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TYSTYSGRIF UWCHRADDDEDIG ADDYSGU MEWN ADDYSG UWCH

POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Cylch Dysgu 2 | Teaching Cycle 2

Case Method Teaching

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Teaching Cycle 2:

Case Method Teaching

Using Case Studies in Marketing Lectures

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, pioneered by Harvard's school of business administration, the use of case studies has become increasingly common for teaching practice in business schools (Jennings, 1996; Volpe, 2002), and is also essential for many of our marketing modules at the 5MB. There is a trend towards more student-centred activities and case studies are increasingly popular (Davis and Wilcock, 2003). The case method is considered to be well-liked among students who see it an effective approach to teaching issues of strategic management (Brennan and Ahmad, 2005; Wheelen and Hunger, 2004). Teachers find that case studies are "real life business problems confronting business managers at a particular moment" (Barnes, Christensen, & Hansen, 1994, p. 44). Despite criticism of case studies which for example includes the amount of time necessary and the reduced scope of cases (Greenhalgh, 2007; Jennings, 1996), these exercises, the analysis and joint discussion of such situations is expected to increase students' understanding of the concepts and techniques used in real-life strategic management contexts, is illustrative, integrative, and a particular pedagogic experience (Jennings, 2002; Jennings, 1996). Case studies are said to provide an interactive learning experience for students (Schemner, 2001) and seem very useful for student-oriented teaching. Case-based approaches are useful to develop students' core skills such as group working, individual study skills, information gathering and analysis, time management and presentation and practical skills (Davis and Wilcock, 2003).

The present teaching cycle is concerned with the effective use of the case method. There are a range of difficulties for achieving good learning results, and case is a flexible method of teaching and there is no single best practice (Volpe, 2002). It is acknowledged that "case studies can be used in many different ways, their use will be shaped by the lecturer's own view of the subject and the role of case in its teaching, by the instructor's style and the expectations, backgrounds and abilities of students" (Jennings, 1996, p. 4).
MY aim for this teaching cycle is to build a theoretical base and to get into the literature on case study teaching, and then to productively use case studies with our Marketing students, finding an effective structure which enables and motivates students to prepare the material and to successfully work with the material during the sessions. While there is no "ideal" approach, some generalities can be drawn. I also aim at gaining some expertise and confidence in case study teaching. I am experiencing a certain need to catch up with case study teaching. Holding degrees in theatre, film and media studies and completing business studies as a minor subject, I was not much exposed to many case studies during my days as a student. There is only little knowledge and personal experience on which I can draw to enhance or even inspire my teaching. The present teaching cycle therefore is a long cycle which started with my first case teaching in semester 2 2006/7 and ended after semester 1 2009/10.

I tried out several methods of case-study teaching in a number of modules: MBM1510 International Markets and Marketing (2006/7), MBM1510 (2007/8), MM30420 International Marketing (2009/10). These modules, in particular MBM1510, consist of formal lectures (50%) and interactive contributions from the students for case studies in every session. There were some additional case study sessions in my other modules. Case studies which were adopted are commonly structured and vary between one and four pages in length, they are provided as 'ready-mades' in the core text of the module (Svend Hollensen (2007) Global Marketing. A Decision-Oriented Approach, Prentice HallPearson Education, London). From time to time I also use my own case studies on actual examples (e.g. session on "Branding in Times of Crisis" in MM30420 uses an example of SAP's new global marketing campaign. I developed the questions and got in touch with SAP for obtaining the new ads and other visual imagery.) Sometimes I used "ecch The Case for Learning" databases and other sources for business studies lecturers (see Volpe, 2002, p. 27).

TEACHING PLAN AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

The teaching cycle is particularly concerned with methods to increase and achieve student participation and with methods for developing communication and interpersonal skills via a sophisticated used of case study to provide opportunities for reporting and group work (Jennings, 1996).

There are challenges to the case method and one of them is the "dilemma of case as a participative method that will capture the student's interest" (Jennings, 1996, p. 5). More
details are identified by Frey and Keyes (1985): (a) the overly aggressive student, (b) the shy student, and (c) the unprepared student; Aylesworth (2008) adds (d) the reluctant class and (e) dealing with "mistakes." As regards my modules, I have not encountered overly aggressive students trying to dominate discussions, but shy students who do not have much to add are numerous. They often have a different cultural background but are generally motivated: Research suggests that Chinese students support the idea of case study learning although English is not their first language (Chang et al., 2005). Whereas I have not encountered a completely reluctant class, unprepared students are widespread. I am also not too much worried about mistaken interpretations of concepts and cases as marketing lecturers commonly draw on instructor resources of marketing text books and case studies and are in possession of the "right" answer and can easily correct a student's misinterpretation. The implications are as follows: I need to make students prepare the case studies prior to the session, and during the sessions I need to find a way of better integrating 'shy' students.

