

Exercise:
Management Skills Comprehensive—Commencement Address:
“Lessons from a Third Grade Dropout”
wayne.smith@csun.edu
[updated: Wednesday, February 20, 2019]

Course: MGT 370
Title: Management Skills Development (3 units)

“A manager is responsible for the application and performance of knowledge.”
---Peter Drucker (1909-2005)

“Making good decisions is a crucial skill at every level.”
---Peter Drucker (1909-2005)

Goal:

Professional life is mostly orderly and occasionally chaotic. *Management* life, on the other hand, is mostly chaotic, and if you are a successful manager, occasionally orderly. Most professionals prefer to be in their “comfort zone”; managers can’t even remember what a “comfort zone” looked like back when they were a professional.

I want you to practice using theories, models, and frameworks from this class. Additionally, I want you to practice them with a real world situation.

This is an individual project; it is one deliverable per person.

Review the following YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Wp1mRgMWEg>

This is a commencement (“graduation”) speech given by a successful individual, Dr. Rick Rigsby. He spent most of his career in journalism, and now does motivational speeches around the world. The thesis of his talk will become clear upon review of video. The speech is humorous but insightful.

What makes the commencement speech so interesting is that he relates some of the experiences he has witnessed and learned to help the graduates understand how to be successful in personal and professional life. He does this through opinion, learned knowledge, and the explication of various stories. It is very possible that the examples from the speech are simply different words and phrases for ideas we’ve learned in our MGT 370 course.

Objective:

Assume that you are the Vice-president of Human Resources. You report directly to the Chief Executive Officer of a large, Fortune 500 firm. You believe this video could be used as part of a new onboarding initiative for new junior managers. Your CEO boss, of course, has to approve and fund such a new initiative, and you know that the speech has to be justified in order to be used. You need to review the video and use the contemporary language of management skill development as the justification elements.

Your task is to relate what the Dr. Rigsby says to what you have learned in this class. You do this by linking each major element from his speech below to one or more ideas using the best theory, model, or framework from our course textbook. Weave in a few Library articles and HBR readings as appropriate too. Just to be clear: a theory, model, or framework *explains* (what has happened in the past) or *predicts* (what is likely to happen in the future). An educated person uses appropriate theory and best practice to persuade and influence. Of course, when you have quantitative data, you use that data too.

The following are the five major elements of his speech. To make it simple, just use a single paragraph (e.g., four to seven sentences or so) to answer each of the following questions. Additionally, just label each paragraph with the relevant question number, such as “Q1”.

- Q1. “Do not judge.”
- Q2. “Show up early.”
- Q3. “Be kind.”
- Q4. “If you are going to do something, do it the right way.”
- Q5. “When you combine academic knowledge with [experiential] wisdom, you will change the world.”

Additionally, you are welcome to write about anything else in the commencement speech that you find compelling and relevant to the course.

Length:

For this comprehensive exercise, I’m relatively indifferent to page length. Just write one (or two, if your team prefers) paragraph for each question (double-spaced). A team can probably get not much more than two paragraphs on a page. Other relevant formatting requirements (“style guide”) are linked from the course web page. Recall also that for all written assignments in this course, 10% is deducted from the content score for each type of error in language use.

Performance Measurement:

The maximum number of points for content on this exercise is 1 (participation points).