Curriculum Design and Evaluation of an MBA Module: Contemporary Business Marketing

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Abstract: The process of designing a business marketing course at the post-graduate level is challenging. This course is developed specifically for a Master of Business Administration (MBA) qualification commencing in a specific date in future. The course rationale would be designed, planned with learning outcomes, teaching pedagogy, assessment plan and evaluation plan, among others.

The course rationale provides information on the development of contemporary business marketing in a changing environment and meeting demands of stakeholders and primarily the sophisticated customers. Conceptually, this helps learners to understand the dynamic of product and service offers and can discriminate between alternative offers, and consequently make choices that were unpredictable. Buyers have significant switching power, can accept or reject offers quickly, and have portfolios of acquisition patterns that are unthinkable.

JEL Classifications: I23, M310, M53, M160

Keywords: Learning outcomes, Course rationale, Teaching pedagogies, Assessment plan, Evaluation plan, Assessment tools, Five dimension of assessment

1. Introduction

This course examines the use of a series of case studies from companies in a different pace of the markets (fast/slow moving), domestic and international settings and combinations of products/services relationships. There is a recognizing trend of the growing importance of employees working across geographic and cultural borders. Hence, it is designed with aims to meet the needs of the general public, employers, employees, business researchers and adult learners, by assessing knowledge and competence in a range of marketing skills with the appropriate knowledge, management skills and abilities they will need to effectively implement a marketing plan, marketing research and analysis on the 4Ps: product, price, place and promotion.

This course would give insights into developing individuals towards their workplace. It also clarifies specific issues faced by managers and researchers when carrying out marketing research in an organizational setting. These would include the philosophical aspects of enquiry in social settings, operating in political contexts, negotiating access to key individuals and data, and meeting the analysis outcomes expected by multiple organizational stakeholders. It is ideal for adult learners wanting to broaden their understanding of business as a whole, or those seeking to develop specific marketing activities at the workplace. These decisions bearing on the curriculum would influence the kind of opportunities for learning and experience that learners will have (Eisner, 2002).
The curriculum are made up of a set of topics, each designed to ensure an individual's ability to understand and apply the various principles & methods of Business Marketing. “The curriculum ...by what is selected to be included and what is rejected, actually creates reality for learners.” (Simith & Lovat, 2003). The marketing activities and the practices of a wide range of key activities with several case studies on each chapter throughout the key text is reinforced in this educational process. Although each module is self-contained, a clear progression route can be followed through, enabling learners to build upon the knowledge gained at each stage.

The framework for course design is adapted from Posner & Rudnitsky (2006). It is aimed at adult learners who are employees likely in the middle level at the workplace and are considering for a marketing position with their degree qualifications. Learners will need to have access to business organizations or institutions (which may include their own business or organization) in order to plan marketing activities and gather information of which would enable individuals to develop theoretical understanding, alongside with the practical abilities of a variety of business disciplines at all levels.

2. Writing Learning Outcomes

This module is taught on the basis of the Intended Learning Outcomes of the lesson. On successful completion of this module, the learners will be expected to be able to demonstrate they have met the following outcomes.

**Learning Outcome 1:**
Identify the value proposition of an organisation and show how it provides a competitive advantage for the organisation.

**Learning Outcome 2:**
To explain and evaluate the value propositions of a range of companies competing in a market sector and provide examples.

**Learning Outcome 3:**
Apply the concepts of the marketing tools (4Ps) and the extended marketing mix (3Ps).

**Learning Outcome 4:**
Analyze the value propositions of a company for competitive advantage.

**Learning Outcome 5:**
Classify information and analyze the marketing theories and concepts.

**Learning Outcome 6:**
Manage information from a range of sources in the formulation of a viable value proposition.

3. Teaching Pedagogy

The teaching pedagogy used will be Case-Based Learning (CBL) where cases are factually-based, complex problems written to stimulate classroom discussion and collaborative analysis. Case-based teaching involves the interactive, student-centered exploration of realistic and specific situations. Learners consider problems from a perspective which requires analysis, where there may have no single right answer.” the case method promotes discussion in class and feedback from the learners.
4. The Learning Outcomes and the Learning Activities

The intended curriculum design’s, assessment and instruction must be in alignment with the intended learning outcomes (LOs). The fundamental is to choose and develop the learning activities that are aligned with the LOs. Hence, the Curriculum-Instruction-Assessment Triad from James W. Pellegrino (2009) is adopted. This leads learners to achieve the specified LOs for a given learning session in which there is a practical component of case study appropriately used in the current context and with the available resources.

