Teaching Cases Online: Synchronous, Asynchronous and Hybrid Techniques

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INTRODUCTION

Dr. Harris: Welcome everyone to our NACRA New Views session on teaching cases online. I have a distinguished panel today to discuss teaching cases online with you.

The learning objective for this session is to present you with some basic and intermediate strategies for teaching case studies in an online classroom environment. We are going to draw upon our collective experience to describe a number of classroom situations to give you some tips, tools and techniques that we hope you will immediately be able to bring back to your online classroom in our COVID-19 challenged environment. The general outline for our session is as follows: We will discuss some course design considerations, and then present a brief overview of some synchronous, asynchronous and hybrid online case teaching approaches. Therefore, before we get into the various methods of online instruction, we will start with some preliminary considerations. The initial questions for your consideration are these: How do you set the stage for your class using online case instruction? What are some pedagogical and practical issues to consider as you design your online course?

PRE-PLANNING FOR ONLINE LEARNING

Dr. Harris: Let me pass on now to Jeff Shay, who will discuss some preliminary considerations.

Dr. Shay: Transitioning to online learning requires reconsidering your course design, what you are assigning, and how those decisions align with your learning objectives. I learned early from my mentor professors that there is a significant difference between "covering" material that will be committed to short-term memory

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and "teaching" material that will be transferable to our students' careers. Careful consideration of the difference between covering and teaching is critical. We must resist the urge in the online world to just cover material and instead need to consider how we might teach more purposefully in ways that help students best achieve and retain your course learning objectives.

This breaks down into three major areas: design, assign, and align. In design, we need to consider how will we deliver course content and assure learning takes place. Here, we need to make the overall design decision, such as: are we going to be synchronous or asynchronous, are we going to have a hybrid of both, are we going to use lectures, and can we still use things like experiential exercises? These are basic questions regarding course design that must be considered at the early stage. Are you designing your course with purpose? Really thinking about it, rethinking your course in this new learning environment?

The next set of decisions focuses on assignments. Do your assignments capture your instructional learning objectives? Can you assess and how are you going to assess student achievement of learning objectives through your assignments? The typical decisions that we have here are similar to what we have with a normal in-person course. Are we going to have case discussions, are we going to have write-ups, are we going to have exams, or is it going to be a variety of different options? And then, regarding case presentations, are we going to have the students present as a team or are they going to present as individuals? What are the technical challenges for student teams in the online environment? The last part of the assignment decision for me is the rhythm of the assignments. There is some benefit to having frequent assignments, but this may sacrifice deep learning. If you have less frequent assignments you likely will have some students may not keep up with the work. However, you can also provide more copious feedback on the work that students submit. The fundamental issue, then, is whether you are assigning student work with purpose.

The final part is going back and making sure that you align your choices with the course learning objectives. Does your course design and assignments align with your learning objectives? If so, then that is teaching with purpose. It is critical in the online classroom because of the nature of the medium, but these principles apply to the face to face classroom as well.

Dr. Harris: I would now like to introduce Dr. Vanessa Hill, who will also present her thoughts on pre-planning considerations for online case instruction. Vanessa?

Dr. Hill: Thank you. Reflecting on my experience of transitioning my face-to-face class to remote delivery, I knew that it would be ineffective to present course content the same way that I would in a face-to-face course. I would not be informed by non-verbal cues (e.g. the Eureka-I've-got-it-gleam, vacant stare, deer caught in headlights, or angry-for-no-apparent-reason glare.). In a conventional classroom these cues allow me to modify my explanations, choose another illustrative example, or ask if there are any questions. I would not be able to clarify confusion about assignments or course material in real time. These observations motivated several questions that for me were necessary to inform course modifications or wholesale redesign. These questions, outlined below, comprise what I am calling "conscious course design".

1. ***Who is your audience?*** Are you teaching first year undergraduates, graduating seniors or MBA students? Each of these audiences require different considerations. This question helps me to identify the appropriate case(s) to use for the course. I am prompted to take into consideration the proper level of difficulty and relatable case scenarios.

2. *Where is your venue?* The strategy for continuing operations during the COVID pandemic has varied from school to school. Some institutions moved all courses to virtual delivery. Others had a combination of in person and online offerings. Virtual delivery had variations. Some courses moved exclusively online with no synchronous class events. Other courses, which my University labelled "remote delivery" hosted synchronous class sessions at the times the face-to-face sessions would have met. Another option divided classes into smaller pods to meet social distancing requirements. Each pod would the take turns attending in person and the other pod(s) would attend virtually. I realized that I would need to modify how I delivered content to accommodate the various delivery methods as one size certainly does not fit all needs.
3. *How do you interact with students?* Interacting with the entire class in real time allows the instructor to facilitate discussion differently than in classes where asynchronous interactions are the only means of interaction. The case study method assumes synchronous class events. Synchronous class events not only facilitate discussion between instructor and students but encourages discussion among students themselves. Traditionally case study method promotes back-and-forth interactions among students with the instructor as the facilitator, asking the occasional questions to nudge students toward resolving issues raised in the case. *An asynchronous environment challenges the foundation of the case study method built on real time interactions.*
4. *What purpose do case studies serve in your course?* Some instructors use case studies as the primary method of instruction, eliminating the traditional lecture. Other instructors supplement lectures with case study class sessions to gauge students' mastery of concepts beyond comprehension. Case discussions are an opportunity for students to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the concepts they are learning. I believe that the pedagogical purpose of case studies influences and is influenced by the audience, venue, and nature of interaction with the students.

Teaching remotely has been and continues to be a learning experience. Just as I am always tweaking my conventional face-to-face classes, I continue to modify my remote and online courses. I am looking forward to hearing about the experience of my esteemed colleagues on this panel. What did you learn from teaching cases online? What is one best practice that you would recommend for teaching cases online?

SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING

Dr. Harris: With that in mind, let us first look at some methods and tools for online synchronous teaching and learning. Leading this section is Jeff Shay.

Dr. Shay: Thanks. You know, I've taught case teaching and research seminars, and have been fortunate to have opportunities to teach them around the world. Perhaps the biggest fear professors share is going into a case discussion class session in which students have not adequately prepared. This fear can be amplified in an online environment. Students either don't prepare enough or their preparation is unstructured. For example, sometimes the preparation has students going in directions that are not helpful for discussing a case, with the resulting class contributions being rather shallow and cavalier.

Basically, I tell my students that people don't care what you think or believe unless you can back it up with rigorous analysis. So, how can you assure that your students are going to conduct rigorous and relevant case analyses that will assure more lively and meaningful discussions? I assign students to complete pre-class discussion analysis templates and submit them prior to the case discussion. This is a model for strategy and entrepreneurship classes (See **Exhibit 1**) that I developed over the years, and then expanded. Completing these templates prior to the class discussion ensures that the students are prepared.

