

Case Studies in Personal Finance, Applied Electronics, International Management and Global E-Commerce courses

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Abstract

Case studies were developed at Harvard University, Cranfield University and Thunderbird University for advanced learning among MBA students and for PhD research. These publications and internet searches, added significantly to global leadership. At University of Phoenix, Personal Finance course was offered as part of the First-Year Sequence of Courses. Teaching this course proved a challenge, because the number of hours per class was limited to 20 as opposed to 45 hours in traditional settings. At Dominican College, Applied Electronics, International Management and Global E-Commerce courses were given. Using case studies in these courses reinforced learning, encouraged team work, and provided the formula for success. Students raved about these courses. This paper gives a summary report.

Keyword: Applied Electronics, International Management, Global E-Commerce, Leadership and Personal Finance

Harvard University, Cranfield University UK, 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, Hsu (2008). Since 1996, internet e-commerce has become the new paradigm for business and education. Final projects using real-life case studies 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 2010, the College enrolled 2000+ 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 MIS and IM. While the MIS enrollment is down, the IM enrollment has steadily increased for the past 10 years.

1. CI227S Applied Electronics

This course was developed in 1990. There was a need to create a Science course as one of the Liberal Arts requirements. Business majors could take Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Psychology, or Earth Science. However many of these courses require additional two or three hours per week in labs, in addition to the lectures. Business majors worked part-time and had limited hours.

Applied Electronics was developed that used a combination of lectures, demonstrations, and in-class labs. Four in-class labs were: (a) Parts Identification, (b) Semiconductor Device, (c) Operational Amplifier, and (d) Oscilloscope. Each of these labs required two classes to complete. A written lab report was collected and graded as the homework assignment.

Course objective was to:

- describe the dynamic growth in electronics
- understand logic gates, electrical components, circuits and systems
- explain the semiconductor devices, diodes and transistors for their scientific content
- comprehend how digital circuits make decisions
- have a clear idea about the digital integrated circuit
- define wafer fabrication processes
- introduce the laser and fiber optics systems
- discuss consumer electronics and the Internet
- perform five scientific labs in electronics, with "hands-on" practice to learn more

Textbook was Cannon (1991). This book was old, but still good. In the lab, 20 day students were divided into four groups, with 5 people each. Then the four labs were carried out in the rotating fashion. For evening class with small class size, the whole class did one lab, after another. This course was offered 28 times to 432 students, since Fall Semester of 1990. The day enrollment was about 20 students per semester.

Four students enrolled in Summer Session 2010. Mel Electronics Kit (MEK) was added as the fifth lab. MEK has 500+ experiments in one design board and can be used for many different courses. After learning the theory of electronics, it is vital to have "hands-on" experience. Students started with the four labs, wiring capacitor, resistor, operation amplifier, transistor, onto the Heath breadboard, and tested the circuit with the oscilloscope. Then they moved to MEK, wiring a sound generating device. Final project is a written paper with PowerPoint presentation. Four projects were done, a) Apple iPhone 4, b) Blackberry Torch, c) HTC Droid, and d) Motorola Droid. The technical specification and the business side were analyzed and compared.

They enjoyed the course very much and said: a) Great Professor with plenty of real life experience to share with the class, b) Dr. Hsu lets students get involved with many interesting topics and nice final projects, c) Wonderful Professor with a massive amount of experience in and out of the classroom, with a willingness to share those experiences, and d) Dr. Hsu's style of teaching is interesting and hands-on. He lets the students get involved in what is being taught. This is my second class with him and I would not hesitate to take another class with him.

2. MG355 International Management

In Fall Semester 2010, 19 day students enrolled. Accounting, finance, toxic mortgages, ethics, human resource, managing culture, marketing, merger/acquisition, and operations, were covered in details. Students did group final projects covering global business founders/managers in Brazil, France, India, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, USA, Table 1.

3. MG366 Manage Global E-Commerce

Fourteen people registered in Fall Semester 2010. This course was modified to add much internet

hardware and software content. By doing it this way, CIS/MIS major can use it for a computer class. Laudon and Traver (2010) was used as the textbook. Ebay and Amazon served as examples of the American success stories for e-commerce. In addition, this course covered 7 non-US countries, taking e-commerce to the global level. In the continental Europe, 40+ discount airlines are now operating to benefit travelers. There are 27 countries with 500 million people in the European Union. Each discount airline started with just one website doing e-commerce, and tried to be the next RyanAir or EasyJet. Final projects involved the comparison between a discount airline and a traditional airline, covering Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Sweden, Spain and UK, Table 2.

(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 Levit, PhD, is in charge of hiring, training and scheduling classes for all instructors.

In February of 2008, Hsu went through a rigorous 16-hour training session and was certified to teach Business/Computer courses. The training was mandatory for all instructors regardless of prior teaching experience. From May 2008 to December 2009, Hsu taught: Critical Thinking, Information System Security, Integrated Business Topics, Management Negotiations, Marketing, Marketing Research, Organization Behavior, Public Relations, and Quality Management Productivity. Hsu taught most of these courses in the past. Three papers were published: a) Marketing Research, Hsu (2006), b) Organizational Behavior, Hsu (2008) and c) Critical Thinking, Public Relations and Integrated Business Topics, Schmidt and Hsu (2009).

FP120 Essentials of Personal Finance

This course provides an overview of the elements necessary for effective personal financial planning and the opportunity to apply the techniques and strategies essential to this understanding. Primary areas of study include creating and managing a personal budget, understanding and paying taxes, working with financial institutions, wise use of credit cards and consumer loans, financing automobiles and homes, and the use of insurance for protecting one's family and property. Textbook was by Bajtelsmit and Rastelli (2008).

