

Practice Operations Success Story



Instructor

Dr. Felipe F. Rodrigues is an Assistant Professor in Operations Management at King's University College, Canada. He holds a Management Science PhD from the Ivey Business School at Western University, specializing in health-care operations and management science. He has published in scientific journals such as *Operations Research for Health Care*, and has presented his research in conferences such as CORS, DSI, ORAHS, and webinars for Simul8®. He is also an experienced instructor in Operations management, Supply Chain Management, Management Science and Analytics.

Institution

Founded in 1954, King's University College at Western University is a Catholic, liberal arts university college affiliated with a large, world-class university. King's is recognized, both nationally and internationally, for its excellent academic programs, generous scholarships and comprehensive student services. Visit www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings for more information.

Course

Operations Management
■ Enrollment: 80

Why were you interested in bringing Practice Operations into your course?

“Operations is a course that most students struggle to relate to, either because they feel like it's part of engineering, or because they assume it is exclusive to manufacturing, which they are unfamiliar with. When I saw **Practice Operations**, I felt like it presented the closest experience to real life operations that I could provide to my students. It also helps to make the course more fun, competitive and interactive.

Not only is **Practice Operations** visually appealing and engaging, but it also covers the basic concepts of operations in a progressive, more digestible manner. So much so that I changed the the order of the topics I teach in my course to match the progression of the modules.

What type of feedback did you receive from students?

“When **Practice Operations** was first introduced, some students thought the modules might be hard to complete. After the tutorial, however, students felt a lot more comfortable. As the competition kicks in, a large portion of the students became very involved and were only satisfied once they received a score of 100.

Most often, students needed help understanding how each module related to the concepts taught in class. So, I usually gave examples from **Practice Operations** during my lectures, which they connected immediately to; This is perhaps the key point of the simulations. If they have played **Practice Operations**, they understand how hard it is to manage operations and the trade-offs in inventory, balancing an assembly line, or the cost of high service (reputation). They certainly enjoyed the experience!

How did Practice Operations make an impact in your course?

“**Practice Operations** makes operations management tangible, so it is an ideal tool for experiential learning. Once exposed to it, students get a better sense of the many moving parts of OM and better appreciate the concepts covered.

I'm happy to have introduced **Practice Operations** in my course since students use it as the back-ground for their questions and often use situations from the simulation as examples during class participation.



What would you share with a colleague considering Practice Operations?

“The first thing I noticed is that students started to refer to Practice Operations as the “app”, the “simulation” or the “video-game”. The way they referred to it described how they approached it. The “video-game” crowd played for hours on end and were perhaps the most enthusiastic. The “app” crowd had less interest in it, so they needed extra guidance to make the theoretical connections and achieve higher scores.

I noted that some students devised empirical strategies to complete, so the instructor needs to make the linkages between concepts and Practice Operations very explicit. A classic example is job scheduling and priority rules. By telling students to use the shortest time rule or the earliest delivery rule, they immediately realize they have been ignoring or switching priorities and that it hurts their performance.

“When I saw Practice Operations, I felt like it presented the closest experience to real life operations that I could provide to my students. It also helps to make the course more fun, competitive and interactive.”

— Dr. Felipe F. Rodrigues

Here's what some students have to say about Practice Operations:

“The slow introduction to new methodology. Having each module focus on one aspect at a time as it builds to combine all of them together is a great way of learning.” – Ryan

“Allowed me to use what I learned in class and display that in a realistic work environment.” – Chris

“It allowed you to apply textbook readings to real life situations.” – Cristina

“Gave practice applying operations concepts in business setting.” – Adam

“All the modules on the game corresponded with the modules we learned in class to give us practical experience” – Laurel

“Practice Operations allows for a student to physically experience what can go wrong in operating a business and learn how to avoid the problem the next time.” – Adam