

Title: *'Leading Changes' in Learning and Teaching*



Pictured are the class of UU MBA students 2019/20 on 12 Feb 2020 with Head of Hillsborough Castle, Laura McCorry (middle), and UU's Lecturer in Leadership, Fodhla McGrane PhD (left) at the majestic state entrance to Hillsborough Castle, Hillsborough, Co Down.

Summary

This case study details how and why I redesigned elements of a postgraduate MBA module, 'Leadership and Change'. My aim was to enhance the student experience and increase attainment of the module's learning outcomes by means of two main innovations:

1. Business Partnering:
 - a. Assessment using a live case study: I negotiated the creation of a novel, 'live' case study with NI's renewed and recently opened Hillsborough Castle and Gardens. The case study formed the main part of the module assessment.
 - b. Guest speakers: I collaborated with topical, relevant, experienced business leaders to create and deliver interactive classes with the students.
2. New assessment strategy:

I implemented a new, two-stage assessment strategy to benefit students by 'feeding forward' their learning from one assessment into the next, with the aim of increasing learning outcomes. Both assessments were integrated with and timed alongside the business partnering.

What was done:

Post-graduate module, Leadership and Change, 2019/20. MBA students in Ulster Business School

93% of the students on the module were international students (mainly from Asia). This is relevant to UU's 5&50 priority on Global Vision in which UU aims to internationalise teaching, teach for global competence, and increase its % of international students.

Relating to 5&50's priority of Academic Excellence, below are two main module enhancements.

Enhancement No 1: Innovative Partnering with Businesses

1 a. Creation of a live case study

The module has always involved a case study as the main piece of assessment. Last year, we bought in an American, printed case study. This year, I generated a local 'live' case study by negotiating entry to Hillsborough Castle (HC). This resulted in a new and novel case study with NI's unique royal residence. In 2014, HC changed from being managed by the NIO to being managed by a prestigious London charity, Historic Royal Palaces. HC is headed locally by Laura McCorry with whom I generated the case study.

The case study boasts the following benefits:

- 'Local' story for UU students (in Hillsborough, NI). Great interest to international students due to royal connections.
- 'Historic' venue (Hillsborough Castle was a place of political and historic significance under the UK government, and Monarchy)
- Relevance to module on leadership and change:
 - o Change in use of HC from a closed, political venue to a public tourist and visitor attraction
 - o Change in management from public sector management (by NIO) to management by a charity (HRP)
 - o Change in leadership: Head is Laura McCorry
- Students visited free of charge and were briefed by Head of HC
- No cost to UU (unlike case studies purchased per copy)

1b. Visiting speakers

In 2018/19, no visiting speakers were included on the module. For 2019/20, I designed the teaching strategy to include live guest speakers who were chosen specifically for their experiences with leadership and change. The first three speakers on leadership, listed below, were scheduled prior to submission of coursework 1 which was on the topic of leadership:

- Stephen Martin MBE, Olympian, led UK hockey team and currently leading change with Sustrans (see photo in final section, Further Information).
- Laura McCorry, Head of HC
- David Maxwell, Further Space (entrepreneurial leader developing niche tourism provision of luxurious accommodation pods)

Enhancement No 2. Redesign of module assessment

In the previous iteration of the module, one summative piece of coursework was submitted after the 12 weeks of teaching. Therefore, students did not have opportunity to receive feedback and feed it forward by applying it to improve their next submission. I changed the assessment from one to two pieces of coursework. Coursework 1 (40%) was submitted early in term (start of week 6) so that students could receive individualised feedback and apply it to their final and larger-weighted coursework 2 (60%).

Motivation and aims:

I taught this module for the first time in 2018/19, as per its module handbook. From marking the one assessment received after the 12 weeks of teaching, I thought that the students' work could be improved. I decided to make changes to the module delivery in 2019/20 to enhance the L&T and to increase student outcomes.

Purpose and benefits of redesigning the module:

- To create teaching and assessment materials that were relevant and timely, and that were unique to NI so that they appeal to the international students who chose NI for their studies.
- To create an assessment strategy that produced individualised, timely feedback to each student allowing him/her to apply the feedback in their next assessment, with the desired outcome of increasing their performance and related to this, their personal fulfilment.
- To increase the excellence of the student experience by adding different perspectives on the module topic through interactive sessions with business partners.
- To increase real life application of the module by partnering with businesses, and also to increase students' employability.
- To enhance the reputation of the MBA in order to attract more international students to UU (UU's 5&50 global vision).

Professional knowledge:

Since my PGCE in adult education in 2012 and my membership of Advance HE, I have enjoyed experimenting with multiple L&T methods and keeping current with L&T advancements, UU's L&T policies, and our new 'integrated curriculum design' (Cherp, 2020). The following texts support my ethos.

Banerjee, N., Stearns, E., Moller, S. and Mickelson, R.A., 2017. Teacher job satisfaction and student achievement: The roles of teacher professional community and teacher collaboration in schools. *American Journal of Education*, 123(2).

