

November 6, 2020

Observed: Bob Mackalski's RAIK 341H

Observer: Steve Cooper

In attendance: 14 students in person (others connected via Zoom). Undergraduate TA Luke B. was in attendance, helping out with Zoom. Class was run in a hybrid format, due to Covid-19.

Bob started the lecture by reviewing the objectives for the lecture. I liked how Bob started his class this way, as it helped students to understand what would be covered and why.

Bob also reviewed where the course was overall, and how today's lecture fits in. (Again, I liked this for the same reason I note above.)

The strong impression I got was that the in-person students seemed to be engaged in the lecture. It was not possible for me to ascertain the situation for the students connected via Zoom, as I could not figure out how to get the Zoom session running on my laptop.

Bob started the new content section by asking how to create a great communication? Bob divided the students into small discussion groups to address the issue – most of the in-person students joined breakouts in Zoom to discuss the question. There was one group of students who decided to meet face to face, more or less 6' from one another. I liked how Bob was able to design the activity to meet the needs of all of the students.

After the student discussion, Bob asked for student feedback, writing down results of student discussion on the white board. There were lots of students participating, which again confirmed to me the level of student engagement with Bob's class. I suspect that it was challenging to see white board via Zoom for students connected remotely – my suggestion is that the use of a document camera or writing on a laptop might have been easier for the remote students.

I thought Bob did a good job in the interactions with the students. He was complementing their suggestions, and doing a good job interpreting their comments, and grouping their comments/suggestions coherently into 3 categories: sales, brand building, and behaviors.

Bob associated 3 terms with the above: target (number of users, number of sales, etc.), task, and time (assessment after a certain amount of time).

I liked Bob's regularly checking with the remote learners in terms of how they are doing. Some remote students asked questions in response to Bob's various prompts.

Bob next challenged the students to think individually regarding what constitutes a great ad. Again, he was quite complementary regarding student responses, and interesting following up with students' comments/suggestions.

Bob next provided a fun and engaging demo with throwing one ball with a student, and then trying to send several. I thought this was a neat demonstration for showing the idea of needing to keep communication simple.

I thought that the classroom was too well lit, and was harder to see the screen, especially the pictures. My recommendation is to ask his TA to play with the various room settings to try to get the front of the room dark while the rear of the room was better lit. I recognize that the Great Hall is not a good classroom, but with Covid, we really don't have a choice.

Bob then reviewed real ads (static and video) with the class: Mr. Clean, DuckDuckGo, Coke, and Google. The class seemed to relate well to this exercise.

I liked Bob's periodic calling on quieter students – who had valuable information to contribute. Bob seemed to know this, and gently prodded these students to contribute, which they did!

Overall, despite the suboptimal conditions of the Great Hall, I found Bob's lecture to be quite engaging for the students. They seemed to have a strong relationship with Bob.