

Drug Education in Business

A Survey of Accredited Business Schools 1971



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Drug abuse in industry is rising rapidly according to major studies conducted throughout the country. It has a potential to seriously harm the productivity of employees at all levels of an organization. Businessmen responding to the surveys concerning industry drug abuse cite the lack of information and guidelines as the biggest roadblocks to formulation of their own policy. As is often the case for business problems, business leaders turn to the field of business education for assistance and possible solutions to the mounting problem.

However, because the problem of drug abuse in industry is relatively new, or is only now being admitted, there is little or no information readily available from business schools. To ascertain the extent of contact business students are receiving in their business courses, a survey was conducted of all accredited business schools in the United States and Canada. Of the total 153 schools, 89 replied for a response rate of 58%. Selection of the sample was based on two factors: the possibility of a better response rate and the opinion that the sample of accredited schools would represent the higher levels of business education in curriculum development. No evidence was received to the contrary and the data resulting from the study can be applied with caution to all business schools.

Information provided by the respondents proved both enlightening and interesting. There is a small but noticeable growth in course material and class time being devoted to the problem. Much of the attention however is similar to that which has been given to employee alcoholism throughout the years. Often it is mentioned in a personnel course as a problem that does exist, or it appears as a related issue in law or organization courses.

With only 29% of the schools devoting any time at all to the subject of drug abuse (Table 1), a closer examination of how much time is devoted is necessary. This classification (Table 2) reveals that, in many cases, the material is being given nothing more than a passing glance.

Table 1
Drug Education in Business Schools

	Number	Percent
None	63	71%
Yes – Mentioned	4	4%
Yes -- Significant	22	25%

Table 2
Time Devoted to Drug Education

Time Devoted	Drugs	Alcohol
Less than 15 Minutes	11	9
15-45 Minutes	6	8
1-2 Hours	6	5
3 Hours	1	1
1-5% of Class Time	4	4
10% of Class Time	1	3
40% of Class Time	1	1

The actual number of courses where the subjects of drug abuse and/or alcoholism were mentioned was twenty-nine for undergraduate students and fifteen for graduate students with one school reporting that the course was open to both. The type of course where this reference is made, or the material covered is usually in the industrial management or personnel area (Table 3).

Table 3 Course Titles – Drug Abuse Coverage		
Course	Number	
Industrial Management		29
• Personnel	12	
• Organization & Behavior	6	
• Human Relations	5	
• Manpower	2	
• Policies	2	
• Labor	1	
• Management	1	
Business Law		4
Marketing		3
• Retail Management	1	
• Promotion	1	
• Principles	1	
Community Issues		1
Society		1
Industrial Psychology		1
Insurance		2
Business Responsibility		1

The material is being covered in some of the newer courses as a factor related to social marketing or the social responsibility of business. The advertising course covered the problem of drug abuse from the standpoint of legal drug ads which portray and thereby foster the drug society which this country faces. In this society the ability to alter mood, eliminate pain, and solve physical problems is easily obtained by taking something. This is not a direct solution to solving the drug abuse problem within industry, but it is certainly a step in the direction of greater understanding of drugs in society.

Over 80% of the courses were three credit courses with other courses ranging from two to six credits. Eleven courses, or 26%, were required while the remaining thirty-one attracted from less than 1% to 90% of the student body. Based on twenty-one courses where information was provided the average enrollment was just over 18% of the total business student enrollment. While the material appears to be becoming more and more a part of the courses in many schools, it is still not reaching a high proportion of the students.

Lengths varying from "next semester" to "as long as the school" were cited for the question of how long has material on drug abuse or alcoholism been included in the curriculum. For twenty-two courses reporting that drug information was included, slightly less than two years was the average while alcoholism had an average of just under three years. Here the difference between drugs and alcohol becomes important. While alcohol should be considered a drug, this classification, while medically accurate, is not upheld by many professional people, particularly in business. Alcoholism's long-term presence in the business community can also be used to explain this difference. However, this is the only place where this difference has any meaning to the data. In the conclusions and recommendations, drug abuse includes the abuse of alcohol.

Teaching methods varied considerably for presentation of this material with the lecture and discussion playing the most important role. This could be expected as some of the other methods which might be preferred and are recommended have not been developed for the specific needs. For example, no case studies exist for the problems of drug abuse other than alcoholism. These cases, therefore, ignore some of the many additional problems associated with other drugs. As authorities in this field are few, guest lecturers, though desired, are not available. Several respondents reported that, the only way they felt they could effectively give the subject any attention was to make the topic available to students as a term paper or book report. Textbooks are not available, except again in the area of alcoholism. However, material is becoming increasingly available and there is little doubt that it is continuing to become more and more applicable to the specific needs of business education. Table 4 gives a specific breakdown of the teaching methods used by the schools responding. 41 of the 42 different courses listed teaching methods with multiple answers possible.

