

Teaching with Cases

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will millhiser

assistant professor of management

zicklin school of business

william.milhiser@baruch.cuny.edu

background

Operations Management

MGT 4500: Cases in Operations Management (28 class meetings, 25+ case studies). “Integrative experience.”

MGT 9700: 4-6 cases per semester.

MGT 9700: (Healthcare) 13 classes; 10 cases

Quiz

Q: In what year did Harvard Business School start using case studies? Where did they get the idea?

A: They were first used when the Harvard Business School was founded in 1908, and the idea came from the success of the case method practiced at their law school at the time.

top 5 sources of business cases?

5. You!

4. Colleagues

3. Darden Business Publishing, store.darden.virginia.edu

2. Ivey Publishing, cases.ivey.uwo.ca

1. Harvard Business Publishing, hbsp.harvard.edu

examples

Sport Obermeyer, HBS, 1996 (revised 2006)

Marriott Rooms Forecasting, Darden, 1991



Hints for Case Teaching

Quotes from the above Harvard Case:

“Do not strive or expect to simulate another teacher’s style or approach.”

“Have reasonable expectations for each class and understand that some will be better than others.”

“Cases ... are very useful in the development of skills, approaches, and a philosophy of management.”

“Because other techniques do other jobs well ... use case discussions to accomplish what they can do better than other pedagogical methods.”

“Use lectures, readings, exercises, [etc.] to supplement cases and do other tasks.”



Hints for Case Teaching

Quiz: according to the above article, how should instructors prepare to teach cases?

- (a) Read the case and teaching note.
- (b) Develop a set of specific teaching objectives.
- (c) Have a clear idea of general topics and diagrams which may end up on the white board.
- (d) Prepare questions that encourage greater depth and focus.
- (e) All of the above. (correct answer)



Hints for Case Teaching

Doc

Teach students the “4 Ps” of student involvement:

1. Preparation.
2. Presence.
3. Promptness.
4. Participation.

Quiz

In Harvard MBA classes, what percent of the grade is class participation (i.e., quality and frequency of comments)?

- (a) 10%
- (b) 25%
- (c) 40%
- (d) 50%

Answer: (d). Source: PD Broughton, *Ahead of the Curve*, 2008.

Quiz

At Harvard Business School, what is the average size of a class?

- (a) 25 students
- (b) 50 students
- (c) 70 students
- (d) 90 students

Fact: Each HBS class is usually 900 students divided into 10 sections (90 students per section).

Quiz

True or false: at Harvard Business School, professors memorize all 90 student names? (answer: true)

Quiz

True or false: Harvard MBA classes have a problem with “sharking” (i.e., students who gratuitously seek to discredit the remarks of others)

(answer: true)

“Provide respect and protection to students and their comments. Respect and protection are an important part of encouraging students to participate and test ideas.”---*Hints for Case Teaching*

How do you motivate students to properly prepare cases before class?

What is proper preparation anyway?

How many case studies per semester are appropriate in an introductory class?

How do we not overwhelm students with too much work when using cases in an intro class? E.g., in MGT 9700 (Ops Mgmt), a subgroup lack the background to read the cases, and complain that the workload is too great.

What are interactive methods for holding case discussions? At Harvard, classes are led by instructors. Is it effective when student teams present the cases?

Are cases more effective than other methods for creating “deep learning”?
Games? Simulations? Books?

Barnes et al. 1994. *Teaching and the Case Method*, Harvard Business Publishing.

Is the case method effective? The answer to this question given by the above book is the following quote: “No question is as difficult to answer as that to which the answer is obvious.”--George Bernard Shaw

“The case method...”

“...enables students discover & develop their own unique framework for approaching, understanding, and dealing with business problems.”

“...is intellectually stimulating for the faculty.”

“...meets a faculty’s teaching and research needs.” (especially for case writers)

“...is supportive of a culture that places high value on review and innovation.”

“...is economically efficient.” (works well in 80 or 100-student sessions; scale is asset, not liability)

Final 2 thoughts.

The story of “business analytics” at the Ivey School,
University of Western Ontario, Canada.

“Empirical research is lacking due to the variety of ways
one can teach tools or cases.” -- Steve Powell,
Dartmouth College

recommended reading

B.P. Shapiro. 1985. "Hints for Case Teaching." Harvard Business School Publishing, case 9-585-012. [some basic advice and a short read; 5 pages]

Barnes, Christensen, Hansen. 1994. *Teaching and the Case Method* (book), Harvard Business Publishing.

Ellet. 2007. *The Case Study Handbook: How to Read, Discuss, and Write Persuasively About Cases* (book). Harvard Business School Press.

Broughton. 2008. *Ahead of the Curve: Two Years at HBS*. Penguin Press. [a particularly good reference to understand case studies from the student's perspective]