Learning activities must give learners opportunities to develop and ultimately learn. The designed activities must allow them to progress through a range of levels of complexity as they work towards achieving deeper understanding in the learning journey. However, if the chosen case studies do not align well with the LOs, we would have to refine, realign or update the case studies to meet the learning outcomes or by replacing them with the relevant ones. If the facilitator is inexperienced, he/she may not be able to choose the right or relevant case studies to match the intended LOs. If this takes place the learners might perceive the course is irrelevant while at the same time, does not meet the academic standard and industry needs.

5. The Available Resources and the Industry Needs

To organise this course, the resources needed are trained facilitators with sufficient number of students or learners. The availability of classrooms, and resources are to be allocated to meet with the number of students enrolled. The inputs of resources such as capital, manpower planning (full time or part time facilitators), administration resources, technological network, infrastructure, equipment like computers, laptops, printers, classroom types and first aid room, appropriate fire & safety equipments are to be taken into consideration. Having to invest heavily on infrastructures and in the event if the recruitment of students taking this course is not met, all these investment would be futile. Hence, it leads to the question of a ‘chicken and egg’ scenario.

With the changing industry environment and needs, demands of stakeholders and sophisticated consumers therefore have different criteria and objectives. In meeting the trend of growing importance of employees working on cross borders and the need to understand cultural diversity from different segments of the market is essential. If the intended curriculum does not meet the industry standard or environmental needs, the graduates of this course would be unable to find an ideal employment and relevant job position.
6. Assessment Plan

This module is designed on the basis of the intended learning outcomes. The Five Dimensions of Assessment adapted from the model of Rowntree, D. (1987) is conceptualised. All assessments will be regulated by its examination board regulation, policies and guidelines.

**Assessment 1** (Formative Assessment: 50%)

The assessment will consist of two elements, each worth 50% of the total marks. The assessment will take the form of a 3000-words written assignment. The submission deadline for the formative element of the assignment will be due on a specific date & time. For example, it may be held on 22 Feb. 2014, 1300hrs (with a certain number of weeks from the commencement of class or the start of class).

The instructions are given where the assignment should be original and written in the first-person account on Microsoft Word. Use font type Arial and size 12 with a spacing of 1.5 lines interval. A 10% of the total marks will be deducted per day for late submission. Any submission submitted after three days after the deadline will be marked and given zero. The assignment will be based on the Learning Outcomes 1 – 6 as identified above.

All coursework assignments must be submitted by the published deadline. Learners will receive feedback and marks for the pieces of work that they have completed in the earlier stages of the particular module approximately in two to three weeks. The learners will be provided with the feedback as part of the learning experience and to help learners prepare for other assessment tasks that they have yet to complete.

It is a good practice to make references from the relevant textual sources on many occasions (e.g. Smith, B. 2006) and then put these references in full at the bibliography by adhering to the Harvard Referencing Method at the end of the writing. It is expected that most answers will take the form of an essay, which is probably best suited to these questions, though other forms will be acceptable. Particular credit will be given to well-structured arguments which, wherever appropriate, are referenced to established theories and approaches. The use of analysis, rather than just description and narration will be given higher marks. If theory diagrams help to deepen the explanation, then learners are to draw out carefully and label them fully and explain them in the content or body-of-text. The effective use of empirical supports of various kinds will also be given due credit, including facts, survey evidence and case study illustrations.

**Assessment 2** (Summative Assessment: 50%)

The proposed examination is to be held on an a specific date and time. For example, it may be held on a Saturday, 29 March 2014 at 1400 hours or at 2pm. The instructions are given for this practical examination which consists of a two and a half hour paper at the end of the module. There will be seven (7) essay questions where learners are to choose any five. Each question carries equal marks. The examination will be aligned with all the learning outcomes 1- 6.

Summative assessment is commonly used and referred to assessment by the facilitators, teachers or professors. It is imposed throughout the course and uniformly applied with the objective of measuring by facilitators on the same criteria to determine the level of the learners’ performance. It is meant to meet the course needs for facilitators’ accountability and looks to provide remediation for sub-standard performance. The assessment usually takes the shape of a form and consists of checklists and occasionally qualitative and/or quantitative and narratives. Areas evaluated include classroom climate, instruction, professionalism, and planning and preparation.
7. The Rationale for the Assessment Plan

This course will have two assessments. The first assessment would be a formative assessment known as Assessment for Learning from Earl, L. M. (2003) where learners must submit their assignments at the end of the six weeks in a report format for the facilitators to provide them with feedback. Formative assessment feedback would be provided on two to three weeks after student submission. This is for continuous assessment and improvement.

