

Chapter 12

Using Ignatian Pedagogy in a Business Policy Course: Experience, Reflection, and Action for Strategic Decision Making

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ABSTRACT

Ignatian pedagogy is at the core of Jesuit education and is the foundation that has supported teaching in Jesuit universities in many areas. However, its use in the teaching of Business Policy has not been sufficiently examined. This chapter describes one way in which the basic precepts of Ignatian pedagogy can be applied in a Business Policy course for greater student benefit. The Ignatian approach is able to incorporate the analytical and the practical components needed for effective strategic management teaching, and therefore is uniquely suited to train business professionals. The main contention of this chapter is that Ignatian pedagogy offers a robust teaching approach for the Business Policy classroom. The chapter identifies and explains the Ignatian pedagogy concepts of context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation as they relate to Business Policy instruction. As an illustration, the chapter applies Ignatian pedagogy precepts to an undergraduate capstone Business Policy course.

INTRODUCTION¹

Ignatian Pedagogy is at the core of Jesuit education. It is the foundation that has supported teaching in Jesuit universities in many areas, such as service learning (Driggers, 2012; Kloppenborg, Hahnenberg, & Prosak-Beres, 2012), social justice (Chubbuck, 2007), leadership (Lowney, 2005), leadership training (Lecourt & Pauchant, 2011), among others. The Ignatian approach has also been used in business education, including creating an accounting ethics course (Van Hise & Massey, 2010), teaching business ethics (Balotsky & Steingard, 2006), and writing reflective assignments (Hidding, Scheidenhelm, & Milligan, 2014). However, prior research on Ignatian Pedagogy has not examined its use in addressing the complex managerial issues that arise in Business Policy courses, which are focused on business strategy formulation, implementation, and execution. This chapter describes one way in which the basic precepts of Ignatian Pedagogy can be used in Business Policy courses. The Ignatian approach is able to incorporate the analytical and the practical components needed for effective strategic management teaching, and therefore is uniquely suited to train business professionals. The main contention of this paper is that Ignatian Pedagogy offers a robust teaching approach for the Business Policy classroom.

AN IGNATIAN APPROACH FOR BUSINESS POLICY INSTRUCTION

An Ignatian approach to teaching Business Policy would be based on three principles which differentiate it from traditional approaches. First an Ignatian approach would see the organization as having duties and obligations towards a wide range of stakeholders, going beyond the shareholder maximization paradigm, resulting in the organization becoming an instrument for the improvement of society. Second, an Ignatian approach would include the prominent use of experience as a key vehicle for learning. Lastly, an Ignatian approach would include reflection as a necessary component to internalize experiences. This section examines each of these principles in greater depth while the next section describes the five components of Ignatian Pedagogy as they relate to the study of strategic management and other topics of the Business Policy course, covering their characteristics, rationale, and implications.

An Ignatian approach to teaching Business Policy would necessarily include an ethics-based theoretical framework focusing on value creation for all stakeholders of the firm, such as the conceptual framework offered by Porth (2017). In contrast to other models, the theme of this framework is value-creation for key stakeholders of the firm with particular emphasis on customers, employees, and shareholders. This emphasis facilitates the reconciliation of possible conflicting claims that may exist among customers, employees, owners, and possibly other stakeholders, stressing an effort to find balanced approaches to address the tradeoffs which inevitably are present. Porth (2017) suggests a three-stage process to examine the moral and ethical consequences of strategic choices, as recommended by Cavanagh (2006). In the first stage the facts of a given selected strategy are gathered and potential consequences (both intended and unintended) are assessed for each of the stakeholders involved. In the second stage the strategy is evaluated by asking three categories of questions. These categories include a utilitarian estimation of the aggregate welfare that the proposed strategy will produce for the various stakeholders, a verification that the proposed strategy respects rights and duties of each stakeholder, and an examination of the proposed strategy in light of the principles of fairness and justice. In the third and last stage the answers to the prior analyses are considered to determine whether or not the proposed strategy is ethical. The

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