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THE EFFECT OF INNOVATIVE FINANCE COURSE DESIGN ON LEARNING AND  
ATTITUDE OF NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS IN THE NON-TRADITIONAL MBA  
PROGRAM

Abstract

This study examines an innovative course pedagogy developed to increase learning of advanced financial concepts and positively affect attitudes of non-traditional graduate students toward the discipline of finance in a non-traditional Master of Business Administration program. The hypothesis tested is that use of innovative instructional methods, based on a combination of student selected, application-oriented, teaching methods in a graduate finance course yield higher post-course learning assessment scores, and more positive post-course attitudes toward the discipline of finance and the MBA finance course.

In the quasi-experimental study, control groups were given instruction in advanced financial concepts utilizing traditional classroom methods, a lecture-exercise-exam format. Treatment groups were given a choice of areas for focus and application of financial concepts. The areas offered to the treatment groups for concentration and application in three of the six class sections were Real Estate Finance, Investments, International Finance, and New Venture (entrepreneurial) Finance. Class groups in the study were from the John Brown University MBA program.

ANOVA and correlation analysis was utilized to explore differences in metrics designed to assess student learning and attitude, with multiple regression analysis used to identify casual relationships in the data including examination of precedent variables with the potential of affecting analysis results. The study shows that while the treatment groups describe a higher level of post-course attitude toward the course and discipline of finance, post-course assessment of learning revealed no significant difference between the two groups.

This research contributes to the discussion of delivering non-traditional graduate education to non-traditional students using distinctive teaching methods that fit the unique needs of adult learners without sacrificing quality, focusing directly on the graduate finance course. With few exceptions, an advanced course in corporate or managerial finance is included in the business core of MBA curriculums.