

Case Studies in Research Information Utilization

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Abstract

Case studies were employed at university MBA programs for many years. These publications and internet searches, added significantly to learning. It is also a good practice to use case studies for undergraduates. At University of Phoenix, Research Information Utilization course was taught twice. Teaching this course was a challenge, because the number of hours per class was limited to 20 as opposed to 45 hours in traditional settings. At Dominican College, two classes of the International Management course were given. Using case studies in these courses provided a sound foundation for critical thinking, interpersonal, leadership, public speaking and team building skills. Student reviews were good to excellent. This paper gives the summary.

Keyword: International Management, Research Information Utilization, Real-Life Case Studies

Harvard University, Cranfield University, and Thunderbird University have been publishing case studies for 20+ years. While teaching courses in business schools, one would use real-life case studies as the backbone of research. Since 1996, internet is the new paradigm for business and education. Final projects using real-life case studies via internet search, proved to be very successful for learning.

(A) Dominican College

Dominican College is located 14 miles northwest of New York City. Donald Hsu joined Dominican College in 1988 as an Associate Professor in the Business Division. In Fall Semester of 2012, the College enrolled 2100+ students. The Business Division offers

Bachelor of Science programs in Accounting, Computer Information Systems (CIS), Economics, and five concentrations of management: Financial Management, Human Resource Management, Information Systems Management (MIS), International Management (IM), and Marketing Management. A Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA) was approved by the State of New York in 2008. Hsu served as the Director of Business Administration Division from 1990 to 1996, and taught courses in CIS, MIS and IM curriculum.

MG355 International Management

In Fall Semester 2012, two sessions of this course were taught with 18 students each. This course aims to investigate specific issues in the governance of multinational enterprises. Topics include: foundations for international management, managing across cultures, strategic planning, managing political risks, organizing operations, decision making controlling, personnel selection repatriation, training organization development, labor relations, communications, motivating human resources, ethics and social responsibility.

McFarlin and Sweeney (2011) wrote the textbook. Accounting, finance, toxic mortgages, ethics, human resource, managing culture, marketing, merger/acquisition, and operations, with an international focus, were covered in details. Students perform in-class team exercises using real-life events from Business Week, Economist, Financial Times, Fortune and Forbes magazine. Four homework assignments were assigned and graded. One open-book Midterm Exam was given.

For the final projects, students worked in a group of two. They employed case studies, on global business founders/CEOs in Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, India, Italy, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, and Sweden, see Table 1 and Table 2.

All of them are billionaires on Forbes list. The main reason for their success is to manage international enterprises. Therefore this case study fits the content of this course. Students raved about the course format and the content.

(B) University of Phoenix

University of Phoenix (UOP) is a private for-profit institution of higher learning. It has an enrollment close to 400,000 students and is the largest private university in USA. UOP was founded in 1976 and is owned by the Apollo Group Inc. UOP has 200+ campuses offering more than 100 degree programs from associate degrees to PhDs. Its main campus is located in Phoenix, Arizona. The New Jersey campus is located in Jersey City. As the Campus College Chair, Robert Gabriel, PhD, is in charge of hiring, training and scheduling classes for instructors.

In February of 2008, Hsu went through a rigorous 16-hour training session and was certified to teach UOP courses. The training was mandatory for all instructors regardless

of prior teaching experience. From May 2008 to December 2012, Hsu taught: Critical Thinking, Essentials of Personal Finance, Information System Security, Integrated Business Topics, Management Negotiations, Marketing, Marketing Research, Organization Behavior, People Science Environment, Public Relations, and Quality Management Productivity. Hsu taught most of these courses in the past. Four papers were published: a) Marketing Research, Hsu (2006), b) Organizational Behavior, Hsu (2008), c) Critical Thinking, Public Relations and Integrated Business Topics, Schmidt and Hsu (2009), and d) Personal Finance, Levit and Hsu (2011).

