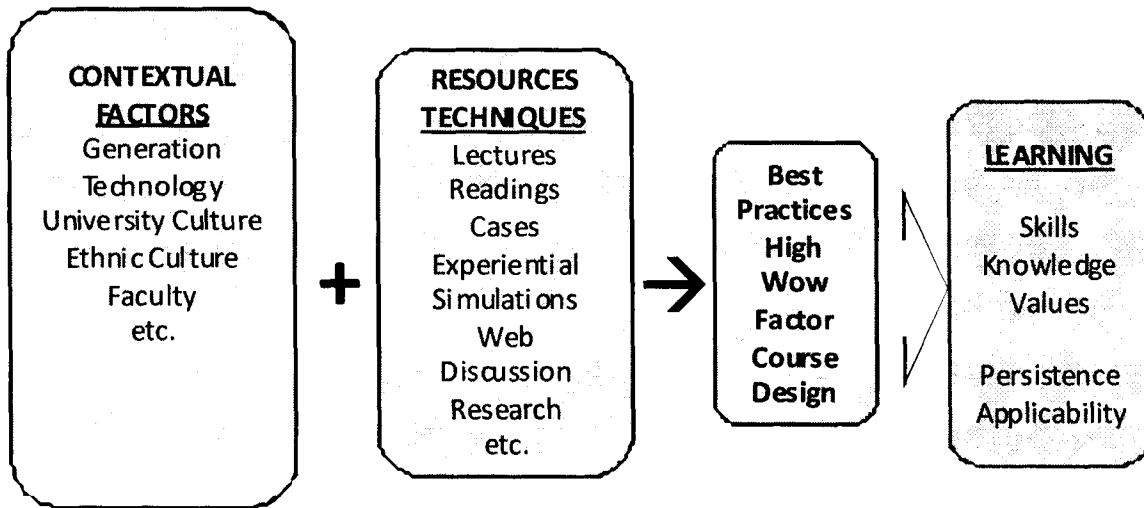
conference, "From Good Teaching to Good Learning," a session that invites instructors of all stages of seniority to pause, reflect, and reconsider how they might make their courses more powerful for the current generation of students and thereby enhance the stickiness of their learning seems appropriate. Gladwell's *Outliers* makes a powerful case that outliers are in fact not so much outliers as we usually think of them (heroically blessed with IQ and talent), but rather the product of timing, culture, luck, driving persistence, and ability to seize opportunities of chance when they arise. He also argues that if we are to make success available to all, we need to restructure our global, national and educational systems to remove irrelevant barriers to success and to create more opportunities for all. A constant and determined effort at keeping our course designs up-to-date and current for the constantly evolving student population would seem to be a critical instructor skill. This session intends to press participants to be aware of that criticality and to determine to keep their designs current.

### **Setting**

The objectives of this session would be best served if we had

1. Computer projector and screen. (I can bring my own speakers.)
2. 2 Flip Chart sturdy easels with 3M POST-IT flip charts and marking pens. (I'll bring extra pens.)
3. Room with lots of blank wall space for hanging flip charts.
4. Amphitheater room or flat classroom with an aisle down the middle so one can get close to the participants.
- 5.

Figure 1. **Creating Wow Factor Courses**



The last, brief closing chunk of the session will ask some reflective questions similar to these:

1. Is this too much to ask for? Are we setting ourselves up for failure and disappointment?
2. What are we leaving out?
3. What would **we** have to do differently to make our courses more wowing?
4. What do you want to do going forward to bring your course designs into closer alignment with today's students' realities? (share this with your neighbor and collect on a flip chart, time permitting)

### **Commentary**

There have been a number of sessions over the years at OBTC on course and syllabus design. One poignant recent example a couple of years ago had a very prominent figure in the field say, "I used to think that creating a syllabus was simply matching a series of readings with class dates." I was staggered to hear that comment especially since sessions at OBTC prior had long since gone way beyond

what should be in a...

## Syllabus

- Institutional Mandated starts

- Required material

- Course purpose

- Learning Obj.

