



MURRAY BRYANT
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
RICHARD IVEY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

TEACHING EXCELLENCE; HOW ONE PROFESSOR ENGAGES

Murray Bryant, Ivey professor, impresses first with his solid physical presence. Knowing his roots in a working class New Zealand household, it surprises no one to learn that he maintains an active passion for coaching rugby.

Frequently recognized for both his research and his teaching abilities, Bryant typifies the engaged faculty at the Richard Ivey School of Business. When asked about the underlying philosophy that guides his success, he uses a sporting analogy:

- **Practice hard, play easy**
- **Know your players**
- **The work you see is only the tip of the iceberg.**

Ivey's case study approach, for instance, is predicated on the sorts of scenarios that abound on the practice field. "The rugby pitch requires action," Bryant says, "and likewise the Ivey Program is biased towards action. Information is assimilated on the fly and the wisdom of any single decision is immediately apparent."

18

" PRACTICE PREPARES "

"By engaging candidates in hundreds of scenarios," Bryant continues, "the classroom begins to reflect reality. The case study method allows participants to experiment and put new knowledge into play. We immerse our participants in an environment that rewards risk taking and active participation. Practice prepares. Hard practice prepares better."

That said, each candidate – like each player – is unique and Bryant keeps that foremost in mind. Recent grad, Liz Snelgrove, maintains that Bryant "knew our businesses better than we did." Another graduate, Bruce Lowe, recounts the amazement he felt being quizzed by Bryant about his company's numbers during class sessions. When asked, Bryant says, "Every class is different, every player, every participant is different and what works for one will not work for another. To get the most out of participants I try to engage them on their own turf."

" WHAT WE DO MATTERS "

It's a commitment that requires a constitution that will put up with early mornings and intense weeks of preparation. "My job as a teacher is to create the conditions and motivation for learning. For the most part, I know what my participants' objectives are. And I have an idea how to get them there. I review every participant's business and try to bring to the session things they'd otherwise not considered."

"We're changing lives," he says. "What we do matters."

“My research is focused on healthcare management and cost system design. I teach accounting as a framing device for helping managers and business leaders make better decisions and evaluate performance. Participants are exposed to ideas and ways of thinking about issues that they’d never even thought about. As a result they have a lot more confidence to address problems that, although they previously dealt with them, they didn’t really understand.”

Murray Bryant, 29 years teaching experience



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