Barnett, R. and Coate, K., 2004. *Engaging the curriculum*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Kahn, P. and O'Rourke, K., 2005. *Understanding enquiry-based learning. Handbook of Enquiry & Problem Based Learning*, pp.1-12.

Sinek, S., 2009. *Start with why: How great leaders inspire everyone to take action*. Penguin.

Tangney, S., 2014. Student-centred learning: a humanist perspective. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 19(3), pp.266-275.

Whitton, D., 2015. *Teaching and Learning Strategies*. Cambridge University Press.

Implementation:

- In week 1, I explained to the students all features of the module including the live case study, business partners, and assessments. I gathered initial student feedback and found that it was positive (see screenshots in Further Information section).
- Prior to week 1, information relating to the case study was collected from HC and uploaded to BBL so that students could begin their research from day 1.
- Visit by class to HC in Week 3.
- Visiting speakers were scheduled into the week-by-week schedule in the module handbook. They were timed to coincide with the two pieces of coursework (e.g. leadership speakers came prior to coursework 1 which is on the topic of leadership).
- Feedback gathered in weeks 11 and 12 and again was positive (see section, Student Impact).

As per UU's new values (which include integrity and transparency) and in pursuit of UU's 5&50 vision of teaching excellence and excellence in student experience, I ensured that all details were included in the module handbook and I invested time in explaining my L&T strategies and my 'why' (Sinek, 2009) to the students.

In our first class, I explained that this was a new module design, prepared with them in mind, and that we would learn together by doing, and monitor and evaluate at numerous points throughout the semester starting in our first class. From their feedback in week 1, they valued being consulted in this way (Tangney, 2014).

Professional knowledge: I relied on CHERP's Sharepoint resources and UU's Assessment Handbook 2019. I was inspired and directed by UU's 5&50 vision and plan, and encouraged by colleagues in MLM, UBS and the International Office.

Successes and lessons learnt:

Successes:

- Agreement by Hillsborough Castle (HC) and its new management, Historic Royal Palaces (HRP), to be a case study for the module. For the first time in its history, HC opened its doors as a tourist attraction to the public in April 2019. Less than one year into this new venture, senior management agreed for it to be a focus of our module's study in terms of leadership and change.
- Agreement by business guests to contribute free of charge to student learning and to invest time in developing unique, interactive sessions for the class with me.
- Positive student engagement and satisfaction (see student feedback)

Challenge 1: Logistical organisation of student visit to Hillsborough Castle

The students had one opportunity to receive a live briefing from Head of HC on 12/2/20. I collected students from Jordanstown and Belfast campuses on a hired bus. Latecomers arrived by taxi and we had full attendance. In case of any issue with attendance, I video recorded the presentation and later uploaded it as a resource to BBL.

Challenge 2: Enhancing the teaching skills of business guests

Business guests are effective in business and in presentations but are often not as experienced in teaching. To enhance guests' L&T skills:

- Weeks before class, we met in person and planned in-class interaction opportunities and exercises.
- During class, I facilitated the guests by conducting the in-class Q&A sessions and our planned interactive exercises, and I encouraged them through questions to retain focus on the lecture topic.

Approach to Evaluation: Student Consultation

I consulted verbally and digitally with the students to evaluate the module. Student data was gathered at three scheduled points during term. Data was gathered in week 1 using Menti (see Further Information), verbally in class in week 6 (after submission of coursework 1), and in our final teaching week using Menti.

In addition to student evaluation, I continually evaluated using my own professional observations of engagement, and by examining the quality of coursework submitted.

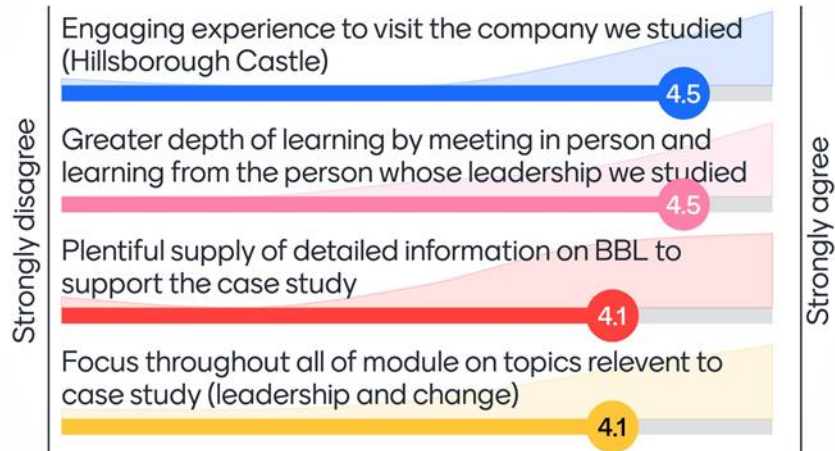
Lessons learnt and future changes: Based on the success of this term, I plan to retain the module enhancements and to develop a new, live, topical case study for each cohort and develop opportunities for live interaction with current business leaders.

Student Impact

Below are examples of student responses gathered in week 12, which averaged at a satisfaction rating of 4-4.5 on a scale of 0-5.

