Faculty: Business School

Department: Management

Module name: Organisational Behaviour (compulsory)

Degree: MSc Management

Level: Postgraduate

Approximate number of students: 400 (4 streams of approx. 100)

Assessment weighting: 30%

Module ECTS: 5

Video and Resource Memo (Group)

Assessment overview

This is a group assignment, where students present a case analysis, in a 5-minute long video and a 1-page memo format, on an article from a current business publication. The programme team assigns syndicate groups formed of approximately 5-6 students each. The group is to choose a recent article from a business publication such as The Economist, or The Financial Times, etc. on an organisation of their choice. The students then choose a specific organisational behaviour topic they would like to relate to their organisation of choice to, as chosen from the article. These specific topics could be, for example, motivation, personality and individual differences, decision making, etc. The video should be self-explanatory, but the memo provides background. All group members are to play an active part in the video, either through physical presence, or in voice-over.

Design decisions

Rationale for the assessment

The assessment is very current, as students are encouraged to use any present-day news in the market from business publications. This requires students to do research and to relate course content to real life case studies of their own choosing. The students develop an important skill of producing concise deliverables, from a lot of research, and presenting their analysis in a clear structured final output. Students also enhance their team working skills. All these skills are relevant for life after graduation and for an understanding of Organisational Behaviour itself.

Using a multimedia output, the video, encourages student creativity as there is freedom in the format. The memo gives the opportunity to students to showcase their references and supportive information and research, providing more academic supporting materials alongside the video presentation.

Fit with other assessments and the programme/ module

Organisational Behaviour is a Core module of the MSc Management, delivered over a five-week period in the autumn term. The video and memo assessment sits with an additional 10% course participation grade, and the main course assessment, an individual `best-self' assessment (worth 20%) and `practice plan' (40%).

The video and memo assessment prepared students well for other assessments in the module. They needed to have a deep understanding of the course material on the topic they were considering and applying to a particular organisation which gave them a very solid grounding for other assessments on that material (exam and related individual reflection questions).

Practicalities

Preparing students for assessment

Students are assigned to groups by the programme team. The coursework

is discussed during the first lecture, as well as the deadline for groups to submit their topic and article on a shared excel spreadsheet agreed.

Some time is set aside in class to work with the students on the assessment, typically one session. The lecturer is then able to spend time with each group and answer questions, and provide guidance and advice. The lecturer gives the students an exercise in class focusing on a team process, and how they work as a team, and makes certain everyone is included – if there is any conflict, the team is able to share how the issues were resolved, etc.

Video design requirements
There were no restrictions placed on what format the video could take, with the aim of giving students' creative freedom. Videos were uploaded to the course Insendi page (the Business School virtual learning hub).

Memo design
The purpose of the memo is to provide more analytical background information on the connection between the business and the Organisational Behaviour, allowing the video to be less formal. The students were told to see the video as something that could be presented to staff in an organisation, and the memo would be used by a manager when explaining the video to staff. The memo was limited to one A4 page in length (one-sided, 1.2 spacing and 12 point Arial Font), plus the article on which the analysis was based added as an appendix.

Marking arrangements
In this specific module, the marking has been done exclusively by the lecturer. The video and memo assessment are worth 30% of the total module mark. Within the 30%, the assessment was marked as follows:
- Quality of analysis and recommendations 50%
- Research support 30%
- Clarity of structure 10%
- Visuals and Presentation Style 10%

Online adaptations
This assessment could be run online, although it would be more difficult with the loss of in-person group meetings, and the loss of the in-person lecturer supervision session in the class time close to submission. However, the video content format is easily transferrable – people can easily watch the videos online and comment in an online course format.

Advantages of the assessment type
- Students connect course materials to real world example themselves, this makes the assessment more authentic and well aligned with what they might be doing in professional lives;
- Students learn how to use academic research to produce a business-focused output;
- Allows students to develop higher order knowledge by applying content to specific case that they select;
- Group working enables individuals to develop key employability skills;
- At interviews for some companies such as Ford potential candidates are often asked about a recent article they read and are asked to discuss how what they read would influence the future. They are asked to analyse what is happening now and what it means going forward. Hence delivering a concise overview of what they learnt, similar to what this assessment is trying to do, could be one of interview tasks they will be asked to perform when applying for jobs;
- The principle of allowing choice in assessment is a good one for several reasons: it makes for a more student-centred approach to assessment; it is more inclusive by empowering students to work on topics of importance to them; and it is fosters independence;

Limitations of the assessment type
- As video assessments may be considered a `fun' assessment by the students, there is the risk that students misalign mark expectations with the level of content they produce given the amount of effort they have put in. For example, sometimes student spend a lot of time on technicalities – for example, continually re-recording the video to perfect the sound, which has nothing to do with the content they are producing;
- The important thing is to make sure everything is constructively aligned so that what could be perceived as 'fun' is reflected in the ILOs (e.g. including elements of creativity and teamwork in ILOs) and in the learning and teaching approaches. In this way, if some students

perceive this as a more fun assessment, they will still be aware of the wider context and content of the module, and how it will be assessed. Having a clear set of marking criteria, and taking a little bit of time to explain these to students, will also help to set clear expectations in the assessment. I think this was done well in this module, where there was a clear focus on content and analysis with a 50% weighting.