RES110 Introduction to Research and Information Utilization

This course introduces students to the research process, with emphasis on academic applicability. Students will gather and utilize primary and secondary data and information through the exploration of digital libraries, the Internet, and other sources of information. Students will analyze and evaluate sources in the course of preparing a research paper, with an additional focus on the responsible use of information and correct documentation. Textbook was written by Howard and Taggart (2011).

The twenty-hour course at UOP consisted of a five-week, four hours per week schedule. In any other university, this course normally ran 45 hours per semester. How could one teach this course in 20 hours? UOP E-Learning website (E-campus) listed the reading assignment for each week. UOP negotiated agreements with book publishers. Students paid a course resource fee and were permitted to download and then printed the pages. This mechanism saved students time and money.

Hsu taught this course twice. The first class started August 20, and ended on September 10, 2012. The second class ran from October 19 through November 16, 2012. Each class enrolled five students. They formed two Learning Teams with three people in one team and two people in another team. An Individual assignment and a Learning Team assignment were required every week. The Learning Team placed students to work in a group, after class. Table 3 provides the point values for weekly assignments.

This shows how much work needed to be done outside of the classroom. Students would spend up to 5 hours each week, after class to do these assignments. Add the 25 hours doing assignment, to the lecture 20 hours, give 45 hours for the total time spent on this course. So the learning requirement is not different from a traditional university.

Team work was not easy either. With full-time work and family obligations, it was difficult for three people to get together to do team assignment. Virtual teams with email correspondences helped, but did not always work.

Hsu presented lectures using PowerPoint slides. Simply reading the slides bored students. The better teaching method was to read a few lines, and ask general questions: What is the research question? How do you brainstorm to get ideas? What is the literature review? How do you employ databases and indexes for your research? With the internet accessibility everywhere, why will you go to the library? What are the media sources,

blogs, wiki, social network, or mobile downloads? How do you avoid plagiarism? How do you refine your paper? What is the main theme of your research paper? Why do you feel that this topic is interesting? How does a writer make a living? Is there a career path for writers or researchers?

These type of questions got immediate attention. Students voiced their opinions in a lively manner. It is important to ask students to provide examples using their real-life experiences, and to discuss the pros and cons for each issue. Four hours were very long in the evening, because all students worked during the day. One 20 minute break was given, at 8:00 pm each class. Hsu met students individually to discuss any assignment issue. Some of them had poor English writing skills. Hsu spent much time with weaker students, to make sure they were able to catch up with the rest of the class. This strategy earned student respect.

For the final projects, the first class members did two group projects, one in Research Method, and the other one in Avoid Plagiarism. The second class members did five individual projects: a) Consumer Health, b) Economic Analysis on Global Warming, c) Living a Healthy Lifestyle, d) Recycling, and e) Solar Energy. They submitted their final papers and presented them with the PowerPoint slides, individually or in a group.

All ten students did well in this course. Student evaluations averaged 9.0 and 9.3 out of a maximum of 10, Table 4 and Table 5.

Conclusion

The students learn the theory and also needs to connect it to the real world. International Management course and Research Information Utilization course were taught at two different institutions of higher learning to 46 people. The E-campus infrastructure at University of Phoenix made the E-Learning a pleasure. It is an excellent platform to train tomorrow's leader.

Teaching and learning strategies included the in-class use of Business Week, Economist, Financial Times, Forbes, Fortune, Harvard Business Review, Homework, and Internet Search. Final projects involved a written paper and the PowerPoint presentation by a team or an individual. All of these tools and reports attributed to the success in an E-Learning environment. It was a very gratifying experience.

