Situational Analysis Worksheet Example

MGT 3060: Opportunity & Entrepreneurship

Summer Online Version for Main Campus Students

Specific Context of the Teaching and Learning Situation

- How many students will be in the class?
- Is the course lower division, upper division, or graduate level?
- How long and frequent will the class meetings be (if in-person or synchronous)?
- How will the course be delivered: in-person, online, or some combination of both?

Your Analysis:

- <u>Section Size</u>: Sections are capped at 30, but we often have to add a few extra students. There is pressure on the Management Department to increase section sizes.
- <u>Course Level</u>: The course is "junior level." MGT 3060 has no course-specific prerequisite, but students must meet the requirements for enrollment in a 3000 level College of Business course.
- <u>Frequency and Length of Class Meetings</u>: The distance education version of MGT 3060 uses an asynchronous format. The Management Department's online courses for campus students traditionally use a synchronous format as well. Thus, there are no 'meetings' for online MGT 3060.
- <u>Course Format</u>: The course is offered in-person during the fall and spring semesters. It is offered online to distance education students in the fall. We are also offering it to main campus students in an online format during summer sessions. The summer schedule is very compressed – 37 days counting weekends; it is difficult to compress the kind of learning entrepreneurship requires. This situational analysis focuses on the asynchronous, online version of MGT 3060 offered to main campus students during the summer.

Expectations of External Groups

- What does society at large need and expect in terms of the education of these students, in general or with regard to this particular subject?
- Does the state or related professional societies have professional accreditation requirements that affect the goals of this learning experience?
- What curricular goals does the institution or department have that affect this course or program?

Your Analysis:

- Societal Pressure: There is some external pressure for entrepreneurship programs to generate new businesses, and this can translate into pressure to push students toward entrepreneurial careers. The startup activity of students is included in ranking entrepreneurship programs, and Appalachian State University does participate in at least one ranking. But pushing students toward an entrepreneurial career is a mistake because such a career is not a fit for many students. Also, there is substantial doubt in society as to whether entrepreneurship can be taught. The value of entrepreneurship courses like MGT 3060 is frequently questioned both inside and outside academia.

- Accreditation Pressure: Teaching this course or any undergraduate COB course requires a masters degree in a related business discipline. It is difficult to find experienced entrepreneur who have the required graduation education.

- Departmental Pressure: MGT 3060 serves as the capstone course for students pursuing a Minor in Entrepreneurial Studies for non-business students. It is also a required course for business students pursuing a Minor in Advanced Entrepreneurship. Furthermore, it is a required course for all students majoring in Management. MGT 3060 is a prerequisite for all other entrepreneurship courses except for MGT 3650 – Social Entrepreneurship. MGT 3060 is thus expect to prepare students to several curricular pathways, each of which has different needs. These differing needs create a tension for the design of the course.

Nature of the Subject

- Is this subject matter convergent (working toward a single right answer) or divergent (working toward multiple, equally valid interpretations)?
- Is this subject primarily cognitive or does it include the learning of significant physical skills as well?
- Is this field of study relatively stable, in a period of rapid change, or in a situation in which competing paradigms are challenging each other?

Your Analysis:

- Convergent or Divergent: Entrepreneurship encompasses both convergent and divergent thinking. The convergent topics are rudimentary but are nonetheless critical to success. Much of the subject matter is divergent in that there is no single correct answer but all answers to the questions that occur during the entrepreneurial process need to be consistent with each other.

- Type of Knowledge: Overall, Entrepreneurship is an applied discipline; it is more of a practice than a science or set of principles. Outside of academia, entrepreneurship is generally "learned by doing". The practice of entrepreneurship is not as well codified as other business practices, and it is not clear how extensively it could be codified. Entrepreneurship is also a very cross-disciplinary subject involving – to varying degrees – all of the functional areas of business. MGT

3060 seeks to help students to acquire relevant declarative knowledge from several business disciplines and to develop tacit (how to) knowledge underlying opportunity recognition.

- <u>Stability of the Field</u>: Entrepreneurship is among the newest disciplines in business schools and is changing relatively rapidly. Its legitimacy as an academic discipline is not established. There is still much doubt regarding the extent to which Entrepreneurship can be taught. There are no dominate or competing paradigms to speak of. The quality of teaching materials is improving. There are extensive non-academic materials available for learning entrepreneurship, but these materials generally lack rigor.

Characteristics of the Learners

- What is the life situation of the students at the moment: full-time student, part-time working student, family responsibilities, work responsibilities, and the like? How might COVID-19 be affecting the students?
- What life or professional goals do students have that relate to this learning experience?
- What are their reasons for enrolling? Are learners taking your course to earn a degree or expand their professional skills in this subject area?
- What prior experiences, knowledge, skills, and attitudes do the students have regarding the subject?
- What are the students' learning styles?
- What are the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of students? What unique challenges might students of different cultural or ethnic backgrounds face in this learning environment? Will there be language challenges? How will your course create an inclusive environment?
- Do the learners have the technology skills and access necessary to complete assignments?
- What equity issues might affect the students? Do all students have equal access to the resources needed to be successful, such as broadband Internet, computing equipment, or a study environment conducive to learning?

Your Analysis:

- <u>Students' Life Situations</u>: The students are main campus students, but they are not likely to be in Boone during the course. Some may reside outside Boone, but most are likely to leave Boone for the summer. Most students are probably working part-time; a few may have full-time jobs or internships for the summer. The vast majority of these main campus students are traditional students who do not have family responsibilities. COVID-19 is likely to be causing stress and anxiety for the students. Some may have lost part-time jobs needed to help pay for college expenses. Some students may not have accommodations suitable to focused learning. Access to adequate Internet bandwidth and/or computing equipment could be an issue for some students.

