

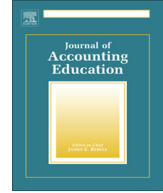


ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

J. of Acc. Ed.

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jaccedu



Best Practice

Accounting “Boot Camp”



Mark Jackson*

Department of Accounting and Information Systems, College of Business Administration, University of Nevada, Reno/0026, Reno, NV 89557-0205, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Available online 13 February 2014

Keywords:

Intermediate accounting
Student expectations
Student motivation
Accounting education
Performance outcomes

ABSTRACT

This study examines the effectiveness of a program designed to set appropriate student expectations and motivate students to put forth the necessary effort to succeed in intermediate accounting and other upper-division accounting courses. At a mid-sized public university in the Western US many students enrolled in Intermediate Accounting I (their first upper-division course) struggle with the rigor and academic demands of this course, resulting in failure rates of 30–45%. In many cases, students new to upper-division courses appear to lack a commitment to, or awareness of, the effort needed for success in the accounting program. The faculty implemented an accounting “Boot Camp” to prepare new accounting majors for the expectations of the program. This paper details the implementation of the Boot Camp and reviews its effectiveness by comparing the performance of attendees with the performance of non-attendees. After controlling for other contributing factors, the evidence suggests that attendees outperform their non-attending peers in Intermediate Accounting I. This relatively low-cost intervention should be attractive to faculty concerned about the common problem of students failing and then retaking intermediate accounting.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Many university students who successfully navigate their lower division or ‘core’ courses stumble, earning lower grades or failing classes, when they begin taking upper-division courses after declaring

* Tel.: +1 775 784 4823; fax: +1 775 784 8044.

E-mail address: markjackson@unr.edu

a major. At a mid-size, public university in the Western US, students were performing poorly, failing Intermediate Accounting I at a rate of 30–45%. Students who retook the course passed and ultimately graduated at a rate consistent with those who passed on their first attempt, suggesting the problem was not student capability. In discussion, most students who previously failed indicated they were not prepared for the rigor of upper-division courses or that they lacked commitment to put forth the effort required in these courses. The accounting faculty developed an accounting “Boot Camp” to better prepare students for success in upper-division accounting courses. The camp was designed to set appropriate student expectations and motivate students to put forth the necessary effort to succeed. Comments from surveys suggest the camp successfully managed student expectations and motivation. Empirical evidence indicates students who attended the Boot Camp earned higher grades and had a lower failure rate than students who did not attend.

1.1. The Boot Camp

Several weeks before the beginning of term, all students enrolled in Intermediate Accounting I are emailed an invitation to the Boot Camp, and asked to RSVP. The camp takes place on the Saturday before classes begin and runs approximately 3½ hours. The program begins with the Associate Dean of the College of Business, who provides welcoming words and highlights the outstanding reputation of the accounting program. This is followed by the intermediate accounting professor, who congratulates the students on getting into the major and discusses the rigor of Intermediate Accounting and other upcoming accounting courses. The entire accounting faculty is present and introduced. The students are then divided into four groups, and pairs of instructors visit each group in four ‘breakout’ sessions. Each 30-min session is designed to review some aspect of accounting that students should remember from their introductory accounting course (e.g. adjusting entries, flow of information to the financial statements, time value of money), introduce somewhat intimidating intermediate level material, and then follow up with student application. One breakout session includes the intermediate accounting professor along with graduate teaching assistants, engaged in a discussion of effective study strategies. Refreshments are provided by the department midway through the breakout sessions so that students and faculty may socialize. During this break a guest speaker from industry (typically one who recruits local graduates) also visits and outlines what employers are expecting from newly hired accounting majors. After the breakout sessions conclude, students and faculty gather together again for a few concluding remarks and a gift for the students.¹ Exhibit 1 provides an example of the Boot Camp schedule.

The various components of the Boot Camp are not arbitrary. Prior literature suggests student motivation is higher in the presence of good student–instructor relationships, and when students believe a program has a good external reputation (Bennett, 2003). Content reviews and study strategy reviews have been used successfully to prepare students for advanced accounting courses (Beattie, Collins, & McInnes, 1997; Sanders & Willis, 2009). The opening comments from the associate dean, the presence of a speaker from practice, and the content of the breakout sessions are all carefully designed to integrate these successful practices. While these components are designed to motivate and assist students, the overall theme and purpose of the camp comes across clearly: raise student expectations of the rigor of upper-division coursework, and motivate students to put forth the necessary effort to succeed in these courses.

Several aspects of this arrangement, such as discussions of effort needed or review of prior material, have of course been tried before, and could be accomplished in a regular classroom setting. However, the anticipation of the event among students, as well as the enthusiasm generated by bringing together all new accounting students and all accounting faculty, along with the Associate Dean and a guest speaker, are difficult to capture in a regular class session. At the conclusion of each camp, the predominate student comment is that the camp was a “wake up call” that will motivate them to work

¹ Accounting departments considering adopting this process may be concerned about the costs. The faculty graciously supports this arrangement without monetary compensation. The guest speakers likewise are generous with their time. Refreshments consist of bagels from a local bakery and bottled water. Finally, the gift is a tee shirt in school colors with the school logo, along with the word ‘Accounting.’ A local CPA firm generously sponsors these shirts. Interested readers are welcome to contact the author for more detail on organizing the Boot Camp.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/359392>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/359392>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)