As regards the second point, Barnes et al. (1994, p. 24) emphasize that discussion teaching requires the ability to manage both content and process. I am always extensively prepared and familiar with the content and theories, as also suggested by Volpe (2002), hoping that this is a good basis for a satisfying discussion and joint learning experience. According to Barnes et al. (1994, p. 24), an effective case discussion - which aims at internalizing the knowledge and management techniques substantial to the case - is a "partnership" with shared responsibilities of students and the instructor and the discussion groups need not be individualistic, but a "learning community".

I used the teaching cycle to experiment with methods for motivating students to prepare the case study prior to the session and to help them to become part of a "learning community" during the discussion. This also involves considerations of the general format of such a session, as MBM1510 and MM30420 combine both, lectures and case studies.

As there is no standard teaching approach and most appropriate format depends on a number of variables such as student numbers, their knowledge, level, time available, and finally, on the skills of the lecturer, I was experimenting with a number of approaches to case teaching in order to develop a certain expertise. For the teaching cycle I focus on the issues addressed above: Teaching format of the sessions, preparation, discussion/organization in the case study part of the course.
PROGRESS NOTES ON TEACHING PRACTICE AND EVALUATION OF STUDENTS’ LEARNING EXPERIENCE

In this section I shall give details on the Teaching format of the sessions, Preparation and Discussion/ Organization in the case study part of the course. For evaluating student understanding of case study methods, I used formative assessment in form of constant feedback on their interaction during the case study session and their preparation of the cases. I also used summative assessment (also see Davis and Wilock 2003). Students’ understanding of course content and methods was evaluated by marking submitted group work (a case study on a company) which accounts for 20 percent of the total mark. In 2008, marks were higher in average and I felt that the quality of SWOT analysis and other conceptual frameworks, which are practiced in the case study group discussions, was higher. I shall not compare both average marks as cases differed from 2007 to 2008 and both results are consequentially not directly comparable. However, I need to emphasize that the quality of the application of theoretical material was better in the 2008 group.

For evaluating my case study teaching, as recommended by Davis and Wilcock (2003), I was gathering immediate feedback by means of written, anonymous brief comments on post-its (Brown and Race, 2002, p. 176) at the end of four case study sessions from MBM1510 (2007/8) students. (I have not included copies of these 200 of post-its but will describe the findings.) There were asked to comment on how they evaluate the interaction and they were asked to comment on the structure of the interaction (e.g. "case first, then theory"). In once instance they were asked to provide a statement on their personal and group preparation of the session.

Additionally, I draw on personal observations and students' verbal feedback during the sessions. It is very easy to tell if such an interactive session "work" or not in terms of interaction and fruitful verbal exchange. This is a more qualitative and so-called "commentator" approach which is however accepted and even prevalent in research on soft factors (such as atmospheres and interactions) in my subject areas of organizational studies (e.g. Strati, 1999). After all, the teaching cycle was intended to experiment with situations for gathering experience in case-study teaching and for getting a better 'feeling' for these situations.

Another source of feedback is via structured questionnaires in the final Speedquest evaluation which is conducted by the department for every module.

I shall refer to the findings of these methods in the following sections.
Teaching format of the sessions

Having assigned the case to a module segment, lecturers need to decide where it fits. I understood that it is useful to consider different placements (also see Volpe, 2002). Typically, I am now reflecting on three types of case study teaching (as also suggested by the author of the core text adopted for MBM1510 - Hollensen, 2007, p. 9): Theory first, then case; case first, then theory; theory and case simultaneously. Speedquest feedback revealed that students did not like double-sessions which only included case study work and presentations and I have tried out these structures and made the following experiences:

Theory and case simultaneously is suggested for lecturers who place much emphasis on student's ability to move back and forth between general concepts and actual examples (Hollensen, 2007, p. 9). Theories underpinning "International Marketing" are diverse (from market entry strategies to advertising decisions) and this approach seemed challenging for MBM1510 students in particular (M1 Master's - students who graduated in non-business subjects), less so for MM30420 (final year VG), as the Master's students were lacking a clear framework which could be applied to the case. Interaction in these cases could be described as 'difficult' and 'slow'.

I have made positive experiences with Theory first, then case as supplementing a discussion of theory with case analysis allowed students to apply theoretical concepts. The case was used as some sort of repetition and illustration for the theory, and as an application of theoretical concepts. In my teaching I wanted to avoid students' uncreative application of patterns and concepts as this can be seen as contradictory to a more discussion based, interpretative case study approach (Barns et al., 1995). Consequently, I placed a lot of emphasis on the discussion (see following section). Written student feedback indicated that the experience in such a session was perceived positively, they felt to be able to "build upon" previously introduced theoretical concepts.

