

ACADEMIC & BUSINESS RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Goal, the Games and the Great Escape:
An Innovative Approach to Teaching Operations Management

ABSTRACT

One of the biggest challenges students face in a business degree is the onslaught of quantitative courses, especially in the decision sciences. Operations Management is designed to be an application-based conceptual course that ties together the decision sciences, but it is often taught as just another quantitative analysis course filled with word problems, at the expense of some learning opportunities. In this session, you will see how Goldratt's "The Goal" opens the door to many games that teach the Theory of Constraints and TQM, how the movie "The Great Escape" teaches project management, and how Legos can be used to teach the cost of quality and strategy, how the "Beer Game" can be used to teach supply chain management, how poker chips can be used to teach lean manufacturing and batch processing, and how an Excel simulation can be used to teach inventory analysis. By incorporating active learning methods, students have a memorable experience and higher retention of the concepts, as evidenced by course exams and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) business exam.

KEYWORDS: Operations management, Course design, Pedagogy, Active learning, Games

