

rism apply to all papers they write in college, not simply those written for English classes.

Over the years, a number of students (including many I have not taught) have come to me for help with their research papers in sociology, psychology, and environmental science. It is disheartening to see these papers laden with plagiarized passages. While I do point out the problem to these students, all instructors should work together to help students master paraphrasing and documentation to eliminate a problem that may not be intentional but is sadly common in student research. I have found the preceding approach to work quite well, and I seldom find plagiarism now even in rough drafts. *

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EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING 2020

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Experiential Learning 2020 — perfect vision in review and assessment or forward thinking into the year 2020? Either direction, the importance of experiential learning activities is most evident in the performance ability and understanding level of our graduates on the job. Those graduates who were able to experience such activities have a better understanding of the "school-to-work" philosophy and demonstrate more effective critical thinking and problem-solving skills. A "perfect vision (20-20)" is the best description that applies to experiential learners as our workforce enters the 21st century. Students with experiential learning experience are in a better position to learn and develop those skills and characteristics that will be needed early in their careers. Today's experiential learners become tomorrow's work force.

Characteristics to search for in experiential learners include: ability to accept responsibility, honesty, integrity, sincerity, eagerness, enthusiasm, initiative, intelligence, oral communication and other verbal skills, problem-solving and critical thinking skills, self-esteem, confidence, creativity, listening and reasoning skills, attentiveness, and leadership skills. Having some or all of these characteristics moves the experiential learner into an operational mode that can be more productive to all parties involved. Certain management skills will surface over time that allow the experiential learner to further accept increasing responsibility.

Regardless of one's job title or position of responsibility, mastering such skills as time management, project planning, and personnel management is critical. Any manager has always exercised "perfect vision" as an assessment tool and determined that each needs to be more effective. We all need to be able

to get the job done, within a budget and according to quality standards. Effective managers know how to follow rules and policy guidelines as team players, to plan effectively and appropriate economically, and to manage their plan from orientation to completion. All managers are actually experiential learners as new challenges are identified and addressed. With this knowledge, managers can better communicate with the newer experiential learners.

Many available paths promise success. But, which format do you choose? This decision can only be answered after careful analysis of the subject case study. To improve management skills and results, implementing and following some basic objectives in time, project and human resource planning are necessary. The initial four strategies listed below address the establishment of a plan, and the latter involve the management of the plan.

1. *Always establish a clear goal.* The clearer you are about the end result of the project, the more effectively you can plan how to get there. Also realize that each employee and experiential learner involved in the chain of action must be clear about the goal. Setting a clear goal is a lot harder than what it sounds. It takes a concrete effort to make sure the goal is measurable and clearly understood.

2. *Always determine the objectives.* Establish objectives for each employee and experiential learner on the project. This approach allows each to better understand the responsibility and importance of his/her role. You must keep the overall goal in front of people and reward their successful efforts.

3. *Always establish checkpoints and time estimates.* Establish intervals throughout the process for progress checks and review to keep the common goal in alignment. Pay strict attention to detail to be sure of including all necessary components for completion. Determine the priority of and relationship between the segments.

4. *Communicate the project in a picture format.* Use charts or chalkboards to indicate the project identity and time intervals involved. The employee and experiential learner can better understand this schematic approach.

5. *Always work to understand people.* The most basic and fundamental rule about successfully managing projects is: you can't do it alone. Your strategies for managing a project depend upon your understanding of people. To be a success-

ful manager, you have to put yourself in the other person's shoes and be sensitive to why people do what they do.

6. *Always reinforce commitment.* Make every effort to maintain the employee's and experiential learner's commitment to the project. This is a team approach, not a dictatorial strategy. Efforts may be rewarded by visible awards, monies or verbal recognition. However, extend every effort to minimize project and personal jealousies.

7. *Always keep employees and experiential learners informed.* The key to improving communication problems is to get ideas across from the perspective of the team and to continuously give and receive feedback.

8. *Always build agreements.* People become concerned with things they care about. As discussions take place and conflict arises, rechannel these energies toward job and goal completion. Practice brainstorming sessions in route to improve results.

9. *Always recognize authority and delegate to responsible people.* Remember, employees and experiential learners look for honest, competent leaders who empower them through providing direction and delegating responsibility and tasks.

10. *Always encourage risk taking and creativity.* Make goals and deadlines clear, but allow for errors without intimidating or inhibiting people who try new approaches. Remember, an error doesn't become a mistake until you refuse to correct it.

Remember, develop with dependable people a sound plan that is flexible enough to handle the inevitable, unexpected problems. And be reminded that management can be defined as "getting things done through other people." Experiential learners are learning "on the job" through activities that are challenging and offer a degree of satisfaction upon completion. The experiential learner brings a keener eyesight to the workplace through past experiences — a 2020 vision. *

References

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