Case first, then theory has not been particularly apt for a number of International Marketing topics, as concepts such as "hierarchical entry strategies" should be explained beforehand. Students' written feedback and student complaints during the sessions have indicated that it is not particularly fruitful to try to make M1 Master's students 'reinvent' such complex theories. This is also difficult for final year VG students who can at least base their discussion on a broader knowledge about marketing. This exploratory format, which emphasizes theory-seeking case discussion (Hollensen, 2007, p. 9), may in other instances motivate students to learn theory (Volpe, 2002). It was used once for a 'soft' issue when students were asked to interpret a branding campaign in the context of a case study.
Campaigns are forms of visual communication and are based on generally accepted cultural patterns (Eco, 1979) which are easier accessible and allow everyone to contribute. Students were actively participating in this case.

**Preparation**

There are several ways to motivate student preparation of cases. Emphasizing learning outcomes, which is commonly suggested for teaching (Brown and Race, 2002), is very relevant but does not guarantee that students show up well prepared. Colleagues of mine have come to require written analysis (PowerPoint slides) - as also suggested by Volpe (2002) - by different groups of students in the module which has to be emailed prior to the lecture. This is not at all difficult to enforce if the exam consists of 30% group work (MBMI510) and groups therefore are eager to leave a good impression. Hollensen's (2007, p. 10) suggestion of an individual written analysis, evaluated by the teacher is similar but causes too much work for a module of over 45 students if it is done weekly. I have therefore continuously suggested that students meet in groups and prepare the material together as this may engender conversation and encourage deeper thinking (Volpe, 2002). I collected post-it feedback on this aspect once and MBM1510 students in their feedback confirmed that they have met in groups to prepare some the cases. They however wrote that it was not feasible to meet every week due to "difficulties in finding a meeting date" and their high work-load in other subject areas.

I was experimenting with methods such as cold-calling (Schernner, 2001) which may become part of the case study introduction. Individual students are asked for their view and this 'surprise' and potential threat of losing one's face creates a healthy level of uncertainty among students. Open humiliation of lazy students however can be detrimental for the learning atmosphere (Schernner, 2001) and is definitely not an option for me as my teaching is guided by a certain respect towards students and their different abilities.

It is also a good idea to evaluate student performance (Schernner, 2001) even if there is no mark on group work. I will typically use formative assessment and give verbal comments on their preparation, participation and the value of their comments. This creates a certain awareness of the importance of their contribution.

There is guidance for students on how to prepare a case study (Hollensen, 2007, p. 12) which contains information about steps (read case, define problems, discard unnecessary information, how to analyse the situation, recommend course of action) and which I
Distributed to the class on paper in an early session. Student said that such a framework is always welcome.

Discussion! Organization in the case study part of the course

Consulting my predecessor (MBMI51O module co-ordination) I understood that it is common practice that students gather in groups and discuss the case situation and the questions in the session. Similar approaches are suggested by the literature (e.g. Bames et al., 1994; Hollensen, 2007). The class then debates recommendations and actions suggested by one of the groups.

It was important for me to pay due attention to the fact that the teacher is playing the role of the facilitator of student discussion rather than the 'dispenser of wisdom' and must not dominate the class discussion (Bames et al., 1994). Switching from lecturing to case session mode, teachers must not dominate the discussion, it is for example suggested that the lectures does speak 10 to 15 minutes in a 75 minute class (Vedpuriswar, 2003). It is helpful to feed back points to the students before verification, using phrases such as "Are you saying that...." or "Let me see if I correctly understand the point you are making", seeking additional confirmation and encouraging reflection (Roberts, 1997). During the discussion, I increasingly tried to encourage Asian students and women to contribute as these groups are more likely to withhold contributions (Brennan and Ahmad, 2005). I would directly address students and show positive recognition of their comments. I commonly tried to generate participation by not surprising students and established eye-contact before addressing individuals (Volpe, 2002).

The tutor is responsible for leading the discussion and has to adopt a range of discussion strategies such as asking questions which go into depth (why?), inquiring for other aspects (what else?), limitations (what if?), and which are more open ended (Hollensen, 2007, p. 11), and also somewhat challenging by playing the devil's advocate (Vedpuriswar, 2003). During the teaching cycle I have followed these advices and realized that a skilled use of questions brings the discussion further. I also became aware that active listening is very important and that the lecturer, by asking questions, can "act as interpreter to make what one student says clear or accessible to the rest of the class" (Volpe, 2002, p. 23).

In the literature the use of the white board is commonly encouraged (Bames et al., 1995; Volpe, 2002) and it is emphasized that all points should be noted in a clear format (Vedpuriswar, 2003). I do, as suggested by Schemner (2001), reward comments by putting something down on the board and "punish" low-quality suggestions by doing otherwise.
Following these suggestions I realized that further preparation and a mental pre-
scripting is necessary. I also encouraged students to take their own notes as I consider such
activities to be helpful reminders for follow-up reflections and individual learning.