Having the students complete these templates, requiring analyzing the case's stakeholders, resources, capabilities, and distinctive core competencies, ensures they are better able to discuss the case. Also, you're able to assess whether the students read the case ahead of time and provide appropriate feedback. In general, I assign one to two analytical models each week. As a result, the students become more efficient as we progress. Students apply the models, and because they use them so frequently, they are more able to subsequently use them in their professional careers as well.

My experience with this approach is that the students learn through repetition and the learning objectives are achieved in terms of being able to transfer the knowledge and skills to their professional careers. One note here is that I do provide the templates to the students, and this gets back to my comments before regarding teaching with purpose. The courses I generally teach are strategy, entrepreneurship, and international business. My course is not focused on developing PowerPoint skills. I'd rather have students focus on rigorous analysis and not on figuring out how to make the analytical template. It is also important to note that the templates are not meant for presenting in either academic or professional settings. The template is for pre-class analysis. I have developed other templates for my courses in Entrepreneurship, so the idea is portable to other theoretical domains. To conclude, I find that this approach assures that students are well prepared for a synchronous or asynchronous online case discussion. Their preparation is rigorous, structured, and focused and using them in class demonstrates the utility of these models in real world (i.e., case) situations. Further, these templates are also effective in a face-to-face classroom setting.

Dr. Harris: Thanks, Jeff. I will now hand the floor to Will Geoghegan, who is going to discuss whiteboarding co-creation. Will?

Dr. Geoghegan: Thanks, Randy. So, you may have used Mural (https://www.mural.co/), or Miro (https://miro.com/), or Klaxoon (https://klaxoon.com/). I find all of these tools helpful for synchronous online case instruction. The illustration I have for you today is a Mural board for a case study on the U.S. company Trader Joe's. You can see the end product in the exhibit below (See **Exhibit 2**).

What we get at the end of the exercise is a range of perspectives on the students' favorite Trader Joe's products. I use Mural with the whole class and I also find them useful for group breakout rooms, so they are good for small group collaboration as well. Students engage with the content, and this helps introverts to contribute as well. I also find that it is useful to time the exercise so that everyone stays on schedule. I miss having a physical whiteboard when I teach online, so this approach facilitates something similar, and this comes with unlimited space.

In the sample Mural whiteboard below, the students post their favorite products from Trader Joe's on the left-hand side. On the right-hand side, I asked students to post photographs of a typical Trader Joe's experience. This example served as an icebreaker for the synchronous online class discussion of the case. Mural also has a chat feature, and I use that to discuss the case with the students as well.

I really like Mural for my case classes online. There are other tools that achieve similar goals to Mural and these platforms are evolving rapidly. In general, students work on a whiteboard for the online case discussion, and this technique can be used to introduce the case to the class or for group breakout sessions. In the breakout sessions, four or five people can work on their own group's Mural and then report back to the class after 15 or 20 minutes. This breakout approach allows the students to build out their own insights in smaller groups, I then ask each group to share their insights.

Dr. Harris: Thank you. I would now like to turn the floor over to Chris Cassidy for some additional discussion about synchronous online learning.

Dr. Cassidy: The two classes I primarily teach are strategy and the social responsibility of management, and two of the core learning objectives for both of these courses are problem solving and critical thinking. These are two of the hardest learning objectives to teach. They are unstructured, there is no right answer, the class acts like a brainstorming session, and the best and most effective use of our synchronous time together requires the students come to class fully prepared.

Unfortunately, when you move online, they're sitting at home, and they're not as accountable as they were before. Added to that, we have more absences right now for a variety of reasons. There are communication problems. In addition, I've had plenty of students become quarantined or ill during the COVID-19 crisis. There are also students who have hearing or visual barriers, and the technology doesn't always keep up with them. In late 2020, most of my instruction is online. I have had to adapt quickly.

So, the key to incentivizing student preparation for these synchronous online sessions is the same as for face-to-face teaching. It's just you have to do things a little bit different in the online realm. I have used a variety of assignments that the students have to prepare before they come to class. My approach is tiered, beginning with a basic preparatory quiz on the class material. In general, I cover both the theoretical material as well as the case we are going to discuss. The next level is a written assignment, usually completed using our learning management system. We use Blackboard (https://www.blackboard.com/), but this is rudimentary on any learning management system. (See **Exhibit 3** for tips on incentivizing student preparation).

I set deadlines on all of these preparatory assignments 24 hours prior to the class session, which gives me the time to check student performance. From this initial feedback, I can build around gaps in student learning during the synchronous class session. I can call on students with a rudimentary understanding first and get the basics out of them, and then, I can call the students who answer the questions well to build upon that basic foundation, and that way everybody gets to participate, and the students who are less prepared get the added benefit of seeing how well the better students are able to perform.

The key is an in-depth class discussion of the case study, built upon effective student preparation. I use the Socratic method, which asks everybody questions about the case. I'll sometimes pick specific students to answer specific questions because I know they are prepared. A positive contribution is valuable to the class and the other class members. A negative contribution is costly to the class because we could have been using that time more wisely. There are almost always those students who come up with something profound or really insightful about a case, sometimes things I never thought of, and for those students, I always give them some type of verbal accolade. It is important to shape the environment of the class toward deep preparation, full involvement, and well-articulated reasoning.

Dr. Harris: Thank you very much. I would like to turn it over now to Cle-Anne Gabriel for some discussion about Padlets and also guest protagonists in a synchronous online setting. Cle-Anne?

Dr. Gabriel: Hello. In this section I am going to present two methods for synchronous online case instruction that I use in my courses here in Queensland, Australia. The first of these tools is Padlet (https://padlet.com/). Padlet is a digital canvas that allows students to design classroom projects and to easily collaborate. Padlet is an effective teaching tool because it allows my students to collaborate within their small groups, and I can also use this tool to mark them on their preparation, participation, and contributions. The very first thing students need to do when they come into my learning environment is to show evidence of their preparation. I also use templates, so they will have had a template for the assigned case posted on Blackboard that they will need to fill out, and they will need to respond and do some analysis prior to coming into the learning environment. These completed templates are then uploaded to the Padlet in the first five minutes of class. Five minutes is not enough time to complete the preparation in real-time; they actually need to do it before they come into the learning environment. Students can either simply copy and paste text directly into Padlet or upload their own word document. If you are concerned about plagiarism, then documents can also be submitted via a learning management system (LMS) for integrity checks. I download the Padlet at the five-minute point, and I keep that as a record of preparation. (See **Exhibit 4** for a Padlet example).

