



蘇州大學

XJTLU Teaching & Learning

Research-led Teaching And Practice-driven
Learning Through Business Case Studies

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Objectives

This paper aims to discuss the methodologies we used through implementing research-led teaching methods to lead second and third year students at Soochow University to conduct various groups of case studies (including new energy electric vehicles, innovation in tourism and university-led venture incubator) in Suzhou. We found that the implications of research-led teaching can facilitate both the students' understanding of research techniques and methodologies as well as demonstrate how applying their knowledge can help influence other students' learning. This study also found that encouraging students to see themselves as research collaborators is part of the effective learning process and that can inspire students to transform experience to others.

Research-led teaching

Research-led teaching depends on the intersection of a number of approaches to teaching. It may involve the use of any number of these dimensions simultaneously.

Research-led teaching takes many different forms. If one sees “research” principally in terms of its “external” activities (presenting conference papers, posters, teamwork and networking) then research-led teaching will reflect these aims.

If one sees research in terms of “internal” activities (analysis of data, conceptual advances of ideas) then the teaching will take the form of classes in methodology and data interpretation.

What is a Business Case Study?

The term ‘business case study’ covers a wide range of problems posed for analysis, but most types include several key elements.

Most cases are either based on real events, or are a construction of events which could reasonably take place. They tell a business story, one involving issues or conflicts which need to be resolved— although most case studies do not have one obvious or clear solution.

The information contained in a business case study might be complicated (including charts, graphs, relevant historical background materials and government policies) or simple — an individual story that illustrates a difficult situation requiring a decision.

Our Chosen Business Case Study

- New energy electric vehicles
- Innovation in tourism (Tongli: an age-old but very well preserved water town with a history of more than 1,000 years. Located on the eastern shore of Taihu Lake, just 11 miles (18 kilometers) from Suzhou City)
- and University-led venture incubator



Why Business Case Studies?

As with other teaching methods, the effective use of business case studies requires instructors to decide the specific goals they hope to accomplish. In general terms, cases can evaluate the application of concepts to complex real-world business situations, including building analytical techniques that distinguish high priority from low priority elements.

Working in groups on cases also helps students develop interpersonal skills and the capacity to work in a team.

Cases also help students make connections between what they might otherwise consider to be separate disciplines—for instance, they see the need to draw upon principles in macroeconomics, environmental studies, and ethics to solve a problem in eco-tourism planning in Tongli, or the need to use political science, financial and marketing knowledge to examine the performance of new energy vehicles project in Suzhou.

Literature Review (LR)

‘The relationship between teaching and research in the modern university is one of international concern... Both research-intensive and teaching-intensive universities need to set out to consciously create a meaningful relationship within their institutions’ (Prosser, 2005).

Some researchers suggest a positive or complementary relationship between teaching and research (e.g. Neumann 1992; Braxton 1996; Sullivan 1996), while others report a separate or negative relationship (e.g. Barnett 1992).

Negative arguments typically conceptualise teaching and research as separate activities that compete for an academic’s time and resources (Brew 2001). Positive relationships emphasise the qualities or attributes that active researchers may bring to their teaching.

LR (Cont.)

Insights into entrepreneurship and small business development are provided through an extensive research base consisting of the analysis of secondary data, surveys of samples of the populations of interest, and case studies of select individuals, enterprises, or programs. (Barkley, 2006)

Yin (2003) notes, however, that case study methods may be involved in all three roles. (exploratory/descriptive, evaluation, and hypothesis testing). For example, a common use of the case study research methodology is the “evaluation” of businesses and government programs with the goal of identifying potential explanations for their successes or failures.

Exploratory and descriptive case studies, on the other hand, examine the development and characteristics of phenomena often with the goal of developing hypotheses of cause – effect relationships. Finally, the use of case study research for hypothesis testing involves tests for causal relationships by comparing generalizations from case studies’ findings with the underlying theory.

Our Research-led Teaching Setting

Students as participants

- encourages deep learning

Emphasis on research process and problems

- develops the relevant skills

Students as audience

- is effective within the time available

Emphasis on research content

- brings together the process and the content of research activity.

Our Research-led Teaching Setting (Cont.)

Emphasising development of students as active researchers is of great value

However, research led teaching should not be reduced to making research fit our teaching and learning

Research led teaching should also effect development of researchers

How we can better make our research applicable to teaching and learning

How we can better make our teaching applicable to research

Methods - Data collection

- To investigate the influences of research-led teaching and practice-driven learning through business case studies on students' learning, we will design a questionnaire, with a series of open-ended questions, to explore students' perceptions of the impacts on their learning and understandings of research.
- We attempt to explore students' perceptions of the impact of the research-led teaching and practice-driven learning on their understanding of research, learning experiences and learning outcomes.
- E.g. Students will be asked to give their views on a number of issues, including a definition of research, their knowledge of research in local financial practices, business and management, their awareness of research components in the course and the impacts on their learning.

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THANK YOU

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