



## Online Case Study Teaching in the College of Business: valuing virtual interactions

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### Programme team approach to delivering online case study teaching and case competition support

T&L Strategy with underpinning pedagogical considerations	Examples from Marketing Programme Teams
<b>DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for online case teaching by visually structuring the students' case discussion process</li> <li>• Form a collective programme team mindset</li> <li>• Set a baseline of reasonable expectations for online case competitions</li> <li>• Asking better more focused questions to keep the programme team focused on students' needs for each case</li> </ul>	<p>The Programme teams have collectively shared their strategies for their individual case-based modules to ensure best practice and shared learning, and have been trying new strategies and activities online; design questions being considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What will allow us to achieve the learning outcomes for this programme in relation to case study teaching?</i></li> <li>• <i>What can we do to improve this class for the students in preparing for the case competitions?</i></li> <li>• <i>How can we use our class time on the cases most effectively, even if that requires us to do things differently?</i></li> </ul> <p>For competition preparation, the model will change; as competitions will be in an online environment, operating and approaching case competition delivery must be in the same mode. It is first necessary for staff and students to appreciate both the differences and similarities between competitions in person and online.</p> <p>Programme team are also forming questions from both a content and a process perspective. Important to ensure students feel that questions are more than an abstract exercise. In VLE 'Bongo' <u>synchronous</u> platform for case discussions, lecturers will need to modify their case questions to be simpler (no multi-part questions), but also deeper - asking for prior experiences or</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider engagement with only essential case material synchronously</li> <li>• Design discussions to have increased scaffolding to provide students with chances to prepare</li> <li>• Most cases focus on decisions, and online, distributing more of the work to students allows them to be accountable &amp; invested in their own learning</li> </ul>	<p>proposed actions can keep discussion fast-paced/sustain students' energy; warm-up questions can work well in the polling function or an open chat box.</p> <p>As online teaching can be challenging and technological limitations are inevitable, it is possible to cover as much material per class as programme teams are used to e.g. pauses that happen after a question is asked and waiting for replies can slow things down more online. Other case materials' such as videos, reports, related case studies can be dealt with asynchronously.</p> <p>In the Brightspace <u>asynchronous</u> discussion room, students can engage in small group action planning. An option is as a class to use a document with pre-set tables &amp; bullet points instead of a board to document the collective discussion. Useful to prime students with prompts, role assignments etc to support them to think ahead and keep the conversation flowing e.g. buzz groups and giving students issues to report on during class time can enhance their engagement and reduce lecturer workload.</p> <p>Students anticipate a full timetable of taught hours and rely on practical team-work; some of the 'discoveries' made by staff teaching online for the first time last semester are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• delivering the curriculum as it stands is not realistic - especially for programmes with intensive contact hours; care has to be taken to restructure to suit the delivery mode;</li> <li>• it is not practical (or healthy) for students to sit in front of a screen for hours on end - keep sessions short;</li> <li>• consideration is needed on the amount of time a student - or lecturer - is required to 'take over' a dedicated physical space (a room in a house) or annex the broadband for their own use;</li> <li>• activities need to be planned to allow all to participate so small groups are essential so the lecturer can allocate sufficient time to individuals;</li> <li>• activities online take longer, so spread them out - also spread out the lecturer support for ongoing cases so individuals are not deskbound on a daily basis;</li> <li>• peer learning has potential where case work can be shared across year groups;</li> <li>• learning to deliver a presentation to others online is a skill - there is value in flagging the skills students are using;</li> <li>• where students are in households where others are unwell then mitigation is a possibility;</li> <li>• using the 'assignment' icon in Teams is useful for setting up preparation work but students should be reminded to avoid confusing this with VLE assignments;</li> <li>• using the assignment icon and setting down carefully what students have to do provides both clarity regarding the task and helps institutional compliance to new QAA Guidelines on working during the COVID-19 pandemic;</li> <li>• using MS Teams has limitations for viewing groups but it is part of our central resources, so students should all be involved with it in some way to encourage community.</li> </ul>
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### DELIVERY CONSIDERATIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use cases that are known from experience to be those that students enjoy</li>   <li>• Build relationships with students online cognisant that this is a key resource in the lecturer's delivery toolkit; use this to get the case discussion off to enthralling starts</li>                 <li>• Variety is key</li>                   <li>• When facilitating discussions, do not assume students are always online and ready to respond</li>                   <li>• Model good practice online</li> </ul>	<p>Some cases have maintained their popularity over time by being enjoyable to teach and be taught; Academic staff select cases for online delivery for their brevity, ease of use, and teachability. This can also reduce cognitive load for students and staff at a challenging time.</p> <p>In the <u>synchronous</u> Bongo sessions, lecturers can make explicit their leading questions for the students so that the discussions can be just as dynamic as they are in a f2f classroom; demonstrate the dynamics of case teaching in the virtual classroom - show how the shorter, sharper questions are delivered will keep the discussion going by signaling that there is something valuable for students to listen to and engage with in the online case. The discovery process can be undertaken in the synchronous class by using small group breakouts to facilitate discussion.</p> <p><u>Asynchronous</u> learning can make use of a daily-deadline model. Each day, groups of students read and prepare their answers to one portion of the case. They use an online discussion forum and their own small group meetings to discuss and submit their answers by the close of day. The lecturer can summarize themes in a short video, which students watch the next morning before working on the next portion of the case. While the case discussion is more spread out, the dynamics are similar: the students learn from each other, with lecturer guidance throughout. This model allows for deeper analysis at each stage than the typical classroom discussion model. And the threshold moment can take place with the final summary video at the close of week. In the competition preparation asynchronous learning ensures that the range of inputs from previous competitors, coaches, irrespective of where they are located, can be incorporated.