Teaching Case Studies

Thomas M. Cooney
(www.thomascooney.com)

Dublin Institute of Technology
(www.dit.ie)
Why Use Cases?

- Learning by doing/simulating
- Apply Learning
- Learning from others
- Teaching others
- Working with others
Some Caveats

- Don’t live with decision
- No right answer
- Use case material only
- Cases can date
- May have to dig for issues
Skills Developed By Cases

• Analytical
• Decision making
• Application
• Oral communication
• Time management
• Interpersonal/social
• Creative
• Written communication
What Is Expected Of The Student

• Be active
• Come prepared
• Contribute
• Be professional
Dimensions of Case Difficulty

- Analytical - the task
- Conceptual - theories, concepts, techniques
- Presentation - important, relevant, missing
Learning Process

- Individual preparation
- Small group discussion
- Hear other views
- Large group discussion
- Facilitator
Individual Preparation

• Read first and last paragraphs
• Who, what, why, when, how
• Read and read again
• Reflect on issues
• Analyse and crunch numbers
• Examine alternatives
• Choose an option
• Develop action programmes
Small Group Discussion

- You must manage the process
- Timing
- You don’t have to like / love your group
- Pick a meeting place
- Develop rules - your rules
- Collaborate - not compete
- Avoid drift
- Avoid decision making by exhaustion
Typical Problems

• Time mismanagement
• Freeloaders
• Interpersonal problems
• Lack of commitment
How to Handle Problems

• Prevent
• Don’t accept poor behaviour
• Vent your feelings [within reason]
• See problem as a management problem
• Get outside advice/assistance
Large Group

- Structure presentation
- Contribute
- Listen
- What happened may be useful
- Don’t regurgitate
Key Considerations

• What are the objectives of the course and how does case studies help achieve them?
• Select cases carefully that help the flow of the course and incrementally add to the learning process.
• How will the class itself be managed?
• Who gets graded and how do they get graded is a critical issue?