

# **INTEGRATION OF ERP IN THE BUSINESS CURRICULUM**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This paper discusses two different approaches to introduce ERP to all business students. The College of Business Administration (COBA) of Georgia Southern University decided to integrate ERP into their curriculum, using SAP. After considering various ways to add ERP/SAP to the business curriculum, it was decided to teach ERP/SAP as a unit to over 1300 first and second year business students in the introduction to business course in 2001-02. This paper outlines the way ERP/SAP was taught in this course over two semesters.*

**Keywords:** ERP, SAP, Integration, business curriculum

## **INTRODUCTION**

The use of ERP in business is not considered to be a state of the art information system (IS) application but it is now considered to be “the plumbing.” Although ERP is widely used in business, many universities are still investigating ERP and are cautiously trying to decide if ERP should be taught in the business curriculum, and if so, so there be separate ERP courses or should ERP be integrated into the business curriculum.

## **SAP UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE**

In 2000, the College of Business Administration (COBA) of Georgia Southern University (GSU) decided that ERP was important for the business curriculum and joined the SAP University Alliance and submitted a plan to incorporate ERP into the business curriculum using SAP. The SAP University Alliance consists of universities who have decided to use SAP as the ERP for their curriculum and have submitted a curriculum plan to SAP indicating how they will accomplish this. SAP approved the GSU proposal and for an annual fee of \$8K, GSU was given SAP R/3 software version 4.6B.

## **OVERALL ERP POLICY FOR BUSINESS STUDENTS**

The College of Business Administration decided that a one week introduction to ERP/SAP should be offered to all business students in the BUSA 1105 Introduction to Business course. This week of instruction would include an introduction to ERP and some hands on access to SAP tutorials and logging in to SAP, in a computer lab.

## **FALL TERM 2001**

All 13 sections (600 + students) were given an introduction to ERP/SAP PowerPoint presentation that included what ERP & SAP are and why ERP is relevant to business curricula. Students were given a handout that included important slides on the PPT presentation and the URLs to ERP/SAP web pages created for this course. The web pages included a page on SAP Jobs, which seemed to be a great motivator for students, to investigate ERP and SAP. Another

page was the SAP Intro and Tutorial page at <http://www2.gasou.edu/facstaff/rmackinn/sapintro.htm> which was a key reference to use the Central Michigan University (CMU) ERP/SAP tutorial.

Each class spent a class period in a computer lab where they went over a SAP navigation PPT, the SAP “Getting Started” tutorial and started on the CMU tutorial on ERP/SAP. They also logged into SAP and spent some time navigating around the menu and looking at the Help section. In addition, there was a feedback document, SAP Feedback Form which asked students if they were interested in ERP/SAP and if they would like to have additional instruction in ERP/SAP. The answer was a resounding yes and a demand for additional use of SAP in the curricula. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix A. There was no quiz on any of the material covered.

### **SPRING TERM 2002**

For the second term, there were extensive changes made in the ERP project. It was decided by the business faculty that the ERP project would be worth 10 points towards the 100 points for the introduction to business course. Twenty five percent of the grade would be awarded for attendance at an ERP/SAP presentation (students were required to sign in to the presentations) and the number of these presentations was reduced from 13 in class presentations in the first term to 8 general presentations presented at various times in the spring term. The students were given a handout containing some of the most important slides from the presentation and the URLs to the SAP/ERP pages. The remaining seventy five percent of the grade would be on a quiz on ERP/SAP based on the ERP/SAP presentation and from the first two lessons in the CMU ERP/SAP tutorial. The quiz had 33 multiple choice and true/false questions and multiple variations of the quiz were prepared to be offered at various times.

Since the business faculty teaching BUSA 1105 were besieged by questions about the ERP project, they were given an early copy of the FAQ for the ERP project (see Appendix B) and copies of the hand out that the students would receive. The faculty also received a copy of the “Instructors Guide to ERP Project for BUSA 1105” (see Appendix C). The ERP/SAP presentation PowerPoint file and all the relevant documents for students were placed on a network hard drive (the K drive) that was only accessible in the College of Business Administration (COBA) building. Each faculty member teaching BUSA 1105 also received a CDRW with copies of all the ERP files and tutorials used in the project as described in Appendix D “BUSA 1105 Faculty ERP CDRW Contents.” This CDRW also gave the faculty member the option of loaning the CD to a student with a special problem, at the discretion of the faculty member.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Is this a good way to introduce ERP to all first or second year business students?
2. What was the student reaction to this approach?
3. What was the reaction of the business faculty teaching the introduction to business course?
4. What was the reaction of business administrators to this ERP introduction?
5. Is the quiz approach superior to the voluntary approach?

6. What lessons were learned from these two approaches to teaching an intro to ERP?
7. What are the implications for the future?

