

Pearson Custom Solution

EDUCATOR TESTIMONIAL UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER



COURSE: Project Finance in Engineering
Project Management (Post Graduate)

TEXT IN USE: A personalised case book, drawing together a selection of Harvard business cases

SUMMARY: This University of Manchester lecturer was keen to try something innovative so when she found out that she could create a personalised case book to match her course, including Harvard business cases, she jumped at the chance. She found the process surprisingly simple and now recommends it to colleagues.

SUBMITTED BY: **Fiona Saunders**, Mechanical, Aerospace and Civil Engineering

Course description

This course focuses on the financial side of project management for infrastructure projects. It's a one semester course which is part of a post-graduate taught masters programme taken by 200 students. It's a very international cohort with about 85% of the students coming from 35 different countries outside the UK. They are very enthusiastic learners. There are 3 hours of face-to-face teaching per week.

I previously used a core text called *Modern Project Finance: A Casebook* by Benjamin Esty, which is a comprehensive collection of project finance case studies with an introduction to project finance. I use lots of case studies in the course to bring theory to life. That textbook was getting more and more expensive and too much to expect my students to pay, especially as we didn't use all of the 23 cases in the book.

The challenge

I consider myself to be forward thinking in my approach to teaching and so I was keen to try creating a personalised resource as something a little bit innovative. I really wanted to maintain the interactivity of the course by using case studies.

The solution

I worked with Pearson to create my own case book, with just the case studies I use. I don't write my own introduction yet but I may consider that in the future. Ideally I would like to buy this resource for all my students but at the moment the reality is that we rely on students' purchasing the case book themselves.

I knew my Pearson Account Manager very well so it was easy to get started with this solution. I checked with my programme director who was fine with me taking this personalised approach.

It was a very straightforward process and actually I had expected it to be much more complicated. I was lucky because Pearson had all the cases I wanted. I hadn't realised, and I don't think many lecturers know this, that Pearson can provide Harvard cases and other industry cases and articles. You don't have to worry that you won't be able to have exactly what you want in your personalised resource.

At the start of semester introductory session I tell the students they have to have this book. Each week before the seminar, I assign a case study to be read and provide 8-9 questions which will be discussed in the seminar. Only a minority of students actively participate in the face-to-face discussion, but

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everyone says how good the cases are, so I think their reticence in coming forward to share their opinions may be a cultural phenomenon or just nervousness of speaking in front of fellow students.

The coursework is based on a case study of their choice from the personalised case book. I also post answers to the case discussion questions on the VLE after the students have completed their coursework. Plus the exam always gives students opportunities to exemplify concepts using the cases we have studied during the weekly seminars.

As you can see, the case studies are truly integral to the course.

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The results

Students definitely like the case studies although I'm unsure if they particularly like the individual nature of personalised case book. Students do complain that they have to buy it through the campus bookstore; they would prefer to be able to buy it online.

The thing I learned was that it was actually remarkably easy. There was very little work required of me as I already knew what cases I wanted. I recommend it to all my colleagues – if it fits their needs it can be good especially when no single textbook matches their course. It's a lot quicker than writing your own book or comprehensive printed course guide.

The Pearson service

I chose to work with Pearson because they are active in their support of me and my colleagues, being very present on campus. The service was excellent; my Account Manager was particularly good. It all worked fine – in fact it surprised me how smooth the whole process was.

Pearson's personalised resource creation service is a surprisingly easy way of getting material appropriate for your course in one book. I recommend it!

Conclusions

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