In my classes, students discuss the case in teams of maximum eight students. I then encourage them to initiate case discussion in each of the groups, and members of the teaching team move around to the breakout rooms to engage the students and answer their questions. Each team needs to make a decision as a team, write down a justification for the decision, then upload their work into Padlet in a process of collaboration and co-creation.

There are a few equity considerations I need to make when teaching and assessing online with cases. For instance, if students do not have access to reliable technology or internet connection, they may be unable to use their mics or cameras. In such cases, students find other ways to engage in the group discussion; they might use the chat function in Zoom or create a shared Google Doc for collaboration. When members of the teaching team visit each group, they can monitor the groups' progress as well as individual levels of engagement and contribution in the document. So, in addition to simply checking on the breakout room discussions, I use different means to monitor students' presence and engagement in the group work in the Padlets. After their group work, students return to the plenary session in Zoom for a whole-class discussion and debrief.

At the end of each class session, I download the final PDF file of the group work. The final pdf includes each individual's preparation work as well as the group's written decision and justification. By the end of each class, I have two tablets for marking: the individual preparation Padlet (completed in the first five minutes); and the group's decision and justification. Overall, Padlet is very effective as a learning tool for case teaching, and feedback is very simple to administer with the students.

My next synchronous method is the use of guest protagonists. Nothing makes a case study come to life, either online or in a live classroom, like having a protagonist from your case visit the class. Experienced case teachers have long talked about the benefits of inviting guest protagonists into their classroom. This applies equally to online sessions as well. Further, I would argue there's an advantage to having the session online because you can now access protagonists who may previously have been

located remotely. Whereas previously it may have been difficult for instructors to have remotely-located protagonists physically come into a face-to-face classroom, because technology like Zoom (https://zoom.us/) is so widely available, we can engage a much wider range of case study protagonists in the classroom.

I have had quite a good experience bringing in protagonists of the case to my online classes. It is terrific when they come into the breakout rooms with me: they interact with the students, which is a great incentive for students' decision-making because they are able to engage with the actual decision-maker from the case. For instance, I have used the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) as a case study, and my students were asked to study the company's indigenous and diversity initiatives for Australia. Key executives attended my class on Zoom and it was such a great opportunity for students to hear from the actual decision makers themselves. Obviously, there is less immediacy in an online classroom, but my students and I have adapted well to the online format. This is an example of something that we can capitalize on with the move to online instruction. (See **Exhibit 5**).

ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE LEARNING

Dr. Harris: Thank you Cle-Anne. I would like to turn our attention now to asynchronous online learning. For many reasons, my students have come to expect the option for asynchronous instruction when they are not able to be physically present at their computer at a specific time. This option has proven particularly helpful for online MBA programs where students may be geographically separated, perhaps even in separate time zones or continents. However, asynchronous learning poses a unique set of challenges for instructors. We'll begin this section with Dr. Hill as she shares some insights about the challenges that she has experienced with teaching cases online. She will introduce us to VoiceThread (https://voicethread.com/), a cloud-based platform that she's used to facilitate online case discussions.

Dr. Hill: What do you do when the underlying assumptions of conventional case teaching best practices are upended? While the audience is still the student, the venue is virtual instead of in person. Case discussion usually happens with the class together in the same room, at the same time rather than the asynchronous environment that characterizes online classes. Where case discussion is usually facilitated by the course instructor directly interacting with students; in the online course, technology mediates the discussion. These challenges motivate developing an alternative strategy to case teaching. The strategy that I developed merged pedagogical genres to modify case instruction for a virtual asynchronous venue.

So far, I have identified a few challenges specific to teaching cases in an asynchronous, virtual environment. In addition to these unique challenges, there are some challenges that are consistent with what we experience in the conventional classroom with an added level of complexity due to the asynchronous nature of some online courses.

Engagement: I do not know about you, but I have a difficult time persuading, cajoling, (coercing?) my students to read the assigned textbook chapter. Given this challenge, the task of getting students to read and prepare cases in addition to other assigned reading seems insurmountable. Now, I can imagine some of you thinking, "You have to hold the students accountable for the material. That's why I give them a quiz before we start discussing the case." I am glad that technique works for the students you teach. However, in my experience performing well on a multiple choice

or short answer quizzes does not necessarily yield the insightful discussion I am aiming for.

Participation: Even if there is a critical mass of students who prepared the case, how do I make sure everyone contributes to the discussion? This is easy enough for me to do in my conventional classroom. I have developed multiple facilitation techniques to address potential barriers to full participation. I can refocus discussion when it has veered off course, encourage a promising conversation thread, gently intervene to manage the conversation hijacker. These are skills that I use regularly when facilitating a synchronous class discussion. However, with technology as a mediator in asynchronous settings, it is easier for students to passively sit on the sidelines or forget/ignore norms of civility to dominate a discussion, expressing ideas in a manner that would be unacceptable in person.

Logistics: Asynchronous class settings permit students to have more control over the pace which they interact with the material. Advanced students can work ahead and complete the assigned material way ahead of the deadline. Students who require more time (or procrastinate), can use all the time available to complete the work right before the deadline. In my experience, students rarely interact with the course material at the same time in asynchronous course settings. This issue raises the question, how do we facilitate an engaging discussion with participants joining and/or leaving the discussion at different times?

Evaluation: Finally, how do you evaluate performance/contribution to a discussion that does not occur in real time? When I evaluate a student's contribution to a case discussion, I consider how comments advance class discussion. The quality of responses to questions or comments from other classmates is another consideration. Applying critical thinking to use information from the case to support a course of action also informs my evaluation. While we can observe interactions among students in a discussion forum, the time required to provide students responding asynchronously to simulate the give and take nature of a real time case discussion could take multiple days. This may not be feasible given the pace and timing of the class.

After some consideration, I decided to try incorporating role play into case analysis to facilitate an engaging asynchronous conversation among students. Traditionally, students engage with the case material as a third-party neutral observer. Reading the facts of the case, the students apply what they learn in class to address a business issue. Integrating role play, I select cases where multiple parties have a significant role in case events. Once the enrollment for the course has been confirmed, I divide the students into groups and assign each student a role as a spokesperson representing an involved party.

Here is my process:

1. Post the case/material related to the case on the course webpage
2. Students prepare to participate in a virtual press conference. Each student is assigned to be a spokesperson for a party involved in the case.
3. The student must prepare and present a press statement representing the interest and concerns of their constituents along with a preferred course of action to resolve the situation.
4. Students record their statement using *VoiceThread*. VoiceThread is a cloud-based platform that allows students to post comments and respond to comments posted by other students. The platform allows students to post their responses using multiple media, such as written and voice. (See **Exhibit 6** for an example VoiceThread).