### CONCLUSIONS

Both approaches were successful because:

1. All students going into the business program (over 1300 students) have had an introduction to ERP/SAP and are prepared to use SAP as it is introduced into their business courses that they will take in the future.
2. SAP and the salaries paid to university graduates with a SAP background had a high profile among students, whereas prior to September 2001, very students had ever heard of ERP or SAP. Many students got very excited about the opportunities that a knowledge of SAP would offer them and these students wanted (sometimes demanded) to take courses which incorporated ERP/SAP.
3. The business faculty teaching BUSA 1105 were cautious about this new addition to their course. Many faculty seemed to be pleased that they did not have to teach this unit.
4. Chairs of Departments and the Dean of Business became aware of the students demands for additional ERP/SAP instruction and had to reconsider their planning of the role of ERP/SAP in their curriculum.
5. At the time this paper is being written, the results of the ERP quiz were not known but because of the quiz, most students spent more out of class time studying ERP and SAP and hopefully learned more than the voluntary approach in the fall term.
6. Students were very interested in ERP and SAP, likely more interested than many business faculty. Assigning the ERP project ten points for the class grade gave the students a substantial reason to pay close attention to the ERP/SAP presentation in class and to be more serious about running the CMU ERP tutorial.
7. As a direct result of this introduction to ERP/SAP approach, for the first time at GSU a three credit course on ERP using SAP was scheduled for the Fall of 2002.
8. Finally, a Visiting Professor who was brought in to be a catalyst for ERP and to add some momentum to the ERP/SAP project enjoyed the project so much that he agreed to stay and offer the first ERP course in the Fall of 2002.

**APPENDIX A**

**SAP Feedback Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_ 1105 Sect: \_\_\_\_\_ Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

	Very Little	Limited	A Fair Amount	Extensive
<b>Before</b> taking this brief workshop:				
My knowledge of <b>ERP</b> was	_____	_____	_____	_____
My knowledge of <b>SAP</b> was	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>After</b> taking this brief workshop:				
My knowledge of <b>ERP</b> is	_____	_____	_____	_____
My knowledge of <b>SAP</b> is	_____	_____	_____	_____

**We would like to find out your opinion of the potential role of SAP at Georgia Southern.**

	Yes	Somewhat	No
Did you find this <b>SAP</b> workshop to be useful?	_____	_____	_____
Would you be interested in additional classes on <b>SAP</b> ?	_____	_____	_____
Would you be interested in a course that <b>included SAP</b> ?	_____	_____	_____
Would you be interested in a course <b>about ERP/SAP</b> ?	_____	_____	_____

**For business or pre business students:**

If a business course was offered with 2 versions, one including SAP and one without SAP

	With SAP	Without SAP
I would prefer taking the version	_____	_____

**Additional comments or recommendations:**

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**APPENDIX B****FAQ for BUSA 1105 ERP Project**

1. **Q.** What is the value of the ERP project?  
**A.** Your project grade consists of two components: presentation, 25% and quiz, 75%. Your project grade represents 10% of your overall course grade.
2. **Q.** What does the project consist of?  
**A.** The project has four parts:
  - a) Reading Component C (page 414) in the BUSA 1105 textbook
  - b) attending a 50 minute presentation on ERP
  - c) running lessons one and two of the Central Michigan Univ. tutorial on ERP
  - d) taking a quiz on the material covered in the above units
3. **Q.** When will the presentations be given?  
**A.** Mornings: 9:00 AM Wed. Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup> and 9:00 AM Fri. Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>.  
Afternoons: 3:15 PM Wed. Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup> and 3:15 Thurs. Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>  
Late afternoons: 5:00 PM Mon. Jan. 28<sup>th</sup> and 5 PM Tues. Jan. 29<sup>th</sup> and 5:00 PM Thurs. Jan 31<sup>st</sup>  
Weekend: 1:00 PM Sunday February 3<sup>rd</sup>
4. **Q.** Can the Central Michigan University (CMU) ERP tutorial be run from any computer?  
**A.** Yes, any computer with an internet connection can run the CMU tutorial.
5. **Q.** What is the URL for the CMU ERP tutorial?  
**A.** The URL is <http://sap.mis.cmich.edu/sap-esoft00.htm>
6. **Q.** How many lessons must be completed for this project?  
**A.** Lessons one and two.
7. **Q.** Do we need the CMU password to do lessons one and two?  
**A.** No.
8. **Q.** What are the passwords to run the other CMU ERP lessons?  
**A.** User ID: \*\*\*\*\*, Password: \*\*\*\*\*, Domain: \*\*\*\*\*
9. **Q.** Can I use Netscape or Microsoft Internet Explorer to run lessons 1 and 2?  
**A.** Yes.
10. **Q.** Can I use Netscape to run the other ERP tutorials?  
**A.** No, you must use Microsoft Internet Explorer.
11. **Q.** What is the URL for the SAP tutorial Page?  
**A.** The URL is <http://www2.gasou.edu/facstaff/rmackinn/sapintro.htm>
12. **Q.** What material will be covered on the quiz?  
**A.** There will be some general questions from Component C and several questions from the ERP presentation and the CMU ERP tutorial.
13. **Q.** What are the ERP Presentation Coupons?  
**A.** After attending an ERP presentation, a student will get a coupon which will be an entry permit for the ERP quiz.
14. **Q.** When and where will the quiz on ERP be given?  
**A.** The dates in March for the ERP quiz will be announced by your instructor in your BUSA 1105 class.