The second assessment is in the form of an examination or Assessment of Learning adopted from Earl, L. M. (2003). This would be at the end of the MBA semester terms. It is a qualification where learners would take their terminal knowledge assessment. The summative examination would be held on 29 March 2014 as an example here. The rationale of this assessment plan are many folds which included the Five Dimensions of Assessment. To conceptualise the assessment plan, towards the end of the module, learners will be asked to complete a module evaluation questionnaire to help us see a better picture of what are the learners’ views on all aspects of the module. This is an extremely important process where we are able to continue to improve the delivery of the module in the future and to respond to issues that learners bring to our attention. There is also a learner achievement report in attachment that includes a section which comments on the feedback we received from other learners who have studied this module previously.

We make assessment to maintain standard as it involves in many roles in the selection of an appropriate teaching strategy for the course and the learning outcomes and the role of assessment in this curriculum. We also envisage in what areas to assess in the process of learning and/or the product itself if there is a better know-how’s or if our program is adhering to industry competent standard. In assessment, we seek to find what are the most relevant assessment tools or if continuous assessment more effective or more of a terminal assessment? We interpret the assessment where we collect evidence to review if my learners really learned in the process and how effectively to respond with feedback to the assessment. In this assessment of learning, the purpose is for summative judgement in award of marks and grades with intention to report to parents and about learners’ progress and learner’s relative position in class. The assessment for learning pays emphasis from summative to formative, from making judgement to create descriptions for use in the next stage of learning or for modify the learning work for learners. Assessment as learning is used in enhancing or contributing to learner’s learning or extend the role of the learner’s learning process through engaging, and then relating it in mastering any skills in the process.

8. Evaluation Plan

As according to Fitzpatrick et al., (2011): “Evaluation is the identification, clarification and application of defensible criteria to systematically assess the worth and merit of the curriculum, in relation to those criteria.”

The purpose of this evaluation is to go through the process of systematically assessing the worth and merit of the MBA curriculum in relation to the criteria in which there is qualitative and/or quantitative assessment using formative assessment. A provision of descriptive information and a judgmental summative assessment on the course curriculum where it is incorporated to see if the population needs are met, and to identify resources of which to address, judging if goals, priorities and outcomes are met, or if standard is effectively aligning with the industry requirement. It also judges if the Intended Learning Outcomes has met the original module content and if additional update or revision is necessary.

Lastly the evaluation plan of the product of this curriculum is to ensure the learning outcomes
meet the industry needs and expectation. It is necessary to evaluate learners, parents, subject expert and other stakeholder’s feedback on the product as according from Schwab, J. J (1969). This is to determine whether or not the actual product has met design specifications, check measuring for intended or unintended outcomes, by collecting judgments of outcomes from various stakeholders, and performing both qualitative & or quantitative analysis and by comparing outcomes to assessed needs and to reach bottom line conclusion. Thus, we compare this actual curriculum to the estimated budgeted costs and hence, we decide if further needs of modification, termination, or continuing or refocus a change of activity and comparing the assessed needs and goals.

**Student Course Evaluation Questionnaire**
(To be filled by each Student at the time of Course Completion)

Department: ____________________________
Course No: ____________________________
Course Title: ____________________________
Teacher Name: ____________________________
Year of Study: ____________________________
Semester / Term: ____________________________

*Please give us your views so that Course quality can be improved. You are encouraged to be frank and constructive in your comments*

**Course Content and Organization**

**Course Curriculum**

Legend: (5 – Excellent), (4 - Very Good), (3 – Good), (2 – Fair), (1 - Poor)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you find the course objectives relevant and meaningful?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. What is your satisfactory rating with the topics to be taught?</td>
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<td>3. Do you think the subject matters are current &amp; up-to-date?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Overall, what are your satisfaction level?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. How well have my teachers delivered the planned learning activities?</td>
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<td>6. How appropriate are resources allocated to meet curriculum objective?</td>
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<td>7. Are the learning outcomes achieved?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Is the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the module clearly communicated?</td>
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<td>9. Is the structure and phase of the lessons well managed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Is the course material sufficient, relevant and well presented?</td>
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<td>11. What do you think of the teaching methods used?</td>
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<td>12. What is your overall impression of the course?</td>
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Course Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legend: (5 – Excellent), (4 - Very Good), (3 – Good), (2 – Fair), (1 - Poor) Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Teacher must have industry experiences.</td>
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<td>2. Teacher prepare the lesson before class.</td>
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<td>3. Teacher is able to illustrate with “real life” examples</td>
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<td>4. The teacher lesson is interesting &amp; relevant?</td>
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<td>5. Teacher provides exam focus?</td>
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<td>6. Teacher has good presentation skills?</td>
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<td>7. Teacher provides feedback on assignment on time?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Teacher is knowledgeable and helpful?</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Teacher is able to explain the lesson clearly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Overall, what are your satisfaction rating for the teacher?</td>
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In addition, my evaluation plan would have the following issues, they are as follows:

