

# TEACHING CASE STUDIES IN MODULE 2

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Case studies are often seen the most difficult task by students although they have an enormous positive impact on students' communication skills as well as other soft skills. Besides that, due to the lack of time and students' background, the majority of lecturers are likely to skip teaching this section or let students study themselves. How to take advantage of case studies and motivate students through video clips is always a big concern of the author of this paper.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. The definition of case studies

Case studies are “based on real events, or are a construction of events which could reasonably take place... The information contained in a case study might be complex (including charts, graphs, and relevant historical background materials) or simple—a human story that illustrates a difficult situation requiring a decision. (CTL, 1994)

They are “complex examples which give an insight into the context of a problem as well as illustrating the main point” (Fry et al, 1999)

They consist of “student centred activities based on topics that demonstrate theoretical concepts in an applied setting” (Davis & Wilcock, 2003)

In a case study, there is a real world situation / scenario and some supporting data, and a problem that needs to be solved

### 2. Benefits of case studies

Students are actively engaged in the learning process by synthesizing the contents of the course and applying learnt theories to real life situations. Besides that, teachers can bridge the gap between theory and practice. Moreover, students' interest in the topic is increased and thus their motivation is heightened. In addition, students are provided with opportunities to improve numerous skills such as communication skills, analytical skills, critical thinking, reflective learning, problem solving, group work, organizational skills, etc. They provide students real-world situations of English use, more opportunities for students to access to the workplace, and more training, especially business terms and standards in business etiquette (Chau)

### 3. Problems

Despite the above benefits, there are also some challenges for both teachers and learners in utilizing case studies. First of all, lack of time is a major concern when the assigned hours in class are not adequate for teachers to explain the task as well as for students to practice. Secondly, students are getting bored due to the lengthy case studies written in the textbook. Besides that, lack of motivation results from students' lack of business background, and unfamiliar scenario in the book.

The biggest concern of teachers is to help students understand and be able to apply theories / concepts to real life situations and achieve the aim of maintaining and developing communication in the language classroom

There may be other challenges such as knowledge / expertise of instructors, sources of cases, and levels of students

### 4. Guidelines for using case studies in language teaching

Silverman (1997) recommends teachers to bear in mind the following points when planning to teach case studies:

- Clarify objectives: what do I want my students to learn? What do I want to see as a result of the task?
- Plan and prepare:
  - How am I going to introduce the case?
  - What concepts do I want to be discussed in the case?
  - What do I want my students to deliver at the end of the task?
  - How much time am I going to give my students to complete the task?
  - In what way do I want my students to work on the task?
  - How am I going to assess my students?
  - How am I going to evaluate the task?

There are also important issues in conducting case studies such as

- Role of the instructor
- Explanation of requirements
- Assessment criteria
- Monitoring and evaluation of group work
- Allocation of marks

### **III. APPLICATION OF TEACHING CASE STUDIES IN MODULE 2**

Students are informed the task at the first class meeting. It is the teacher's responsibility to have clear and specific criteria in assessing students' work. They are asked to work in groups of 5. They have to make a video clip to reinforce the contents of 4 units covered in Module 2 and submit it by the 10th day of the course. The video clip includes the following points:

#### **1. Presentation**

##### **1.1 A company**

- A company they really want to work for in the future. It consists of the company establishment, its current state and its plan (Unit 9- Company)
- The market for the company's products or services: types of market with some relevant figures, its competitors (Unit 8-Market)
- The company cultures and its business etiquette (Unit 11- Culture)

##### **1.2 Advertisement**

- The vacancy and the requirements for the job (Unit 12- Jobs)
- The recruiting process, especially the curriculum vitae of 2 to 3 chosen candidates for the final round of the interview (Unit 12- Jobs)

#### **2. Interview**

Students play the role of interviewers and interviewees. They take part in the interview. Questions and answers must be relevant to the job descriptions and their CVs listed in the presentation. Appropriate dress code and formal body language are compulsory.

### 3. Discussion

Interviewers comment on candidates' strengths and weaknesses and make a decision on who is the most qualified candidate for the job.

On the last day of the course, some good points are praised and some suggestions are pointed out by teacher and students. To make it more motivating, the video clip can be posted on Youtube or Facebook, and share to their classmates. The bonus can be given based on the number of students' like, share, or positive comments on their social networks.

### IV. CONCLUSION

The project had a great effect on students' oral communication skills as there are positive impacts on their future job application. Students not only improve their English speaking skills but also develop other skills like critical thinking, problem-solving skills and team-building skills. The activity also enhances students the hand-on experience in attending an interview, which is really essential for their future career. Besides that, incorporating the technology motivates students to work as it is fun and they can feel less stressed. They are eager to insert sound and visual images, which enables their confidence in technology master. By that way, learning case studies can be the most beneficial to students.

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