Discussion	27	Role Playing	3
Lecture	25	Movies	2
Cases	13	Film Strips	1
Readings	6	Field Trips	1
Papers	6	Book Reports	1
Guest Lecturers	4		

Several particular schools and courses deserve recognition as they have instituted new courses or devoted major sections of existing courses to the areas of drug abuse in industry. At Marquette University, there has been partial success in getting material included in many courses at least to the point where reference is made to where the problem exists and how it affects decision making. The author has appeared as a guest lecturer in a graduate personnel class to answer questions and lead a discussion of the problem for a major portion of one class period.

Rutgers University has a school on alcoholism which runs during the summer and has a special labor-management workshop conducted by Mr. Lewis Presnall of Kemper Insurance. Mr. Presnall is one of the country's leading authorities on alcohol in industry and has lectured and written considerably on the subject.

Carthage College in Racine, Wisconsin conducts the Addiction Institute during the summer with a separate section on union and management. In part the goals of the institute are: "to provide advanced training to professionals, paraprofessionals, and community leaders in the field of chemical (alcohol, drugs) addiction and abuse.

Paul Gordon, Professor of Management at Indiana University, conducted a seminar on Society, Business and Administration in a summer school course. Two days were spent on drug abuse with resource personnel including a representative from the drug culture and a former United States District Attorney.

The University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh is offering a course for the Spring Semester, 1972, entitled The Psychology of Drug Use and Abuse. The course, which will be offered on educational television in a four-state area, will cover many facets of the drug problem and has scheduled one session on the industry problem.

The University of Georgia has a course entitled Effects of Alcohol and Drugs taught by the Division of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. Taught in the College Education, the course was the most extensive noted. However, there was no information available as to how many business students, if any, attended the course. It is reasonable to assume the subjects do receive coverage in many schools from various other disciplines.

Several comments were generated by schools which devoted some attention to drug abuse. Many of these were statements that student papers were permitted and sometimes encouraged. One of the law courses specified that the problem received attention only as it related to the background of many criminal cases. Two schools reported that they "planned to expand it the course material" and that "they plan more attention and emphasis" in the future.

The deans of many of the schools expressed sincere interest in including material on drug abuse and alcoholism in some of their courses but also expressed their views that information concerning the problem itself was scarce and that guides to action and suggested course content are non-existent. A few specific comments are worth noting.

- *What would we teach? How would we teach it? What text would we use?*
- *Drug education comes out in other courses offered by other departments.*
- *Drug abuse has not reached a proportion in our area that attention is justified.*
- *Difficult to find text materials and/or case material on these subjects.*

The question of drug education in business is something which raises many questions and often many objections. One of the first is usually: "you cannot, teach drugs." This statement is definitely true; no one wants to teach drugs. What must be taught is the environment of drugs and the situations that might occur when drugs appear as the symptom of another problem.

The business world has in its hands the most powerful motivator in helping an employee with a drug problem, the employee's desire to hold the job. If young businessmen and women can be educated to use this motivator effectively when faced with what appears to be simply a drug problem, the general health and productivity of the nation will be improved.

A companion survey shows that student interest in course material on the subject of drug abuse in industry is expressed by more than 90% of the business students responding. More than 60% would actually like to take a course dealing specifically with employee drug abuse. The question of drug abuse education in business has a unique characteristic in the sense that it, is vitally needed, and at the same time, greatly desired by the students.

The type of education necessary requires that students play an active role in discussing the factors involved. The lecture will not work in business drug education. Students cannot be given hardened facts; they will not accept them. The atmosphere of this educational process must be one of understanding. Given the many complicated factors, students must be able to reach an intelligent decision in a particular case.

The case method and role playing are excellent methods for emphasizing the different problems that can arise from what seems to be a drug problem. Unfortunately, an abundance of case material does not exist at this time. Until such material is developed emphasis in courses may be on the discussion or possibly, the use of resource personnel from various fields related to the drug problem.

The results of this study make it clear that very little is really being done in business education on the problems of employee drug abuse. The American colleges of business, in general, are not providing, nor are they seeking, answers to many of the questions posed by the business community. The slight reference made in many courses is often nothing more than a statement to the students that "someday in a firm you will have to face a problem of employee alcoholism or someone abusing drugs." This does not begin to start the educational process which must include so much more than a simple admission that the problem exists. Yet much of the cooperation and interest generated by the survey indicates that some of the schools admit something must be done and realize that curriculum guidelines should be established.

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Note: This report has been reformatted, including visual modifications to the tables and minor editing for grammar and clarity. (November 2017)