

Developing, Writing and Teaching Case Studies in Philanthropic Studies

By: Pat Danahey Janin, Ph.D. Candidate

Faculty Advisor: Laurie E. Paarlberg, Ph.D., Professor of Philanthropic Studies
Indiana University, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy



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Question

What pedagogical practice will enhance the preparation of the next generation of philanthropic leaders globally?

Context

Teaching nonprofit studies globally requires an understanding of how context influences the nonprofit sector around the world (Casey, 2023). Each country has its own social, economic and political configuration that conditions the landscape and operations of philanthropic activity (*Global Philanthropy Indices*, 2022). Undergraduate students often lack the practical experience to make the link between theoretical models and practice requiring an active pedagogical approach (Walker, 2009). Engaging international students actively in the classroom calls for “productive connectedness” that creates opportunities for students to learn from their exchanges and build learning experiences together (Tran, 2020). Case studies with international examples foster this connection and “relationalizing” or comparing-contrasting practices, experiences and norms (Tran, 2020).

Process

A teaching case study is developed, written and taught with a pedagogical outcome in mind. It solicits prior learning skills, new knowledge and a decision-making process involving group reflection (Brame, 2016). I adopted an iterative process coupled with an on-line course on case writing at The Case Centre, London, U.K. The course structured the conception and writing process, aligned learning objectives with content development and provided peer review and teaching scenario planning. The 10-page undergraduate case study accompanied by a teaching note was then used as a homework assignment (2019), revised then presented as a synchronous discussion on-line (2021), revised teaching prompts and presented for an in-person in-class discussion (2022).

5-Steps



PEDAGOGICAL NEED

Identify key elements of a philanthropic landscape outside of the United States + link to ocean issue: Vietnam, fishing and tourism

ANCHORING CASE

Theory: Components of Civil Society, Social Movements, Historical Notions and Habits of Philanthropy + Philanthropic Environment . Identify teaching objectives.

CASE DEVELOPMENT

Identify event and philanthropic response: Vietnam Fish Kill Event 2016. Research actors, events, responses. Design teaching outcomes, approach, scenarios.

CREATIVE WRITING

Draw in student reader, infuse curiosity, unexpected information, facts, images, evidence. “KW sat at her desk... and cringed as she read her FB feed on the fish kill protests...”

DELIVERY

Homework Assignment. On-line Discussion. In-class discussion. Developed: short case to illustrate method, pre-session questions, scenarios, groupwork, discussion prompts, follow up assignment.

Review after Teaching

Discussion

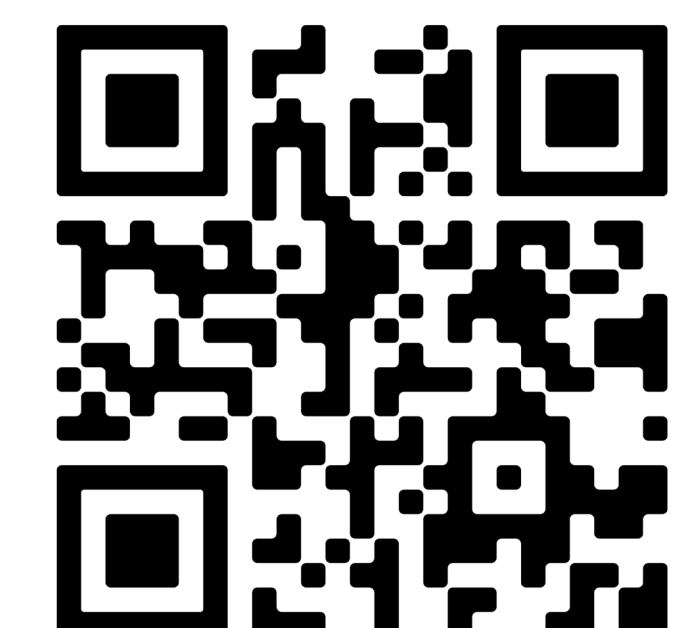
- The 5-step process kept the focus on the pedagogical need and active student learning.
- Step 5 Delivery tested the effectiveness of course design: lectures leading up to the case study exercise, student engagement with the material, target pedagogical outcomes.
- The in-class delivery is full of competing priorities: reaching pedagogical objectives, pacing the discussion and allowing for student participation, including disagreement.
- Students apply their course knowledge actively and solicit knowledge from other disciplines and life experiences.

Implications

- Tailor the teaching case study to the issues and challenges of philanthropic actors working internationally.
- Focus on future work-related skills like critical thinking and problem-solving which students can develop and exercise in real time.
- Assess your vision of how leadership is cultivated in the current generation. Teaching case studies foster learning processes drawing on education, personal and professional experiences (Le et al, 2023).

Read the Case and Teaching Note

Vietnam and Philanthropy: Social Movements, Economic Development and Ocean Issues



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