Friday Forum and the AICPA Core Competency Framework:
Honing Students' Personal Competencies

Abstract

Communication. Interaction. Leadership. Technology. Problem solving. Professional demeanor. Project management. These seven generic or personal competencies are among the 20 identified by the AICPA in its Core Competency Framework (1999). Divided into three categories – broad business perspective, functional, and personal – these competencies are the essential building blocks for successful performance in the accounting profession. To meet AACSB assurance of learning (AOL) requirements, several undergraduate accounting programs use the Core Competency Framework (CCF) to guide their curricular decisions and include a collection of the competencies in their program AOL of learning outcomes. As the content commonly falls within the scope of accounting and business courses, some might claim it is easier for faculty to foster their students' functional and broad business perspective competencies. But as the breadth and depth of what could or should be covered in accounting and business courses constantly expands, it can become more difficult to incorporate certain of the personal competencies in those same courses.

This paper shares one learning technique for honing undergraduate students' personal competencies. The senior accounting capstone course at a small Midwestern private liberal college includes a weekly seminar series, called the Friday Forum, where students and practitioners meet to discuss a current professional accounting article. Since Spring 2004, when the course was first offered, Friday Forum has evolved into a key course component. Following a brief review of the relevant literature, the paper continues with an overview of the capstone course, describes the workings of the Friday Forum, provides student and practitioner feedback about Friday Forum, and closes with an examination of the Forum's advantages and drawbacks from the instructor's four-year experience with it. Suggestions are included about how to adapt Friday Forum to larger classroom environments.