**APPENDIX C****Instructors Guide to ERP Project for BUSA 1105**

1. All the files for the ERP project will be on the COBA K drive under ronmackinnon in a folder called SAP.
2. You will get a document on how a student can get these files from the K drive.
3. You will receive a document with the dates and times of the ERP presentations (all are in COBA 1124)
4. You will receive a CD with all the files for the ERP unit on it.
5. You will receive a document listing the contents of the faculty CDRW.
6. There will be 8 ERP presentations with 2 morning, 2 afternoon, 3 late afternoon and 1 weekend session. The dates of the presentations will be included on the FAQ document.
7. You will receive a hard copy of: the FAQ and the “How to Get Files on the K drive.”
8. You will be given draft copies of each document for your comments on how they can be improved. Please send me any comments you have.
9. Graduate Assistants (GA) from Accounting will sign in students to a presentation and inform you which of your students attended each presentation.
10. A coupon will be handed out at the end of each presentation by the GAs. A student will need this coupon to take the quiz.
11. There will be quiz dates in March. I will give you the dates once they are set.
12. The GAs will hand out the ERP quiz, process the Scantrons and give you the ERP grade for the students in your sections. It would likely be helpful if the GAs had an Excel worksheet of the students in your section, so they can give you the grades in this form instead of just a hard copy.

## APPENDIX D

### BUSA 1105 Faculty ERP CDRW Contents

The CDRW for BUSA 1105 faculty will contain the following:

1. A PPT viewer folder, so that people without PowerPoint can view PPT slides.
2. SAP Getting Started Document (BCDOCGETTING\_en.pdf) 198 pages in pdf format)
3. A Word file on “BUSA 1105 Faculty CDRW Contents)
4. A Word file on “BUSA 1105 ERP Presentation Dates and Times Spring 2002.”
5. SAP Corporate Profile PPT (cp2001\_e.ppt).
6. A Word file on “FAQ for BUSA 1105 ERP Project.”
7. SAP Getting Started Tutorial (get46cen.chm, double click on this file to run it).
8. A Word file on “How To Access the K Drive.”
9. A Word file on “Instructors Guide to ERP Project for BUSA 1105”
10. A login & passwords document for Central Michigan University (CMU) ERP tutorial
11. A copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader file (rp505enu.exe), so that people without this software can view pdf files (permission was received from Adobe to distribute this file).
12. SAP Basics PPT (SAP Basics Spring 02.ppt).
13. The ERP Presentation PowerPoint file (SAP Intro 1C.ppt).
14. A Word file on “Dates and Locations of the BUSA 1105 ERP Quiz”, when available.

Since the CD is a CDRW, I can add additional files that seem appropriate at a later date. Each instructor will get a copy of this CDRW and Lowell and Zandra will also have a copy. All the files on this CDRW will be on the K drive and students can copy these files to a Zip disk. An instructor could loan their CDRW to a student who does not have access to a Zip drive in order to copy these files to their computer at home.

## APPENDIX E

### SAP Intro & Tutorials

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|---|--|
|  <a href="#"><u>Introduction to SAP, MIT</u></a>                 |  <a href="#"><u>Intro SAP Course, CMU</u></a>           |
|  <a href="#"><u>SAP Help Portal</u></a>                          |  <a href="#"><u>The SAP Library</u></a>                 |
|  <a href="#"><u>SAP Help on Help</u></a>                         |  <a href="#"><u>Getting Started, PDF from SAP</u></a>   |
|  <a href="#"><u>Getting Started, Download from SAP</u></a>       |  <a href="#"><u>Free SAP Training and Tutorials</u></a> |
|  <a href="#"><u>The History of SAP, Sapfans</u></a>              |  <a href="#"><u>The History of SAP from SAP</u></a>     |
|  <a href="#"><u>SAP R/3 Overview, Sapfans</u></a>                |  <a href="#"><u>SAP FAQ</u></a>                         |
|  <a href="#"><u>How to get involved in SAP, AD &amp; A</u></a>   |  <a href="#"><u>SAP FAQ, Sapfaq</u></a>                 |
|  <a href="#"><u>SAP Glossary, SAP</u></a>                        |  <a href="#"><u>SAP Glossary, Sapfans</u></a>           |
|  <a href="#"><u>MM Q &amp; A, Ramesh Kumar</u></a>               |  <a href="#"><u>SAD Q &amp; A, Ramesh Kumar</u></a>     |
|  <a href="#"><u>An Intro to German for ABAP/4 Programmer</u></a> |  <a href="#"><u>IDES Tutorial, LSU</u></a>              |