</p> <p>As it is physically difficult to remain in front of a screen for long periods of time, find strategies to break up the class into shorter chunks (typically no more than 20 min duration); switch back and forth between discussions, polls, role plays, breakout rooms to enhance variety. It has been shown that engagement goes down considerably when classes extend beyond 80-90 mins (Pazzaglia <i>et al.</i>, 2016); use breaks and summarize key points at the end of each class section; ensure students are not repeating 'stale' points that are not connected to the current case discussion.</p> <p>Potentially they could be experiencing technical issues; to address this, consider emailing students in advance to give them notice that you plan to call on them for a role; this can help improve the flow of conversation during class time.</p> <p>Show your engagement, encourage students to respond to each other, and model what a good comment looks like; there are many positive aspects of teaching cases online in terms of participation that the Programme team should highlight for students, especially for those who are reticent. Polls are faster and breakout rooms for group work can be facilitated in Bongo; role plays</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In larger online classes, lecturers and students only see a subset of each other during the case conversation</li> <li>• Costs of cases and usage</li> </ul>	<p>can be effective when students are assigned at random so they can work with peers they do not know well.</p> <p>This can extend to even fewer peers if a student is presenting on screen; it can be easy to forget those who are not at the 'top of the screen' and immediately visible; be patient when asking a question to see who "raises a hand" and aim to give students time to respond.</p> <p>Needs to be considered as part of Admin Budget.</p>
<p><b>TECHNOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use digital workspaces to make online case teaching more learner-centred</li> <li>• Ensure groups know how to report back to the main case teaching session</li> <li>• Create digital case workspace templates for use with different cases for competitions</li> <li>• Think carefully about what needs to be synchronous in the case delivery and what will work better asynchronously</li> </ul>	<p>This can increase engagement, interactivity, enjoyment and collaboration, and enable the lecturer to monitor breakout group progress in real time. As case teaching may take longer to do online, options are to pre-record the theory dimension of the case and ask students to watch it before the online session; active participation can be achieved by using the "raise hand" feature in conferencing and a virtual whiteboard for in-class analysis.</p> <p>To further encourage participation and encourage thoughtful consideration of their assigned topic, lecturers can use pre-assigned breakout groups for their students and randomly choose groups to present their insights by sharing their notes with the entire class through screen share. This can help the class be dynamic and give students practice working together as a team.</p> <p>Do a pilot run/demo to show students how to use a digital case workspace, knowing that at some point technology problems will arise; have a backup plan if internet goes down mid-case instruction, so that adjustments can be made midstream. Bandwidth is not distributed equally; not all students have the same technical access to online learning (Lederman, 2020).</p> <p>For <b>competition preparation</b>, as the team is a select one, the ability to use a range of elements available from existing technology is not a barrier. Using the identical platform to be used in the competition setting is important to minimize disruption.</p> <p>Move what material/activity you can to an asynchronous format, meaning you can introduce more complex cases that require more contemplation than is typically possible during a synchronous discussion. If you asynchronously offer insights, background, or commentary in advance, students will have more time to prepare and digest the case. Then they can incorporate those insights into the synchronous class discussion and build on them. The chat function is a useful tool for synchronous sessions, so decide how it will be used: <i>Will it be part of the discussion? Can students go back to past topics? Will you follow up with them later?</i> Consider the effect the chat has on the main channel and note when students might not be paying attention to the ongoing discussions. Set norms and follow them.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screen-sharing by lecturer or students can share insights</li> <li>• Equipment considerations needed in advance of online case teaching and competition preparation</li> <li>• Consider changes to tried-and-tested formats to make online case classes more interesting</li> </ul>	<p>Inviting students to share their screen will allow them to feel as if all in the class are working together. Think about the number of monitors needed i.e. to see students and class notes; how to create discussion board plans to share with students; having a good quality microphone, a good camera, and a 'quiet' keyboard.</p> <p>The pandemic can be incorporated into case discussion in ways that students will find meaningful; can also make the learning 'bond' by changing assignments through using tools, media or simulations.</p>
<p><b>EMPATHETIC CONSIDERATIONS</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase student engagement online</li> <li>• Show empathy to students</li> <li>• Find many different ways to dialogue on the cases</li> <li>• Use the collective experience to decide what works/what doesn't, and share these insights</li> </ul>	<p>Useful to encourage students to send opinions/questions to the lecturer through the private chat function, and to address those comments at the end of the class; this allows interesting insights to emerge from students with poor connections or who are normally too shy to speak up in the larger class setting.</p> <p>A clear difference between in-class and virtual case teaching is the upheaval and distractions to student and staff routines; results in unrealistic expectations for most students to do the same workload given their life circumstances. From the student perspective, most can accept that technical anomalies can happen, especially if contingency plans are in place and the lecturer shows empathy to the situation.</p> <p>Discussions can involve isolated dialogue between lecturer and individual students; with some students, can be challenging to get a conversation going online; with others it can be harder to get discussion stopped due to the lack of physical cues. Lecturer can find ways to take notes e.g. creating a board for the class to capture the collective wisdom of the cohort. Disagreement in online environments on the case is useful to nurture, so again, questioning skills come to the fore; use interesting questions over difficult ones to drive engagement (especially helpful in asynchronous sessions, where messaging can be used to good effect to encourage reticent students to engage).</p> <p>If students join from prior classes, there is an already established rhythm/dynamic/trust to build on and these students are familiar with what your version of inquiry and case teaching is about; teams can use those interactions as a way to build trust with new students.</p>