- AACSB

- what will this do for you

- Now's

- Personalized syllabus

- interactive in some way

- Choice components

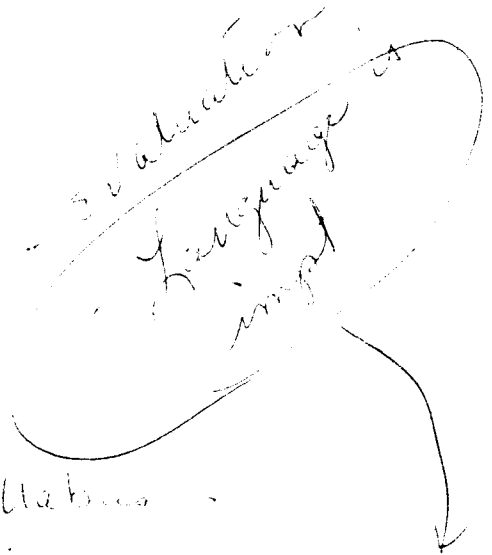
- Searchable

- Videos <sup>intro</sup> / u-tube

↓  
podcasts

- Podcast / youtube

- photographs



## We are the undergraduates. We want:

- a "reasonable" workload - Many of us have other commitments such as <sup>and athletics</sup>
- an active, fun and entertaining
- the content to be relevant to us, to our context and experiences
- the material to make sense on the face of it
- the course to be practical, to help me get a job
- the detailed PowerPoint slides to be posted on Blackboard (or comparable technology) - many of us cannot afford to buy the textbook
- a sense of the big picture, the gestalt
- step-by-step instruction on how to succeed

We see success as a given - I start with an A to be kept or lost

We expect that if we follow the rules, do the basics, we will get it's

Some of us do not understand that A's are reserved for those who excel.

- our professors to be credible
  - instant gratification - immediate replies to the emails I send from my Blackberry - we want to know when you will be available for us outside of class
  - psychological safety
  - to know that our professors understand us and can relate to us and our problems
  - discipline provided by our profs - email reminders of assignments and deadlines, e.g. (Our "helicopter parents" used to provide that for us.)
- We are open to community involvement (but our busy schedules may make it difficult to find the time)



## Value for \$

Many have \$ support from their org,  
don't realize org doesn't have a plan  
for them w/ new degree (but they  
might "expect");

Want to be engaged, entertaining, kept awake in  
the case of learning classes

Want their time to be respected

In some cases

expect to get good grades  
simply by showing up  
want to do the minimum

Want to be able to understand instructor  
(accents can issue)

Resistance to group assignments

Entitlement

Want to know what bare minimum is

Have not always thought they want  
what they want out of degree program

College itself important, may not have  
set personal goals

To be spoon fed

Easy access to materials

looking for loopholes  
easiest way

# Methodologies

## Delivery Methods

- All consistent > take & use what fits your school's requirement
- Everything ~~shakes~~
- Cases: must read chapters to understand case
- Powerpoint to minimum - mainly for organization
- Lecture: Max 30%

## Ex. - Lecture 20%

- brief video / film to encapsulate concept
- Then experiential < <sup>put into context for practical</sup> or <sup>deeper theoretical learning</sup> when teaches
- debrief / brief < class as whole > teaching each other
- full on helix < guided by instructor questions
- summarized by instructor

## TEAM-BASED LEARNING

7 weeks  
40%

Quiz on chapter before coverage in class

1st Individually

about  
30 mins

2nd Team quiz immediately followed: discussion, teaching each other

\* \* Facilitate / Create environment where students share responsibility for their learning using # of methods

"We are going to use the textbook you had to spend so much to buy."

Cases - must read to understand case  
mixed feelings, too long / too short

# Constraints/Consideration for the New Face

- ① ~ Students are taking other classes / have jobs / athletics
  - ② ~ Structural issues, ~ limitation due to accreditation
  - ③ ~ Nearly impossible to integrate w/ other classes
  - ④ ~ Syllabus structure/issues
  - ⑤ ~ How does it fit into a general course syllabus
  - ⑥ ~ college / school missions - branding
  - ⑦ ~ time issue
  - ⑧ ~ time spent outside of class
  - ⑨ ~ any grades
  - ⑩ ~ cost cutting
- students w/ disabilities  
time: teach vs research  
resources: a library / exercise

---

include pictures

# TECHNOLOGY

## 1) VIRTUAL REALITY CLASSROOM

MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED

ELECTRONICALLY, AVAILABLE  
ON TELEPHONE, LAPTOP, ETC.

- 2) Well Equipped Classroom
- WIRELESS, BLACKBOARD, COLLECTIVE EDITING FOR TEAMS
  - REMOTE ACCESS, ON-LINE
  - STREAMING VIDEO, MULTIPLE MONITORS FOR 2 WAY VIEWING
  - LARGE ROOMS WITH MOVABLE CHAIRS
  - ~~SMALL ROOMS WITH MOVABLE CHAIRS~~
- 3) NO TECHNOLOGY, JUST INTERACTION  
CELL PHONES + TEXT JAMMING

CONTACT JOE SUTTER

FOR DETAILS.