5. In addition to posting their press statement, students are required to post questions to other students in their capacity as spokesperson of their group or assuming the role of a reporter. Spokespersons can earn a better grade by responding to questions from their classmates.
6. To verify the authenticity of the press statements, students submit the transcript of their press statement to ***Turnitin*** (https://www.turnitin.com/) a platform that detects plagiarism.
7. I developed a rubric to evaluate each assignment for content, audible and visual delivery.

I have been pleased with the results. The students who allow themselves to get into their roles are the most successful. While this method deviates from the conventional approach to case teaching, it accomplishes the same goals; encourages critical thinking and facilitates discovery through interacting with peers.

Dr. Harris: Okay, I will hand it back to Will Geoghegan who is going to talk a little bit about video cases and PlayPosit (https://go.playposit.com/) in the asynchronous online classroom. Will?

Dr. Geoghegan: In this section I want to talk about ways to engage students in an asynchronous manner. Something I have found particularly useful is a tool called PlayPosit. There is a similar tool called Ed Puzzle (https://edpuzzle.com/) as well. The goal of PlayPosit is to engage students while watching videos. What I have found with my online students is that there are only a certain number of 20-page Harvard cases that they will actually read over the course of a semester. As a result, I have tried to integrate video cases into my course where possible. I have found a lot of really good video cases.

A typical video case is roughly 20-30 minutes. Fortunately, many video cases have depth and strong learning outcomes. When I use PlayPosit I don't just put up a 20-minute CNBC video. I try to be interactive and PlayPosit really boosts that interactivity. I try to write and insert about 10 to 12 interactions/questions into each video. PlayPosit allows everything from a multiple-choice question to a discussion question. PlayPosit allows students to see all of their classmate's discussion postings. I can also link the video to a poll on various questions that I can then use in the live synchronous class as well. (See **Exhibit 7** for a PlayPosit example).

There are a variety of interaction options in Play Posit. It's integrated into the learning management system, so you can download student grades on the assignments. Student response options include multiple choice, check boxes, free responses, fill in the blank, poll questions, and discussion boards. Some students try to play the videos at 3x speed, and as a result I generally limit their fast-forwarding abilities. Also, if they get something wrong, I'll push them back two minutes to re-watch that segment of the video. So, they are coming to my class fully prepared.

PlayPosit can be integrated with all of the major learning management systems, including Blackboard and Canvas. The video stops at various points and students interact with some type of response. The instructions are clear that they get grades for responding to these different questions. I customize the questions around the learning objectives for the instructional module, as well as whatever theoretical framework underpins the case study we are discussing. It's easy to use, students like to engage with it, and it allows students to really get their hands dirty with the case study and how it applies to the class. Thank you.

Dr. Harris: Thank you so much. I want to talk a little bit now about structuring your case assignments and discussion boards for asynchronous online learning. One piece of advice that I got early on that I did not fully appreciate at the time was Stephen

Covey's quote, "start with the end in mind." In general, what this means in application is that you want to match your cases and your case assignments with the learning objectives of your instructional module. So, what I have increasingly done with my case assignments is I have started with the learning outcome first and built around that to pick cases and to build assignments.

The other issue that relates to Bloom's taxonomy, particularly with regard to graduate education, is where you're moving higher up Bloom's taxonomy towards synthesis – where the students are able to engage in not just problem resolution but also problem identification. This is the highest order of learning for case analysis and it's something that I'm only willing to do with graduate students. Undergraduates will often struggle with actually identifying problems in cases, so I typically will try to ground problem resolution around "here is the problem for you to solve." In contrast, with graduate students I'll actually allow them to engage in the problem identification themselves.

One way to resolve this problem at the undergraduate level is a series of forced choices, and I will give you an example of that in the exhibit below. So, to look at graduate education you want to structure your case assignments in such a way that you allow for synthesis and learning in the case and you also want to provide some type of framework for them to begin the work on the case itself.

I have an example here of a synthesis assignment for graduate students about Mattel Incorporated and I have given them two broad targets to examine. (See **Exhibit 8)**. One, immediate crisis response to the global COVID-19 pandemic and then, two, how to restore positive sales growth and profitability for the company. This forces the students to engage not only in problem identification but also resolution. Hopefully, your students can synthesize the elements of the case and to bring out the issues that will need examination and eventual resolution. Often in early case assignments students will struggle particularly when I do not provide a clear focus for problem identification. It's critical to provide feedback to students on these assignments and perhaps an exemplar after the first case assignment is returned. It's important to close the loop on the learning process. In other words, the less structure you provide the more difficult it becomes for the students and the more anxiety provoking, at least at first. I find that my graduate students generally begin to get the hang of it after a case or two, however.

With undergraduates, however, I am much more directive. Again, starting with the end in mind I try to build around the learning objective specifically and then use the case study that best fits the learning objective. In the example I provide here, I give students a forced choice on the assignment. (See **Exhibit 9**). In other words, pick one of the five competitive strategies and argue why it is in fact the best classification for the company in question, in this case Fitbit. Then, I provide a lot of background in the textbook for them to go back and refer to. This is an example of what I mean by forced choice. This is how you provide them with a very clear structure and a very clear theoretical framework to apply to the case study itself, even down to the actual page length and how I would like the answer structured. Undergraduates need structure.

Moving on to discussion boards the same basic principle applies. Take the case study and then begin to examine it through your selected theoretical lens. The example above does this with corporate social responsibility. (See **Exhibit 10**). You can also tie it to other links inside the case or inside the textbook chapter, including the triple bottom line, sustainability or other topics within the global corporate social responsibility area. These are some examples of ways to structure case-based learning for student written assignments that provides focus and theoretical rigor in your

classroom. Hopefully, this section provides some practical tools to aid you in case-based asynchronous online learning.

We're now going to take a look at some methods for blended online learning,

BLENDED/HYBRID LEARNING

Dr. Harris: Let's start the discussion with Dr. Gabriel. Cle-Anne?

Dr. Gabriel: So, this is still quite experimental, and the credit for it goes to Dr Stuart Middleton and some of my other colleagues at the University of Queensland, but academics at my university trialed an outdoor classroom in 2020. The university set up bean bags, chairs and white boards outside on the grass. Everyone is socially distanced, and in the capstone strategy course students must work with the same team members each week. (See **Exhibit 11**).

Students worked in hybrid mode this year – both face-to-face and online – sometimes synchronously. Each team has a laptop or a few different laptops with them and there are also students who participate online and are interacting via Zoom, or using Padlet or other tools. The teams work together to come up with solutions to the case challenges. Fortunately, the University and Dr Middleton are looking to expand this initiative and do more of it, because the outdoor classroom does meet the COVID guidelines for our state.