Evaluation provides the facilitators, and professors with useful information in order to further improvement. The facilitators and the school can determine how well the teaching process goes by observing the group dynamic, the activity of the audience, by analysing spontaneous comments. Evaluation gives the faculty the opportunity to validate his or her observations, as well as to the learners an opportunity to express their opinions and feel satisfaction from the fact that they have been heard.

Evaluation is carried out throughout the course and the use of CIPP model - Context, Input, Process and Product may apply as adapted from Stufflebeam’s CIPP model (2007). The evaluation provides an opportunity to analyse the experience and discuss future changes, and logically concludes the teaching.

Course evaluation should be done at the end of the course. The evaluation procedure should be planned. 15 minutes should be allocated for this purpose. In the process of teaching, it is appropriate to have short intermediate evaluations at the conclusion of each day.

Before the beginning of an evaluation procedure, I will explain what they are and not expecting the participants to know what this evaluation is. I would explain to the learners before carrying out an evaluation, and tell them why it is necessary to carry out. The learners, the teaching environment and its’ process, the School or the University administration policies, regulations and guidelines, and the course structures with the course content, materials and the facilitators, teachers and professors are the people and material involved for the course evaluation.

Trained administrators and faculties as well as learners are the most common source of information for an evaluation. They provide information about the need for the program, its implementation and its outcomes. They do this by their actions, by volunteering comments and testimony, by taking knowledge and skill tests, and responding to the questions. In essence, learners participation is the main source of evaluative information. It is because they are the direct beneficiaries who benefit directly from the course. There are others such as key informants: anyone
who has particular knowledge about the course or how it benefits participants. Examples are facilitators, teachers, professors or parents, residents, local leaders, influential in community, volunteers, course collaborators such as 2nd marker, double blind markers, peer evaluators, or external markers, religion or community leaders, school staff, legislators are also good source.

There are pictures, photographs, videotapes, slides or other visual image, drawing, pictures, graphics and diagrams are powerful sources of information regarding learners’ learning, attitude, interest and commitment to the course. These visual images often convey what the written word would miss and can serve as forceful additions to an evaluation report for presentation. Others are observation, which has the advantage that it does not depend upon people’s willingness and ability to furnish information. In an observation information about real-life situations and circumstances that are useful in designing or understanding what is happening. The physical surroundings, verbal and nonverbal behaviour, relationships, the tone of a program, and learning and behavioural changes are all good subjects for observation. The data collected would be used for planning in my Pre-course, On-course and Post-course evaluations.

9. Pre-course Evaluation

To provide the course evaluation starting points, pre-course tests may be conducted to determine prior knowledge of learners and to see if course materials are appropriate for learner groups and context. Pre-course evaluations would guide the course developers like the teachers and provide an opportunity for reflections, modification or acceptance of the course as it evolves. It helps me to discover unintended outcomes and to observe the intended effects. The results of the pre-course evaluation can form the basis for a comparison with on-course evaluation results.

On-course evaluation

On-course evaluation is characterized by different possibilities, such as session evaluations, module evaluations and programme evaluations. On-course evaluations should be carefully timed so that the evaluation activities do not interfere with the other course processes. Care should be taken not to ‘over-evaluate’ during the course, and evaluation interventions should be carefully planned to be integrated as naturally as possible with the rest of the course processes and activities.

Post-course evaluation

This is done when the course activities have already taken place, to determine the effectiveness of the whole course so as to draw conclusions about its impact and success. There are the possibility of using the evaluation results from various stakeholders so that my institution can use it for academic credit transfer from one institution to another within similar course for progression pathway, or for career prospectus, future collaborators to receive government or institutional research grant / funds. It also can be use as a source of information on my evaluation to inform for other programs.

