



Australia and New Zealand International Business Academy

Discussion Forum

Theme: Advancing International Business Teaching
Date: Friday 11 November 2005 **Time:** 9 -10.30am
Venue : Langham Hotel
1 Southbank Ave
Southgate, Melbourne

Rationale: This panel is for all interested in advancing international business teaching. You are cordially invited to come and share your observations, experiences on experiential learning.

Moderator

Robert O'Donovan

Panellists

Steve Bakalis	Joanne Freeman
Gillian Mort	Thomas Cronk
Rumintha Wickramasekera	Leigh Derigo

Goal

Provide students a variety of international business settings to give them an appreciation for grappling with internationalisation problems in different situations.

Experiential learning

Experiential learning is based on learning from experiences. Case study method learning is one branch of experiential learning. There are several advantages of this method:

The learning is learner-based; it is the learner's experiences that dominate. *Each learner constructs an individual interpretation of the realities that confront him or her, the learning which occurs is tailored to the learner while still retaining a common core concepts that generally have been validated* (Harvard Business School, 1989, pp8-9).

Project

This is a collaborative project between academics involved in teaching international business and marketing at Australian Universities under the auspice of Austrade.

The need for the project stems from the experiences of numerous academics in running international business courses at tertiary institutions in Australia who have identified a lack of suitable relevant case study material relevant to the Australian context. An issue highlighted by the DEST funded report *Australian Business Education Study: Enhancing the quality of Australian business education* (2002). Feedback from students also highlights the need for relevant cases.

Most textbooks used in IB teaching are published in the United States or are adaptations of books published in the US or UK. The leading textbooks used by many universities have limited Australian content. This results in a limited coverage of some issues specific to Australian firms. For example most books, as well as the supporting audiovisual material focus on international experiences of large American and European multinationals. In contrast, the majority of Australian companies tend to be small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs). However, there is limited academic access to these SMEs, which make up 97 per cent of Australian businesses and offer real opportunities to future Australian entrepreneurs (Appendix 2: *Knowing and Growing Report*, Austrade, 2001, pp 4-5, 10, 13, 17, 20). In addition, there is even less understanding of the growing trend towards micro (under five employees) and born global businesses based on innovation and intellectual content, a number springing from university research.

There is a need for university teaching to be based on research that provides current information and evidence on Australian firms and industries. Several writers have drawn attention to the "neglect of real

places” and the scarcity of empirical research in much of current academic writing (Martin 1999, 77; Porter 1996, 86). Earlier writers such as Myrdal (1978, 775) commented on the need for detailed historical analysis of individual industries and locations, arguing that the methods of anthropologists needed to be employed in field histories and case studies. More recently, Martin (1999, 81) has commented that there is a need to study “real economic landscapes with their complex histories and local contexts.” He argues for “realist approaches” in which “explanations are built from below, often relying on close dialogue with individual agents and organisations, and linking this local knowledge with wider conceptual frameworks.”

This project aims to meet that need. In addition, it is an implementation of Recommendation 10 of the *Australian Business Education Study* (2002, xxix):

- “Develop course content and support materials to be more relevant to the Australian context but also global in perspective”. Specifically, “development of case study material for business education that recognises our international markets and the Australian context”.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the project include the following:

- to enhance research and teaching in international business/marketing at tertiary institutions in Australia.
- to provide up-to-date case study material that is relevant to students as in its Australian content, focussing on key issues of significance to Australian firms and industries.
- to provide students with a variety of case study material based on metropolitan and regional firms across several Australian states through the collaboration of academics based in universities with access to urban and regional firms.
- To provide academic staff in a number of universities with the opportunity to collaborate on a useful project with outcomes that would be difficult to achieve if they acted individually.

Conclusion: 10.30am

Discussion Forum REGISTRATION

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