The caveat I must stress, though, is that we are in the state of Queensland, Australia and we have somehow managed get COVID-19 reasonably under control. So, it is perhaps easier for us to do something like this compared to the state of Victoria or New South Wales in Australia. If you're in a COVID-19 hot spot perhaps your University will not be able to do something like this. However, I believe this approach is aspirational and I think COVID-19 has given us the incentive to do it. I can see us sticking with it long-term because it is such a great way to learn! You sit out in nature discussing a case on these bean bag chairs and the students by all accounts from the staff involved really enjoy it.

Dr. Harris: Now for Dr. Gilinsky and the "premium economy" model he uses in his hybrid online classes. Armand?

Dr. Gilinsky: My background is that I have extensively taught online using both synchronous and asynchronous formats. At the moment, I am teaching in a hybrid format that combines elements of both. Some of my students have lost their homes due to fires and other disasters, they've lost their jobs because of the economic depression and some of them have even lost family members due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. I had to rethink how I taught everything in March 2020 as a result.

The issue for me was how to individualize the learning environment in a distant and cold medium like Zoom (https://zoom.us/meetings) or Go To Meeting (https://www.gotomeeting.com/) or WebEx (https://www.webex.com/). Out of this chaos I created what I call the "premium economy" model. This approach combines elements of both synchronous and asynchronous learning. There are asynchronous assignments, but students also talk with me synchronously and share what they are learning. Yes, like others there is some Socratic learning. My course has also been designated as a writing intensive course, so there is a heavy writing component as well. They discuss the case studies in groups and then after the discussion they have to write individual analyses of each case. Like another presenter, I give the students a template for writing their analyses. These are submitted and I give them feedback.

The issue for me was the in-class discussion. Instead of trying to teach an 80-minute class discussion with everyone's faces on Zoom like the Hollywood squares, I wanted to do something different and more immediate for the student. Students were increasingly distracted when I conducted large in-class synchronous online discussions.

So, I signed them up for individual or small group tutorials. I set aside what would normally be class time for these tutorials. These are conducted with a clear agenda. I let them know what that agenda is going to be, and I try to first do a check-in to find out what's going on in their lives. This enables me to learn about what makes them curious and where they're finding themselves having problems and then I review the learning objectives of the course with each student individually.

There are only four learning objectives and those are to describe, evaluate, generate, and recommend. That's about all I can remember as well, and I think it's important for the students to remember this framework because that provides a platform for them to do the class assignments, like the discussions, the issue briefs, the midterm exams and the group project. I also do quick assessments of each individual student.

I also require a weekly reflection log. In other words, I ask students to keep writing about 30 minutes a day regarding what they're learning. They turn in those written reflection logs twice in the semester. Finally, I think it's really important to be patient, understanding and persistent. Many of my students have been in distress in 2020. Students have struggled to schedule work together in teams, and they have had significant external stressors. As an instructor, I remind myself and my students: Be patient. Things will change. Be understanding. I've had to be a little more flexible and persistent to keep everyone on task and on schedule. I remind them that there are no hidden agendas or mystery assignments. Everything is there. Follow the sequence laid out in the course, and I am going to be present with your group to walk with you through the course. Thank you for letting me share some of what has worked for me this year. (see **Exhibit 12** for a brief overview of the "premium economy" model).

Dr. Harris: Thank you, Armand, and I would like to thank all of you for joining us here today. We would certainly encourage you to ask some questions. If the panel participants could help with the discussion, I would appreciate it at this point. Thank you.

OPEN FORUM QUESTIONS

Dr. Gabriel: First question received is this: Do you think it is helpful to hide other student's answers until a student posts their own answer first?

Dr. Cassidy: I'll go ahead and field that one because that issue has come up for me. When my students see what the other students are writing, they often just plagiarize it. As a result, I hide their initial submissions, so each one must compose their own original answer. Then I generally have them provide feedback on each other's comments. Now, at this point they're reading each other's work, and they can cherry pick the good ideas, and there's a little bit of homogenization of the ideas that show up in the papers. But learning goes on from peer to peer as well as from the additional feedback and comments that I provide.

Dr. Harris: Next question. Do you see blended courses as the future for all classes even after the COVID-19 crisis ends? The answer in my opinion is yes. How many of us must post grades and feedback to Blackboard or to Moodle or Canvas as part of our regular feedback, even in a face-to-face classroom? In other words, the introduction of video and other technologies is really an extension of the traditional

classroom. I think it is a question of continuum. We may pull back, but I do not think that once we've opened up the floodgate to new technologies that we're going to retreat back to strictly face-to-face techniques.

Dr. Shay: I think that it's really important to think about your audience. A lot of this depends on your audience and that context is important. I teach at a small liberal arts school, where we have only 5 students per class. It's all undergraduates except for the law program. After the COVID-19 crisis, I think that my school will likely go back to an in-person model. I don't think we are going to suddenly start offering online courses.

Dr. Harris: Thank you. Do you want to take another question?

Dr. Gabriel: If virtual classes continue will the cases we use be shorter due to time constraints? Any thoughts?

Dr. Cassidy: We're already seeing that. This reflects changes in the present generation of students. They do not like the 25-page Harvard cases anymore. They like 8 pages, or 10 pages, and they really like the 3 to 4-page cases. What we're likely to see in the future is shorter cases with more video integration if not completely video cases.

Dr. Geoghegan: It also depends on the audience, I believe. With my undergraduate students I find that the 10 to 20-page Harvard cases are wasted on them. For undergraduates, the smaller vignettes are better. On the contrary, the depth and detail that's needed for a good graduate-level discussion potentially needs to be one of those longer cases. As a result, when we discuss different audiences, we need to find the cases that are suitable for that audience. This ties in to what was discussed earlier about designing your class around the student and the learning objectives.

Dr. Harris: William, can you follow up on a question about PlayPosit and the pros and cons of using PlayPosit?

Dr. Geoghegan: Yes. The question next question is about best practices for using pre-recorded lectures. Personally, I have used PlayPosit and Ed Puzzle for that. Basically, one of the things that is frustrating is that when we record asynchronous videos they tend to go down a black hole. The better students will watch posted asynchronous videos, but there is usually no accountability. As a result, what I like to do with my asynchronous students is insert comprehension checks in the video, and then reward students for watching and answering the questions. The questions are relatively easy, but it keeps them engaged.

