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## Full Color Production of Life and Adventure in the World of Business

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# FULL COLOR PRODUCTION OF LIFE AND ADVENTURE IN THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

March 24, 2021

**By Bianca Sa**

Students have several teachers and professors throughout middle school, high school, and college, yet only a few are remembered for their unique teaching style and ability to make the material in class interesting and dynamic. Lindenwood University has established an exceptional team of educators with outstanding teaching skills, and Stephen McCane is one that must be highlighted by his incredible success in teaching Business courses. McCane has been at Lindenwood since 2017 teaching International Business, and the passion and enthusiasm he brings to the classroom are fruits of the four businesses he started before becoming a professor and several consultation opportunities with businesses in China.

What makes McCane's classes so exciting are the case studies he creates about his own experience in doing business in China. He has already designed six case studies; the goal of each one of them is to "run through many business problems and allow the students to experience the type of thinking that an entrepreneur does. This thinking is very unique, full of tension.... If you make the wrong decision, your young, small, fragile business could die," he explains. Each student shares their perspective on how they would go about solving the problem at every case study's discussion board, and the plethora of different thoughts promotes growth and learning among students.

After getting his Master's in Business Administration and coming to Lindenwood, McCane was asked to teach Global Business and Society. Initially, case studies were not in his teaching plans. After seeing that the textbook assigned for the course needed some "flair and color," McCane "took two business ventures, Blue Frog and T2 Laboratories, that [he] had experienced and made a series of presentations that start from the beginning and move to a future logical stopping point." It didn't take long for his lectures to become favored among students. Because of the positive feedback from students, McCane decided to immediately start working on three other case studies.

By going beyond the concepts in a book and using critical thinking to solve complicated business issues, students are able to get a more tangible perception of what happens in the business world in McCane's classes. McCane knows the ins and outs of each case

study, “giving depth to the material [and offering] the students...a heightened sense and knowledge [because]... their professor was in the story.”

In addition to working on making lectures that “always put students on the edge of their seats,” McCane understands how students’ learning process is a lot different from what it used to be. In many ways their “attention span and style of learning” has changed due to the technology era, and he has adapted his material to these changes. “I noticed that this generation likes short and sweet videos. They grew up on videos and enjoy material that is not an hour long but maybe ten minutes long. So, by making a story that has some adventure combined with a problem that eventually is solved, this style of storytelling pulls the student into the class material,” McCane explains. And this another reason for his success in being a great professor: “I can turn into a macho teacher and force the students to read the material, but that is pushing the student when I want to pull the student. Case studies pull the students into stories and adventure.”

The business process is often complicated, especially when so many variables come into play. McCane states that when “a complicated problem is broken down into small pieces,” students can devote time to reflect on the individual variables of the business process. McCane wants his students to “think about business not like a photograph, but more like a moving picture, a film, a real-life story.”

McCane’s secret is storytelling. According to him, the goal is to “tell people stories that involve business rather than tell business stories that involve people.” I am currently taking Global Business and Society with professor McCane, and I look forward to every class with him. By getting to know him through his classes and his past adventures, I have been able to learn valuable life lessons and now understand how knowledge of different cultures has a direct impact on successful business practices. Moreover, I have been exercising my business problem-solving skills while still in college. Being able to do it in professor McCane’s classes is great practice as I prepare myself to own a business in the future.

McCane’s case studies are in their first version, and he is currently working on the second version of them, where even more storytelling, adventures, culture knowledge, and problem solving will be incorporated. McCane says that “this newer version will be set up like an episode series on Netflix.” His remarkable effort in teaching International Business as a “full color production of life and adventure... instead of in black and white” greatly contributes to the future I, like McCane, envision: “a university database of case studies across the liberal arts, especially in commerce.”