- This assessment can be timely for the lecturer: In reviewing topics initially, giving in-class guidance, marking, and the day before the final session, in choosing which videos to present and discuss in class. With approximately 60 groups, and 5 minute videos, this can indicate 2-3 hours of searching for the right mix to find the right range to present, since not all can be viewed in class;
- Students may be concerned about working with others they don't know in a group, but no significant issues on this were identified in this module;

Advice for implementation
- Topics must be current business/ news articles. If something is chosen that is stale, analysis will already be written about the organisational behaviour topic, and then there is a lack of originality and depth in what students are able to offer. For example, much has been written about the leadership of Elon Musk, etc. Or, for example, when Amazon bought Wholefoods, that was interesting at first because it was a culture clash, but by the second year there was too much information analysing the situation already publicly available. It is very important for the lecturer to be discriminating in the combination of articles/organisations and topics they approve for the students to approve for this assessment;
- Do take time to have an in-class session where the lecturer is able to observe the groups; it is helpful feedback to the students before they submit their final product.;
- Cohorts of students often ask to see prior examples of videos. First, you need permission to do this from the video authors (former students). More importantly, this has proven to be a very bad idea. It limits the creativity from the current cohort significantly. Encourage creativity and confidence;
- A common criticism of exemplars is that they inhibit creativity. However, particularly with

less conventional assessments, exemplars can help to clarify expectations and provide some scaffolding. Other literature shows that exemplars can be useful if students are asked to engage actively rather than simply look at the exemplars, for example creating debates and discussions about grades that exemplars were awarded; asking students to grade exemplars, etc. (cf. To, Panadero & Carless 2021). Another way of using exemplars without inhibiting creativity is to delay the use of exemplars: ask students to draft their own ideas and create a plan for their assignment, including any creative elements they might wish to incorporate. Then show exemplars only after students have started to develop their own ideas in relation to the assessment brief. The exemplars can then still proide some scaffolding and help to communicate expectations, but without hampering the creative process from the start.

- Empowering students to be creative – in learning in general but also in their assessments – also enables them to demonstrate higher order thinking skills (i.e. evaluating and creating in Bloom's taxonomy). To make this constructively aligned, and to make it explicit that creative approaches are valued and encouraged, module and programme leads should perhaps consider including clear ILOs that explicitly assess higher order cognitive abilities, such as creativity;
- When it comes to deciding on whether to provide specific guidance on video assessments in terms of the technology is needed it is useful to consider if there is a level of creativity involved in the task. If the purpose of the task is for the students to be creative it is useful to give the students some freedom and not be too prescriptive with what tools to use and how. Some students prefer to have some resources to rely on because they feel uncomfortable if they have to start completely from scratch without any guidance and might feel uncomfortable not knowing. The teaching team therefore needs to weigh in the emphasis on creativity (or its lack) and the nature of the cohort;
- With more creative assessments such as a video it is useful to provide a more detailed marking rubric that breaks down performance clearly so that it is clear how creativity in a video is assessed – is it the quality of the visual output and the lightning etc or is it more the creativity of the content;

- It is important to ensure that students are well prepared for the different components that contribute to the success of their performance – working in groups, creating a video, demonstrating ILOs;

- A pre-recorded video (presentation) of any kind is always a good inclusive alternative to a live presentation as it benefits students who have issues with processing speed. The flip side of having it as the main method is that some students might find video as a barrier. It is useful, therefore, to offer alternatives to this assessment method in the spirit of inclusivity. Alternatives that could be considered is a written piece, such as a transcript for example (if presentation skills are not tested) or an audio version (podcast);

- The extent of the choice needs to be considered carefully depending on the level of the students. If students have less insight into the subject/ discipline, or are at an earlier stage in their learning, choice may feel overwhelming. In this case, it can be useful to provide a level of scaffolding, for example by giving a few options (e.g. giving a selection of articles for students to choose from), or giving some examples of the sorts of choices students have made in previous years. Having a brief check and approval from the teacher is also useful, as this can help to make students feel secure in their choice and also enables the teacher to check that students will be able to meet the ILOs with their selected material;

- Having many fast-paced activities introducing an element of pressure given the short duration of the module, suited for the nature of the cohort, the degree and the nature of the industry. While this is authentic, when choosing an assessment diet for the course it is important to consider the ECTS value. A 5 ECTS course requires 125 hours of effort. It is important to reflect whether the proposed number of assessments is appropriate for the amount of effort indicated by ECTS, especially with group work involved that can take a lot of student time and effort;

- When introducing group work some consideration needs to be given to how students with specific learning needs can be successfully participating in group interactions. All students involved should benefit from inclusive practice this means that inclusivity considerations can be embedded within standard practice around preparing students for group work. This can be done through discussion around the allocation of roles and better understanding how others, including those with specific learning needs such as dyslexia, autism, dyspraxia etc learn and communicate. Individuals should be mindful of that and think about the delegation of individual tasks that are appropriate to what individuals can do. Therefore part of preparation for group work is considering how others can be mindful and empathetic towards other group members.