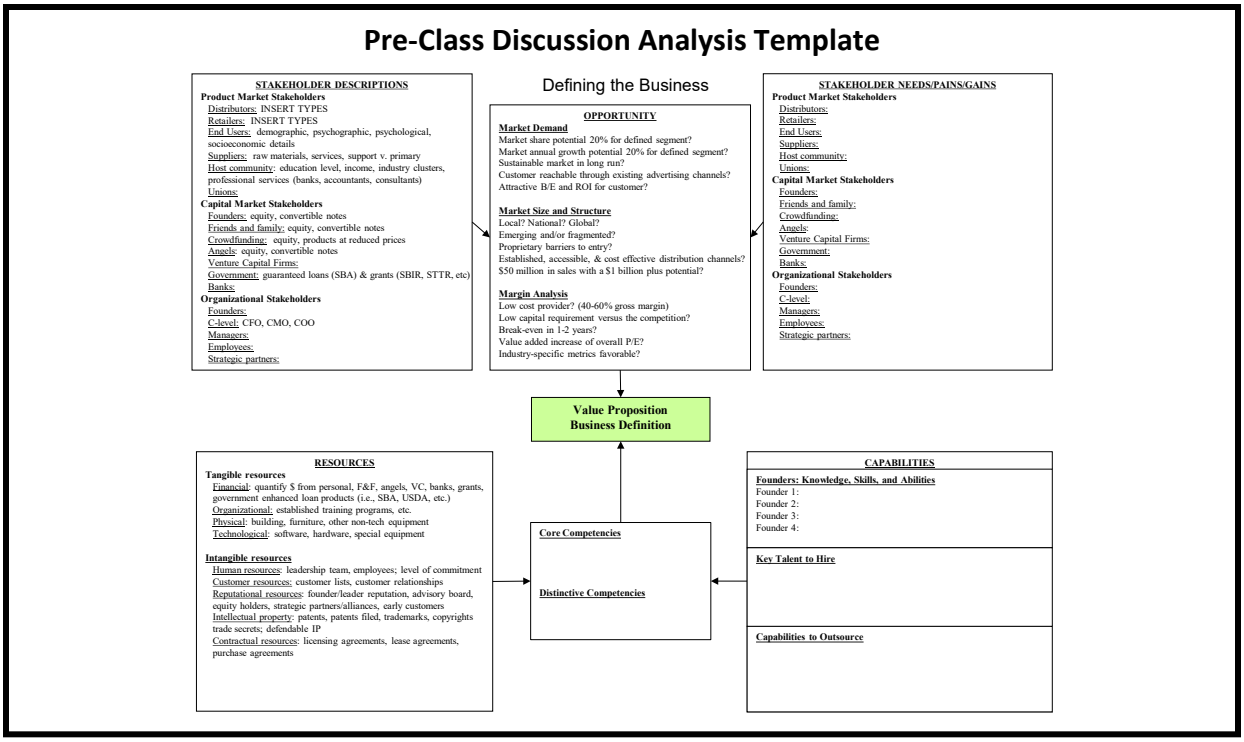
Dr. Harris: Thank you. We have a question about assessment and engagement. How do we know students are really doing their own work in an online environment? A contentious issue, so I will just talk about my own university as an example. We had some difficulties with the online monitoring, particularly the video supervisors for that type of thing. Examity https://www.examity.com/) went offline in the middle of the crisis around April/May 2020 because of the shutdowns in India, Bangalore and one other city in India in particular. There are others including Respondus (https://web.respondus.com/), which is a lockdown browser, and I regularly use SafeAssign (https://safeassign.blackboard.com/). Live monitoring is tricky, and academic integrity is an ongoing issue. I will note that Harvard cases and instructor manuals are particularly popular on Course Hero (https://www.coursehero.com/), which students use to cheat on case analyses. Using new cases and continually introducing new material are one of the ways to overcome this problem. I rotate in material very quickly. My courses chew up a lot of cases as a result to try to stay ahead of this. I hope that helps.

Dr. Cassidy: Another suggestion is to switch over to assignments that require the students to write. My classes are writing intensive and the more you ask the students

to write on original topics, the harder it is for one student to do another student's work. Students won't do the writing for each other but they will take quizzes and tests for each other.

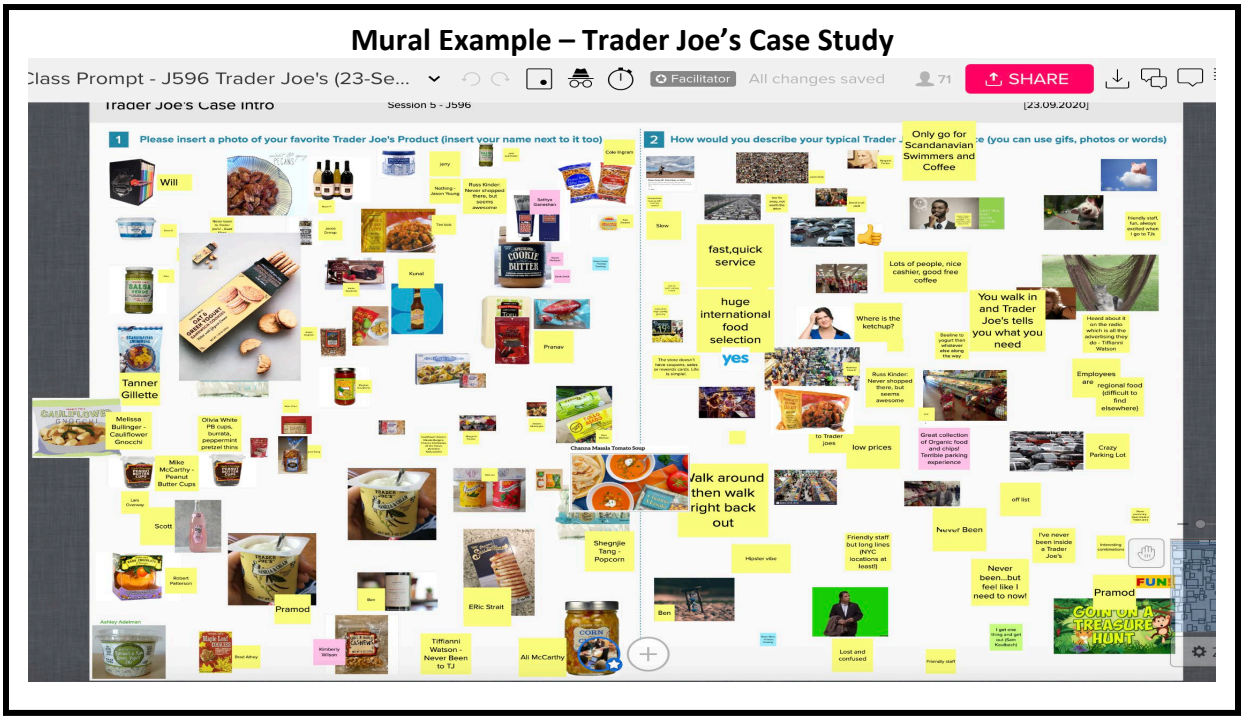
Dr. Harris: Okay. I would like to thank our panel participants here today. I would also like to thank all of you, our audience, for being here today and participating with us. We are grateful for your participation in our session. Thanks everybody.

