



Pre-Class Case Study Quizzes

Faculty: Business School

Department: EPP

Module name: Energy Business

Degree: MSc Management - Management, International, MBA (guest)

Level: Postgraduate

Approximate number of students: 70

Weighting and credit: 2 Quizzes x 15% each

Module type: Elective

Module ECTS: 5

Assessment overview

Case study quiz questions are submitted two days before the class in which the discussion of the case study takes place. In the first instance, this occurs before the course begins. There are five questions in each quiz, each worth 2-4% of the module marks, and each are intended to be answered in approximately four concise sentences. For each quiz, students have a choice of two case studies from which to choose to respond to. These quizzes occur twice in the module; there are 4 cases, with sets of questions weighted as described. A choice of which two sets of questions are answered for each pair of days.

Design decisions

Rationale for the quizzes

The module has 4 teaching days in 2 pairs in a week, then a 7-day gap. The course is not entirely case based. The lecturer originally set quizzes (to obtain a mix of assessment types and to test the transferrable skills described below) on readings that were related to the module. When a quiz was set on a case due to be discussed, student preparation and the quality of the classroom discussion improved. Since that point, all quizzes have been based on cases due to be discussed in class.

Students can choose which of two cases they respond to the quiz on – one will be discussed on each day of the pair. The recommended length of answers is one sentence per percentage point of assessment weight, giving 15 sentences per quiz. The second case study/quiz is due 7 days later from this first; this enables students to take in feedback that is provided to them.

The goal of the exercise is to train students to extract, and summarise information, as well as to provide extra incentives for class engagement, as all students will have prepared one of the two cases discussed.

Rationale for electronic delivery

As the number of assessments increased, so did the marking and feedback requirements. As a result of the electronic upload, student responses are downloaded by the lecturer in one excel spreadsheet, which facilitates quicker marking and delivery of feedback (entered into excel and email-merged via word).

Questions design

Some of the questions (5 per quiz) are simple and factual; some require a bit more analysis using facts from the case. The questions are best demonstrated by the following examples, taken from a case regarding retail energy markets in Great Britain, in this instance. (% following the question shows % of module the question is worth; the 5 questions total to 15%).

1. Why did Centrica have higher revenues from selling gas than electricity?



- (2%)
2. Why has the way in which companies try to get new customers changed over time? (2%).
 3. Which type of customers were least likely to buy from the incumbent supplier? (3%).
 4. Why did customers pay different prices depending on how they paid for energy? (4%).
 5. Why did gas and electricity bills rise in the decade after 2000? (4%)

Response design

One of the useful things about this assessment is the flexibility to offer very personalised feedback. A few comments are written in general to the cohort, then personal comments based on the mark of the student, and are built into the response to the student, thereby providing personal feedback to the student. These comments are sent out via Mail Merge, therefore anything in excel, student achievement-wise, can become personalised feedback, as is suitable to the particular case study.

Fit with other assessments and the programme/module

The current breakdown of the course assessments is as follows: two individual quizzes (15% each), individual report of a speaker worth 20% (assessing what they would have left out, what could have been enhanced, etc.) and a 5,000 word group report on the group's choice among given questions, or pre-agreed topic worth 50%

The group work is using a range of techniques to analyse business decisions. It is important to understand how decisions are made in these areas, and this is a transferable skill, as is being able to describe something that happened with the speaker, plus the analysis of what was said, and extracting information. These are the programme ILOs of being able to assess information well and the importance.

Practicalities

Preparing students for assessment

As the first quiz is due before the first classroom session, the assessment is very clearly laid out in the syllabus. Additionally, students are encouraged

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to email the lecturer with any technical difficulties regarding insendi submission, or qualitative understanding issues of the assessment. In class, students are given the chance to ask questions. The requirement of short and concise answers is reiterated so there should be no ambiguity as to what is the desired work product of each student. Given there are two quizzes, the prompt feedback from the first quiz (within one week's time) is returned in time so that students might implement it in the second quiz, which is a further way to facilitate students' understanding of the criteria.

Marking arrangements

The compilation of the student answers is downloaded by the lecturer with a couple of "clicks". The student answers in this case will clearly be unique to each individual and quite variable given the flexibility to some degree in the range of 'right' answers.

Quizzes must be manually marked, and by an individual with a good amount of knowledge on the subject, such as the lecturer. Correctness, but also clarity of information, is what matters; even if the weight of said question is 2%.

Feedback arrangements

Once the marking is completed, students receive marks and feedback in their email inbox, which makes delivering the feedback flexible and fast. For the individual feedback, it tends to be, whether it is a good answer, a point they missed, or a point the lecturer particularly likes.

Online adaptations

As the numbers of students rose electronic feedback proved to be a great solution to reduce the pressure on the lecturer. When the module was run in hybrid mode, not very many attended online; combining face to face and online students, there was perhaps 60-70% attendance.