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 saves students time and money. Eight people registered for this course. Only six of them showed up. They formed two Learning Teams with three people in each team. Each week, there was individual assignment. On Week Two, Week Three and Week Four, the Learning Team must hand in assignments as a group, Table 3.

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. 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, such as: What is the difference between a checking account and a saving account? What is a term life insurance? Why would you need the medical insurance? What is 401K and Roth IRA? How do you control your own finance? How do you pay

lower taxes legally? How do you invest in real estate? Can you make money in the stock market? Should you start your own business?

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. Two breaks were given, 15 minutes each at 7:15 pm and then at 8:45 pm. Hsu met students individually. Some of them had poor English writing skills. Hsu spent much time with weaker students. There were exercises using MS Excel. Only one student knew Excel. Hsu taught them simple way to construct a spreadsheet. It was not difficult when they paid attention. The purpose was to make sure weak students would be able to catch up with the rest of the class. This strategy earned student respect.

All of them were interested in paying lower taxes, but had no clue. Schnepfer (2010) was used. Many examples were given including: a) If you have a business, then you can deduct travel, meals and entertainment in connection to this business, b) if you own a rental property, then you can deduct depreciation, etc. MS PowerPoint was taught so they could present the case studies. The Learning Teams presented two versions of "Paying Zero Tax" at Week Five.

Students were absolutely thrilled about this challenge using MS PowerPoint. All six students did well in this course and everyone loved the course. Two students completed the SEOCS, Table 4.

Conclusion

The students learn the theory and also needs to connect it to the real world. Applied Electronics, International Management, Global E-Commerce and Personal Finance courses were taught at two different institutions of higher learning to 41 people. The E-campus infrastructure at University of Phoenix made the E-Learning pleasant. It is an excellent platform to train tomorrow's leader.

Teaching and learning strategies include the in-class use of hardware (Motorola board, Semiconductor Device, Operational Amplifier, Oscilloscope and Mel Electronics Kit) and software (Business Plan software, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, MS Project), Global Finance exercise, 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

Authors of this paper wish to thank Dr. Clare Pennino, James Ryan, Business faculty at Dominican College; and Dr. Martin Boyle, Dr. Tamara Clark, and Prof. Linda Price at University of Phoenix, Jersey City Campus; for their encouragement and support.

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Table 1	MG 355	International	Management
	Final Group Project		
<i>Group A</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Group B</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Syska	Liliane Bettencourt	Georges	Carlos Slim Helu
	Loreal, France	Sandhu	Telmex, Mexico
<i>Group C</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Group D</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Duran	Indra Nooyi	Iglesias	Ambani brothers
Sanchez	Pepsi Cola, USA	Moreno	Reliance, India
<i>Group E</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Group F</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Arrigo	Amancio Ortega	Marinelli	Bernard Arnault
Brown	Zara, Spain	Vargas	LVMH, France
<i>Group G</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Group H</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Franco	Andrea Jung	Garcia	Prince Alwaleed
Giordano	Avon Products, USA	Santana	Kingdom, Saudi Arabia
<i>Group I</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Group J</i>	<i>Topic</i>
DeLuca	Stefan Persson	Jones	Eike Batistia
Mathew	H & M, Sweden	Valle	EBX Group, Brazil

Table 2	MG 366 Final Projects	Global E-Commerce	
	European Airlines		
	<i>Names</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Project</i>
1	Georges	Germany	Lufthansa
	Massillon		Air Berlin
2	DeLuca	Ireland	AerLingus
	Slesinski		Ryanair
3	Mathew	Sweden	ScandJet
	Smith		SAS
4	Brown	Czech Republic	Czech Airline
	Jones		Smart Wings
5	Capote	Spain	ClickAir
	Martinez		Air Madrid
6	Soto	Poland	Lot Airline
	Saban		Wizz Air
7	Parker	UK	British Airway
	Reddick		EasyJet
	<p>A. Start with a country, pick two airline firms, one traditional and one E-commerce website.</p> <p>B. Compare the two firms on business models, CEO/founders, # of employees, global locations, global competitors, benefit of E-commerce and future trend using global E-commerce.</p> <p>C. Written paper: 10 - 14 pages, doubly spaced Oral presentation, 12-20 PowerPoint slides 15 minute presentation, 5 minute Q& A Team effort to win, win, win!!!</p>		

Table 3. Individual and Learning Team Assignment, FP120 Personal Finance

ASSIGNMENTS	DUE	POINTS
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Individual (70%)		
Personal Financial Planning Worksheet	W1	5
Personal Cash Flow Worksheet	W1	5
Midterm Exam	W2	10
Student Loan Summary	W3	7
Tax Return Worksheet	W4	8
Final Exam	W5	15
Class Attendance and In-Class Participation	All	20
Learning Team (30%)		
Five C's Worksheet	W2	10
Buy vs Lease Scenario	W3	10
Insurance Matrix	W4	10
Total		100

Table 4. Student End Of Course Survey Results, University of Phoenix

There are 2 completed surveys for courses ending between 10/9/2010 and 11/6/2010

[FP/120](#) 10/7/2010 - 11/4/2010, JFY0710RN, NEW JERSEY

- Survey 1
- Survey 2

FACULTY EFFECTIVENESS

1)											
Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Extremely Likely	10
Likely											
0											
How likely are you to recommend this instructor to other students?											
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>											
2)											
Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Extremely Satisfied	10
Satisfied											
0											
How satisfied were you with the feedback this instructor provided on assignments you turned in during this course?											