Exhibit 1



Source: Dr. Jeff Shay, Washington & Lee University

Exhibit 2



Source: Dr. Will Geoghegan, Indiana University

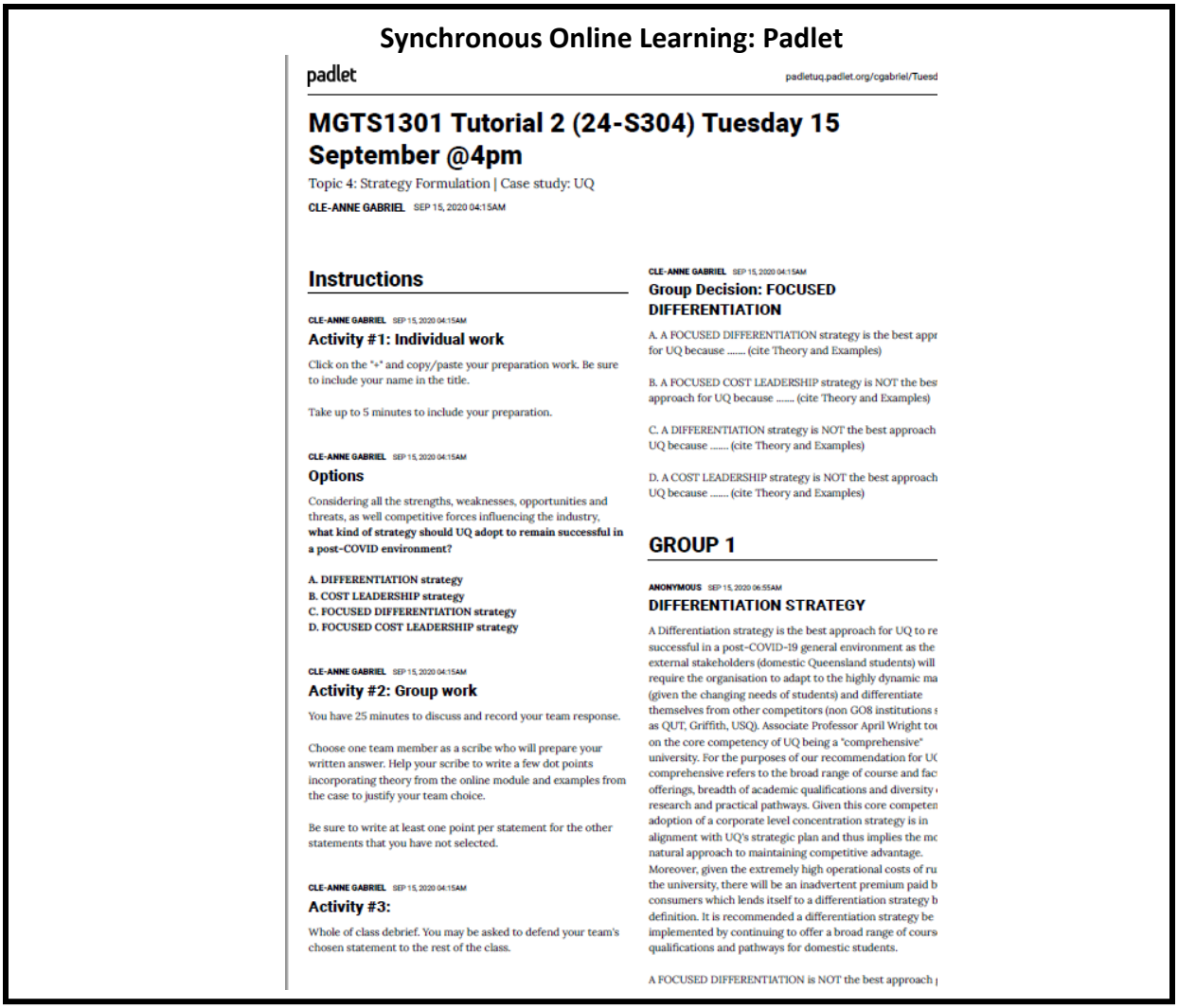
Exhibit 3

Incentivize Student Preparation

- The key to online teaching is the same as for F2F teaching
- Incentivize class preparation with structured assignments
    - Quizzes, discussion board essays and peer feedback, worksheets
    - Can be tiered in in a series of written assignments, of gradually increasing complexity, to move students to a position for optimal (interactive) class discussion
- Setting the deadlines at least 24 hours prior to class, gives the instructor sufficient time to build the synchronous discussion around the gaps in student learning
    - Students who answered questions poorly can be called upon first to provide the framework
    - Students who answered questions well can be called upon later for a more nuanced response

Source: Dr. Chris Cassidy, Sam Houston State U.