From the given evaluation, assessment for specific changes can be made in my teaching practice. One way is to discuss the feedback with my faculties, administrators, learners and let them know that I am acting on it. I would compile a summary of learners’ responses and distribute it to the class; they would have a sense of what their peers think and can see that I am taking their feedback seriously. If learners do report that they are confused over certain subject areas, I would give a topical review of previous lesson for every new lesson or encourage them to ask questions more often and by doing more practice questions. I would discuss the feedback with them demonstrates that I actually want some improvement and that I welcome their participation. Such a conversation can bring about constructive change and is usually much appreciated.
Timing and Design

The timing and design of written feedback instruments have a strong impact on learners’ usefulness. Evaluations are much more likely to be useful than those collected after the course ends. In the middle of the semester, I can still use their feedback to make improvements in class, so they have more incentive to give me thorough and constructive responses.

Peer Feedback Through Observation

Peer feedback is helpful as an observation in other classes would reveal how certain class is taught as referenced from Butler & Winnie (1995) in their feedback and self regulated learning.

Discussing observations with my fellow colleagues, facilitators, teachers and professors after the class meeting is an important way to reflect on teaching techniques. In addition, I would ask others to observe my classes on how I teach and to offer suggestions.

10. Conclusion

In the process of developing this course, we consider what to include the curriculum intentions and the adoption of the overview of the teaching pedagogies (2012/13) is to be used with good exposition. The consideration of all other stakeholders’ interest, particular the learners, society, subject matter and the educational goals. The contextualisation of the course outcomes and the expected behaviours of our learners. Every statements must be specific and be quantifiable or measurable and that the outcomes must align well with the course rationale. All processes and argument must be sound and convincing enough to justify the teaching strategy alignment with the course rationale.

Consideration is given on the effective evaluation process where Types of Assessment Methods are referenced from University College London (2012), and to whom would get involved with and what we are going to do with the data collected.

Effective teachers have excellent content knowledge and hold high expectations of their learners as referenced from J. Biggs (1982, 1987, 1999) in many of his higher education research and development articles. Information from Pratt, D. D and Associates (1998), and Collins, J. B. (2000), (2001) expectation from the result is great for discussion.
References


Author Profile

Dr. Kit Chee Wong is currently the Adjunct Visiting Professor of UGMS Business School Zurich, Switzerland. He worked as an external faculty of University of Wales (UWIC) UK and Queen Margaret University UK programs. He is an approved external doctoral faculty of University of Southern Queensland Australia operating in Singapore. Currently he is teaching the undergraduate and postgraduate programs from Anglia Ruskin University UK. He worked as an external consultant to several banks and corporations before joining the teaching profession as a faculty.

He has a keen interest in lecturing and was responsible for inaugural batch of graduates (Hons.) from Anglia Ruskin University. He was one of the pioneer lecturers of the undergraduate programmes back in 2002/03 from the University of Wollongong in Singapore. He has been involved in external university examinations. Dr. Wong has also contributed to the training of external programs for CIE: Cambridge International Examination, University of Cambridge, UK. Dr. Wong was nominated one of the top-teaching mentors based on a student survey, locally and overseas 2002 and also awarded the Best Lecturer Award in 2006 and 2007.

As the former corporate director and head of the teaching faculty, he worked hard to make the department one of the more popular courses for learners to embark for their higher education. Apart from undergraduate and post-graduate teaching, Dr Wong has helped to organize workshops in Singapore, Malaysia and China. He has been invited to speak as a guest lecturer at international meetings held in China, Austria and Switzerland. Dr Wong is also involved in research with special interests in Financial Equity, Services Marketing, Strategic Management, Business Strategy and Curriculum Development & Instructional Design.

His publications include first author papers that appear in many international management journals are among some of them. Dr Wong is a Fellow of the Confederation of Tourism & Hospitality (CTH), UK. He also serves as an Associate Member of Singapore Human Resource Institute (SHRI). He holds a Bachelor with major in Commerce (Australia), Master of Business with major in Strategic Marketing (Australia) and an Accredited Doctoral of Business Administration (Switzerland). He holds a Specialized Diploma in Applied Learning and Teaching (SDALT) from the Republic Polytechnic in Singapore. A new teaching qualification in Private Education as recognized by CPE in Singapore. He is the pioneer batch of the SDALT program in Republic Polytechnic Singapore. Kit Chee Wong Email: kewong3328@singnet.com or intlbiz.3228@gmail.

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1 Accredited in the U.S. by the following CHEA (Council for Higher Education Accreditation) recognized authority. (Accessed on 24 Nov 2009)

2 SDALT is taught in Republic Polytechnic. It is recognized by CPE and would serve as a potential industry requirement to ensure quality of teaching and delivery based on pedagogical training.

3 CPE - Council of Private Education, statutory board of MOE (Ministry Of Education), Singapore.