- <u>Students' Goals</u>: Many or most of the students pursuing one of the minors in Entrepreneurship have an interest in becoming an entrepreneur, but how many such students there will be a summer online MGT 3060 section is unknown.
- <u>Students' Reasons for Enrolling</u>: Very few students take MGT 3060 as an elective. Almost all the students who take the course are seeking to fulfill degree requirements. The students pursuing one of the Entrepreneurship minors are generally interested in the subject matter and are motivated by this interest as well. Because the course lack prerequisites, it does attract some students are not very motivated because they are neither interested in the subject matter nor need this specific course for their degree.
- <u>Students' Experiences, Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes</u>: About two-thirds of the students will be business students. Non-business students can take the course as well.   The students enrolled in MGT 3060 may have had little or no training in the functional areas of business, especially in Accounting, Finance, and Marketing, but such training is excellent preparation for the course. Compared to other business courses, MGT 3060 requires a moderate amount of writing. Many students have weak writing skills. A few have very poor writing skills. Although business students often work in teams, the business curriculum currently does not provide any training on how to work in teams.
- <u>Students' Learning Styles</u>: The rate of dyslexia is much higher among entrepreneurs. There seems to be a similar pattern among Entrepreneurship students. Many seem to learn better from hands-on activities, videos, or audio recordings. Traditional approaches, e.g., readings and lectures, do not work as well for entrepreneurship students. Entrepreneurship students tend to be easier to engage in discussion.
- <u>Cultural and Ethnic Backgrounds</u> – While there is a high rate of entrepreneurship among immigrants, females and some minority populations tend to be underrepresented. These trends are reflected in enrollments in MGT 3060. Research suggests that the lack of enough mentors is a substantial contributing factor. It is important that female and minority entrepreneurs be well represented in the examples and case studies shared in the course as well as among the guest speakers. Using materials created by female and minority authors helps to build an inclusive environment as well. Language has not been an issue in MGT 3060 except with a few international exchange students. A few students who are very interested in Entrepreneurship often dominate class discussion if so allowed. Maintaining broader discussions is essential to supporting inclusivity.
- <u>Technology Skills and Access</u> – MGT 3060 is requires only moderate technology and technology skills. Familiarity with the LMS, AsULearn, is essential, but some transfer students and exchanges students do not have such familiarity and need to be link to the training materials offered by the Center for Academic Excellence. All technology employed in MGT 3060 is available to students at no charge.
- <u>Equity</u> – Because MGT 3060 is offered asynchronously, the bandwidth requirements are modest. Occasionally, a few students do not have convenient access to bandwidth adequate for watching and uploading videos. Although not required, students often use smartphones and smartphone apps to coordinate their group work. Some students may not have a smartphone.

Campus equipment in labs and the library help compensate for equity issues, but most of the students enrolled in online MGT 3060 during the summer are away from campus; this exasperates equity issues. It is vital that MGT 3060 be designed in a way to minimize equity issues.

Characteristics of the Teacher

- What prior experiences, knowledge, skills, and attitudes do you have in terms of the subject of this course?
- Have you taught this subject before or is this the first time?
- Will you teach this course again in the future or is this the last time?
- Do you have a high level of competence and confidence in this subject or is this on the margins of your zone of competence?
- What prior experiences, knowledge, skills, and attitudes do you have in terms of the process of teaching? (That is, how much do you know about effective strategies for teaching online?)

Your Analysis:

- Instructor's Experiences, Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Toward the Subject: Ph.D. programs are very narrow and are not good preparation for teaching subjects as broad and applied as Entrepreneurship. M.B.A. programs actually provide better background. I do have a M.B.A. in addition to my Ph.D., and this breath of training is useful. Students like to work on their own business ideas in MGT 3060, and they often have unique expertise related to the business idea that they select. I do not and cannot have expertise in all of the different industries targeted by students. This lack of industry expertise makes it difficult for me to help all of the students develop their business ideas. I do have some industry experience – more than average, but my modest industry knowledge is a limitation.
- Instructor's Experience with Course: I taught a similar course at the University of Alabama for 5 years and created MGT 3060 when I came to Appalachian State University. I average two sections MGT 3060 per semester at Appalachian State University until 5 years ago when I began teaching International Management because of department needs.
- Plans for the Instructor to Teach Course Again: It is unlikely that I will teach MGT 3060 again in the foreseeable future.
- Instructor's Teaching Knowledge, Experiences, and Skills: Although my Ph.D. is in Management with a concentration in Strategy, I have taught primarily Entrepreneurship and International Management. I just completed my 19th year of teaching full-time. I have some industry and entrepreneurial experience – more than most tenure-track faculty who teach Entrepreneurship, but not enough such experience. I won the College of Business's teaching award in 2013 and am an effective teacher. I feel that teaching is the highest priority in my job, and I am passionate about teaching. I also enjoy teaching and interacting with students. I have been teaching online

for 6 years and have averaged 2 online course per year. I have completed several workshops related to online teaching, including two offered by Quality Matters.

Special Pedagogical Challenge

- What is the special situation in this course that challenges the students and the teacher in the desire to make this a meaningful and important learning experience?

Your Analysis:

- <u>Special Pedagogical Challenge</u>: Entrepreneurship courses like MGT 3060 are experiential courses requiring extensive feedback from the instructor. Providing detailed, prompt feedback to students has been the major challenge for me in teaching Entrepreneurship. I have developed and implemented rubric to ameliorate this difficulty, but it remains a substantial challenge for me, especially for the summer, online version of MGT 3060.