Change and changes

Overview

Once again, thank you all for the helpful feedback you have provided on the course through the SSCC/ClassRep process. I particularly appreciated the positive comments about the course but here I will concentrate on the things that are seen as needing attention

The rooms

Comment: The rooms outside of the Business School are not seen as ideal; especially in the case of HSB. There is a strong desire for the class to be held inside the Owen G. Glenn Building.

Response: Since the Business School was brought under one roof in the OGGB, most of the MGMT 300 classes have been held here. Talking to the timetabling/scheduling people, one of the reasons the class has ended up in Old Government House and in HSB 2 is that student numbers this semester were materially larger than previous years (often it is closer to 60 than the other side of 100) and so it was hard to find space in OGGB. One of the reasons behind the rise in numbers is the fact that last year students complained a lot about the time-slot of the course (it used to be one of the earliest classes), and the move to the middle of the day has made it more popular. I am asking what can be done for next semester, but I know they are reluctant to put the class into one of the 250-seat rooms in OGGB.

In the meantime, for weeks 6–11 (inclusive) I have booked two labs in OGGB for Thursdays at 13:00 (when we would normally meet in HSB 2). They are labs 1 and 9. Rather than been in HSB, I'll be in one or other of those labs. In week 12, we will meet again in HSB 2 (for the last time). The labs seat 60 in total, so it will be on a first come, first served basis (sorry, I couldn't get more space).

Mac users

Comment: MAC users are frustrated by some of the missing features on the web-version compared with the PC application.

Response: Yes, I can imagine that. I will pass the comment on the SmartSims. In the meantime, Mac users can use the remote access function to 'get into' the virtual PCs that the Business School has. That way, they can run the PC version. Check out the details at https://www.cloud.auckland.ac.nz/digital-services/students/student-terminal-services.

The wiki

Comment: There is some surprise and confusion regarding the penalties around late or missing learning journals or for not giving feedback. The information is seen as being buried on the wiki

Response: This time I am surprised—as opposed to you being surprised—as I thought it was pretty clear and accessible. From the main/starting page if you to Assessments and then Learning journal the information is there. Alternatively, if you have worked your way through the To Do checklist, that will also take you to Assessments and then the Learning journal page. In addition, I explicitly said in the first class that there would be penalties for late /missing journals and feedback (I checked with Emma Sadera in case I missed remembered). So, I am open to suggestions as to how else I might present the information.

Follow on comment: Just was is the deal with later or missing learning journals and not giving feedback.

Response: The policy is there to try and make sure that students do the learning journals and provide feedback to each other. I know that stuff happens, so like most managers I try to be sensible about applying sanctions. The challenge is that is there is a general 'amnesty' then folk will take it as a right to skip doing one or more of them, and that's counter productive. At the end of the course I'll run a report that checks the dates etc (creation times, modification times) to see the state of play. I know that's ambiguous, but I want to be reasonable rather than just being black-and-white about things. So, if you want black-and-white, I can do that ... but I think my current way is more humane.

Comment: It would be nice to have more help with the wiki earlier on in the course.

Response: Okay. What would you like (I note that only one person has asked for help this year, which leads on to ...)

Labels and labeling

Comment: How do I label my journals correctly

Response: At the bottom of the page, once you have created your journal, there is a little icon like a pencil; if you hover over it, it says "Edit labels". Either click it, or press the 'l' key.

Poor journal entries

Comment: Some people are doing poor journal entries, and that makes it hard to give good feedback

Response: Yes, that's true. Emma Sadera and I have been talking about this at length. There are clearly a group doing good (and getting better) journals who we have no worries about. We think they will do really well with the Summative Learning Journals. There are also a group who seem (my interpretation of events) to be putting little effort into their journals (and typically into the feedback they are giving). The second group seem to be digging a hole for themselves. Emma Sadera's recent post 'Reflections on reflection' is her response to the poor quality of many learning journals.

Poor feedback

Comment: Some people are really frustrated by the poor quality feedback some of their peers are giving.

Response: I can understand that. It is clear that some people are being rather perfunctory in their responses/feedback. Their marks will suffer at the end of the course.

Tips and questions

Comment: You are giving some hints and tips to teams during team-time. That seems unfair.

Response: I do answer questions during team-time. That's why I'm there. You might interpret that as tips, but I really only say what is in the handbook or in other people's journals.

Training wheels

Comment: We really want the rollback/rollfoward feature.

Response: The training wheels are off. As someone noted in their journal, you do not get access to something like that outside of the simulation.

The double-edged nature of freedom

Comment: Students are liking the freedom that the course provides them, they like the fact that they are given many responsibilities which challenge them. However, some find the freedom challenging and they wish they were more guidelines at the beginning of the course. Some feel as though too many new concepts were introduced and not explained enough.

Response: Okay. Now that you have some experience of what is going on. What---specifically—did you want to know (in advance) and what would you have found to be an effective way to access that information? Can you please post your feedback as comments to this blog entry.

Are there lecturers during team-time?
Comment: Students are unsure whether or not there are lectures during our team meeting times
Response: No
Sometimes I don't get any feedback
Comment: A student emailed saying he hadn't received feedback for his reflection for two weeks and he said it limits his progression in terms of his reflections and writing.
Response: If someone has been allocated to give you feedback, you can contact them—you can see their UPI and hence you know their email address. Alternatively, let Peter know.