Exhibit 4

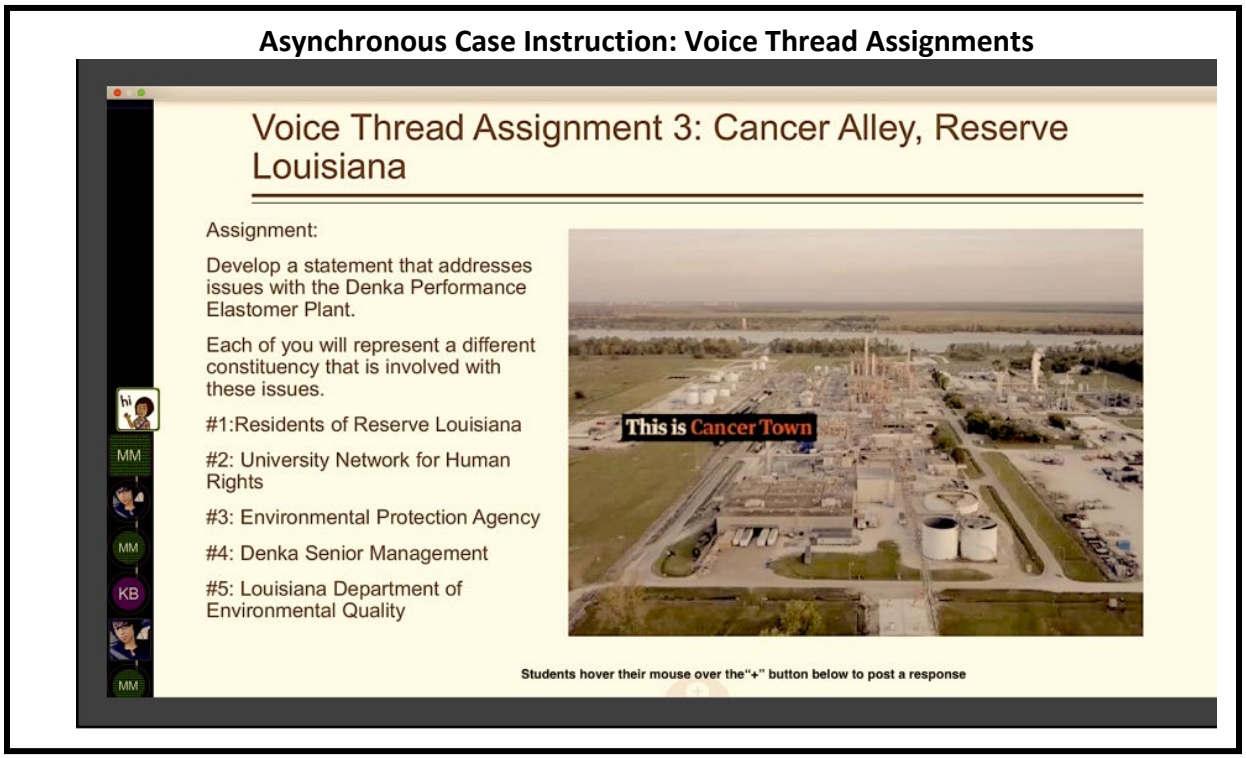


Source: Dr. Cle-Anne Gabriel, University of Queensland.

Exhibit 5

Source: Dr. Cle-Anne Gabriel, University of Queensland.

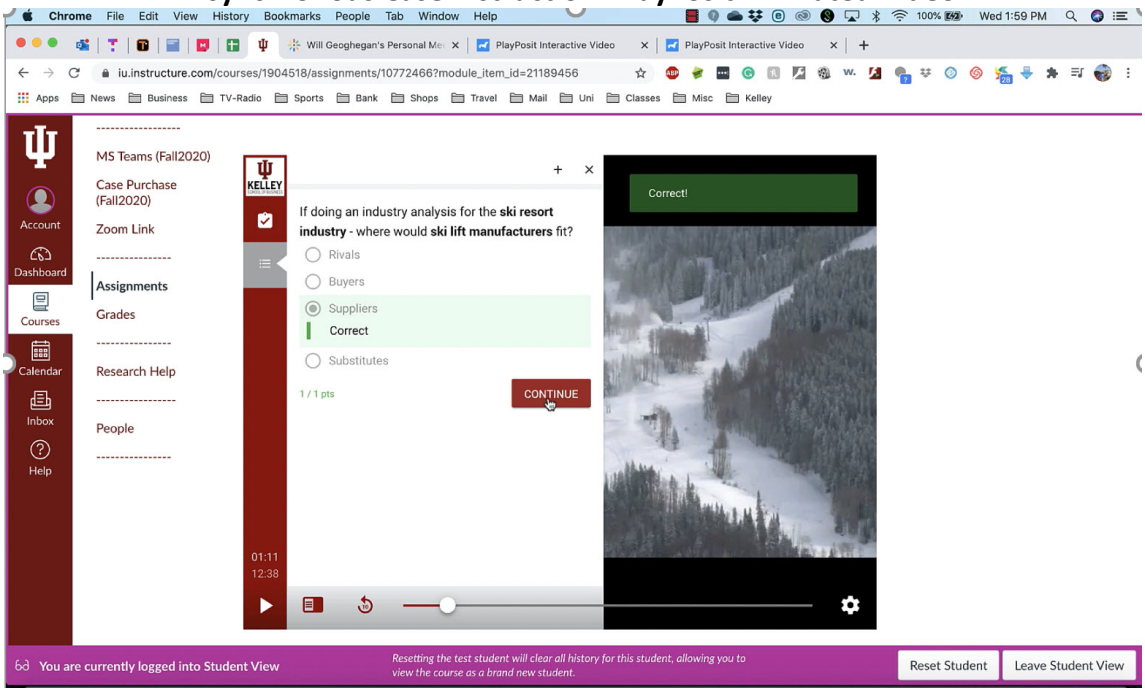
Exhibit 6



Source: Dr. Vanessa Hill, U. of Louisiana at Lafayette

Exhibit 7

Asynchronous Case Instruction: PlayPosit Animated Video



Source: Dr. Will Geoghegan, Indiana U.

Exhibit 8

Asynchronous Online Learning: Structuring Case Assignments

- **Graduate Education Example**
- It is **September 1, 2020**, and the Board of Directors of Mattel Incorporated has employed you as a consultant to assess and improve the company's overall situation during the COVID-19 Pandemic and recommend a set of specific, measurable and rapid actions for the company to take to (a) survive the global COVID-19 Pandemic and (b) quickly restore the company to healthy sales growth and profitability.

Source: Dr. Randall Harris, Texas A&M U. – Corpus Christi

Exhibit 9

Asynchronous Online Learning: Structuring Case Assignments

- **Undergraduate Example**
- How would you best classify Fitbit's **competitive strategy**? Categorize Fitbit into one of the five generic competitive strategies from Chapter 1 in the textbook (Strategy and the Quest for Competitive Advantage section. Also, see Chapter 5 in the textbook for a detailed discussion of the generic competitive strategies). Next, discuss how Fitbit executes and delivers this competitive strategy. (Recommended page length: one page).

Source: Dr. Randall Harris, Texas A&M U. – Corpus Christi

Exhibit 10

Discussion Board Example: Corporate Social Responsibility at Mondelez International

- One example of a **CSR** initiative is discussed in the Annual Report of **Mondelez International** (Mondelez International, 2018). The company states, "A key strategic priority for us it to create a positive impact for people and our planet" (Mondelez International, 2018). In many ways, that statement echoes discussion about the "**Triple Bottom Line**" in Gamble (2019, Chapter 9). Mondelez has several 2020 sustainability goals, including reducing their water consumption in manufacturing, reducing their overall carbon footprint, and reducing waste in their manufacturing and packaging (Mondelez, 2018). Reports on these initiatives are reviewed at the

Source: Dr. Randall Harris, Texas A&M U. – Corpus Christi

Exhibit 11

Hybrid Online Learning: Outdoor Classroom

Source: The University of Queensland

Exhibit 12

Hybrid Learning Approach: The "Premium Economy" Model

- **Create group discussion boards/issue briefs**
- **Sign up students for individual/small group tutorials**
- **Start with a clear agenda & stick to that agenda**
- **Use "check-ins" & "check-outs" to foster personal connections**
- **Review LOs & do quick assessments - prevents procrastination/ increases productivity**
- **Require weekly written reflection log [30 min/day]**
- **Be patient, understanding, persistent**

Source: Dr. Armand Gilinsky, Sonoma State U.