Acknowledgment

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Table 1	MG 355-1 International Management		
	Final Group Project chart		
<u>Group A</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Group B</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Craig	Mukesh Ambani	McNiff	Karl Albrecht
McFarlane	Reliance Industry, India	Clark	Aldi, Germany
<u>Group C</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Group D</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Kcira	Liliane Bettencourt	Garcia	Lakshmi Mittal
Jorgensen	L'Oreal, France	Li	Mittal Steel, India
<u>Group E</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Group F</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Bronson	Thomas Kwok	Gonzalez	Michael Otto

Nolido	Sun Hung Kai, Hong Kong	Navarro	Otto Group, Germany
<u>Group G</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Group H</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Uffer	Alisher Usmanov	Hajjar	Ricardo Pliego
Campbell	Metalloinvest, Russia	Polanco	Salinas Group, Mexico
<u>Group I</u>	<u>Topic</u>		
Gagliano	David Thomson		
Olesen	Thomson Reuters, Canada		

Table 2	MG 355-2 International Management		Final Group Project Chart
<u>Group A</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Group B</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Coppola	Georgina Rinehart	Leonard	Bernard Arnault
Landrigan	Hancock Pros, Australia	Ventura	LVMH, France
<u>Group C</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Group D</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Alonso	Eike Batistia	Lalanne	Michele Ferrero
	EBX Group, Brazil	Weiss	Ferrero Rocher, Italy
<u>Group E</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Group F</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Bermudez	Amancio Ortega	Medina	Prince Alwaleed Kingdom, Saudi Arabia
Taveras	Zara, Spain	Smith	
<u>Group G</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Group H</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Dunlap	Li Ka-Shing	Butler	Carlos Slim Helu
Roberts	Hutchison, Hong Kong	Ginter	Telmex, Mexico
<u>Group I</u>	<u>Topic</u>		

Gianuzzi	Stefan Persson		
Nieva	H & M, Sweden		

**Table 3. Individual and Learning Team Assignment for University Phoenix
RES 110 Introduction to Research and Information Utilization**

Point Values for Course Assignments

Week One	
Individual Assignment: First Step in Research Proposal	8
Learning Team Assignment: Create charter and objectives	2
Week Two	
Individual Assignment: Answer Weekly Discussion Question	2
Learning Team Assignment: LaRoche & Gerber questions	10
Week Three	
Individual Assignment: Outline of Research Paper	8
Learning Team Assignment: Copyright/plagiarism	8
Week Four	
Individual Assignment: First Draft Research Paper	10
Learning Team Assignment: Plagiarism Paper	12
Week Five	
Individual Assignment: Final Draft paper and Presentation	12
Learning Team: Project Evaluation paper	8
All Weeks	
Individual Participation & Discussion	20
Assignment Totals	
Individual	60
Learning Team	40
Point Total	100

Table 4. RES/110 - INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH AND INFORMATION UTILIZATION
Schedule: 08/20/2012 - 09/24/2012
Campus: NEW JERSEY-JERSEY CITY CAMPUS
Group ID: NJFY0811MN
Survey 1
Survey 2
Survey 3
Survey 4

SEOCS results: On the FACULTY EFFECTIVENESS of <u>Donald Hsu.</u>											
1)	Not at all	Likely	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	9	Extremely Likely 10									
How likely are you to recommend this instructor to other students?											
Three people rated 10, one rated 7.											
2)	Not at all	Helpful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	8	9	Extremely Helpful 10								
How helpful was the feedback this instructor provided on assignments you turned in during this course?											
Four people rated 10.											
3) Comments on the Faculty: None											

Table 5. RES/110 - INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH AND INFORMATION UTILIZATION											
Schedule: 10/19/2012 - 11/16/2012											
Campus: NEW JERSEY-JERSEY CITY CAMPUS											
Group ID: NJFY0711MN											
Survey 1											
Survey 2											
Survey 3											
SEOCS results: On the FACULTY EFFECTIVENESS of <u>Donald Hsu.</u>											
1)	Not at all	Likely	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	9	Extremely Likely 10									
How likely are you to recommend this instructor to other students?											
Two people rated 9, one rated 8.											
2)	Not at all	Helpful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	8	9	Extremely Helpful 10								
How helpful was the feedback this instructor provided on assignments you turned in during this course?											
Two people rated 9, one rated 7.											
3) Comments on the Faculty: None											