Realizing that other teaching aids (news about the companies from the internet, website, etc.) are also encouraged (Hollensen, 2007), I tried to add such additional resources. In some cases this was particularly useful for international students who are not necessarily familiar with British cultural knowledge (example: case study on the Tipperary Mineral Water Company which emphasized the economic value of tradition – I used Youtube to play the song "It's a long way to Tipperary" which has been referred to in the case study text).

Works on case study teaching suggest several approaches to encouraging students to take ownership of the session. It is suggested to establish a contract with 4 Ps (preparation, presence, promptness, participation) which is then continuously made explicit (Shapiro, 1984; Volpe, 2002). During the session it seems useful to state that "the only person who does not have to make a decision about the case is me, the instructor" (Shapiro, 1984, p. 3). I have verbalized such a 'contract' and experimented with similar verbal reminders and for emphasizing what is expected of students and my impression is that such techniques have a positive impact on students' relation to what is going on. They feel more 'responsible' and tend to interact more and contribute more ideas to the discussion.

The revision of the literature also increased my awareness towards the importance of an appropriate closure (Volpe, 2002). Concluding the session with a summary which links themes which were developed and reflects on the broader learning outcomes (Shapiro, 1984) seemed to be positively received by students and seemed more efficient than a wrap-up with the "solution" of the case and the instructor's view in lecture-style. Whatever the state of the discussion is, I will now reserve some minutes to end it in a satisfying way.

**IMPLICATIONS**

There are a number of implications for my professional development and future teaching practice. I have become more familiar with a range of techniques and built-up additional confidence in case teaching, and I am sure that these skills will grow with more teaching practice in the future.

During this teaching cycle and the revision of the literature I became increasingly aware that preparing case studies properly takes more time than lecturing (Volpe, 2002) and the session also demand more energy. Facilitating a class discussion is not only about
structure, but requires some verbal mastery. It is therefore useful to experiment with and practice rhetorical strategies (supporting minority statements, devil's advocate, feeding back issues) for improving the verbal interaction. After all, case teaching is different from a lecture and, as it seems to me, a real exercise in leadership.

Again I realized that a lecturer has to live with the fact that teaching situations and interactive case study session in particular are always uncontrollable to a certain extent, no matter how much careful preparation has been involved. During this teaching cycle I experienced that sessions developed a certain dynamics and in some cases there was joint learning in a positive and motivated atmosphere, whereas other sessions just turned into something unexciting. Depending on group size, social structure, shared mood and individual personalities, classes can be quite different and case study session can be successes or somewhat disappointing experiences if the enthusiasm is not shared. However I believe that careful planning and structure and deliver a great deal towards stimulating interactive sessions.

Brennan and Abmad (2005) have found differences in attitude towards case studies between students with different entry qualifications and with different ethnic backgrounds and emphasize that lecturers using this case studies need to consider these differences when designing appropriate teaching. With regard to teaching international students in the 5MB, one must not forget cultural differences. Chang et al. (2005) found in a survey that the majority of Chinese students were not familiar with the company described in the case. In consequence, the preparation of such a case may be an immense effort. In the future, it might be attractive to consider some local cases involving more international companies and even Chinese companies as they gain increasing global importance. This might also be a good starting point to create more cases by myself and get into writing case-studies - which is again another discipline worth exploring in my teaching career.

REFERENCES


You should discuss your planned teaching cycle with your Mentor, and consider how you plan to gather feedback and evaluate what happened.

Class/Module
The module description (intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning strategies and assessment methods may be attached).

- Level: Masters
- Numbers in class: 48
- Meetings (timetable): Thur 12.10-14
- Semester: 2
- Venue: B 22 Llandinam

The intended development:
- Using case studies effectively, providing a professional learning experience to students

Issue to be addressed
- Different ways of using case studies

Sources of appropriate scholarship on issue


Intended outcome for students?
Students should be able to benefit from interactive discussions; different approach to learning

How will the teaching practice be implemented?
Lecturer will prepare case studies and introduce these case studies to the class. In groups of six, students will work on these cases and the lecturer will tryout different approaches to discussing the cases.

What feedback on student learning will be produced?

Collecting written feedback
Using coursework marks (20% case study) as a point of reference

What opportunities will there be for modification along the way (if any)?

This cycle is about to take place in three different classes in three consecutive semesters as case study teaching is common in many modules at the 5MB.

What criteria will be used to evaluate the success of the teaching cycle?

Personal observations (atmosphere and interaction during sessions); Using coursework marks as a point of reference. Progress of dealing with case studies will be visible. Mentor discussions.

Please ask your Mentor to countersign this form.
The top sheet should be kept in your Portfolio
A copy should be given to your Mentor.