Impact of a 'live' case study on students

Mentimeter



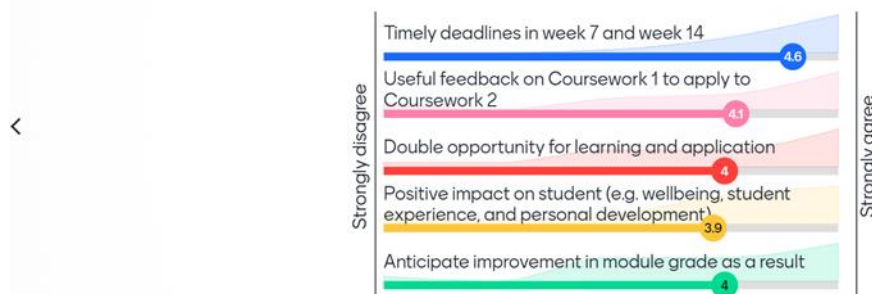
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Example of impact in the words of one student:

"I, Mr. X, your student of MBA, thank you so much for the informative and awesome trip. We all enjoyed a lot and learned a lot, this kind of case study is itself an innovative idea that helps a lot of students like me with non-management background.... I feel so lucky to have a faculty like you."

Impact of two-part module assessment on students (previously, students had one assessment submitted in week 12)

Mentimeter



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Transferability:

This module design (business partnering, the use of live case study, and a two-staged assessment strategy) is highly transferrable.

Advice re visiting speakers: meet the business partner at least once in advance of class to decide on the topic for the class and to create interactive exercises for use in class. Don't leave this until the day of the class. Preparation is key to achieving learning outcomes, student engagement, and interaction.

Evidence of adoption:

1. Revised assessment strategy. 4 QAHE locations in the UK implemented the revised assessment strategy for the module. Feedback was positive.
2. Business partnering. I have introduced UBS colleagues to the business partners after our classes. Colleagues have connected with them on LinkedIn and also developed business partnerships with them (e.g. for case studies, guest lectures, company visits).

Further information:

1. Testimonials:

- a. **Feedback from students** about the module design (gathered in class in week 1 using online digital interaction software, Menti).

What do you think of the design of this module? Lectures, guest speakers, BBL, coursework 1 for early feedback, & 2=live case study Hillsborough C&G

i think this module is very interesting. The dividing of course works should help me to easily submit. lecturer is more knowledgeable and blackboard helps to get more ideas and module contents.

Very good lecture and modules are new and quite interesting to learn

Its is very good lecturer and mod interesting and its is something international 🌟📚

it a very good leature modules are easy to understand .it something new and intersting and it will give opputunity in futher studies

I think the module is well balanced and designed in a perfect way.The lecturer is perfect and knowledgeable .Blackboard is much enough to provide all the informations what a student needed to be perfect.Dividing course works is pretty good.

I personally think this module is compare with our previous cours is very easy to manage . I thinkin this module with the help of divi oke with this

we are very curious to start the model to learn the subject we are looking forward to learn more things about the module

Very good lectures and quite different subjects and i can learn new things



What do you think of the design of this module? Lectures, guest speakers, BBL, coursework 1 for early feedback, & 2=live case study Hillsborough C&G

Well structured, clearly laid out. Coursework is spread across the semester which keeps students engaged throughout the semester rather than leaving the majority of work until the end. Very interactive with live case studies and guest speakers.

It is something new and quite interesting for me as an international student.

The design of the module is great for reasons.First, it gives the students a feedback based on his or her first as it will give the student the opportunity more and improve.

It is designed in a way that balances practical and theory well. It brings together students, guest speakers, local history and involves constant work on the students behalf with two pieces of coursework due.

I personally think this module would be interesting with the guest speakers & live case study, which is an entirely new experience for me. The lectures plan to divide the course is great so that we would get timely feedbacks to improve our work

In my opinion live case study and di coursework in to two parts is the ed effective way to do our assessment helpful to make sure we are doing it

The module is very insightful and full of learnings. Looking forward to the Hillsborough trip.

I think that this module is excellent as it gives us chance to explore and learn from live cases like Hillsborough. Lecture from Fodhla should be interesting. Further we are able to listen and learn something from famous and pioneer Guest speakers.

we are very happy to start module as international student we look forward opportunities provided by the mod

What do you think of the design of this module? Lectures, guest speakers, BBL, coursework 1 for early feedback, & 2=live case study Hillsborough C&G

Yeah this module designed in a way that it is quite interesting because it has live case study which will be enhancing our exposure and practical work and also we can have an early feedback on it which will also us in gaining good grades in a total.

Lectures will help us to well understand the theory. With guest speakers we will be able to match that theory with real live cases. Once done and with the lecturer's feedback on CW1, we will definitely have a deep understanding of Leadership & change

This modules will give me a great me gain knowledge as well as a case study which has been organized great role in my resume. Guest speaker work is also very well organised.

great idea it will allow us to get the feedback so we can improve our assignment.

The leadership and change is a new subject to me. As it's new subject to I don't no much detail about the subject but I feel this subject will help me a lot because my future goal is to be a good leader and own a company

I found the way the module is designed revolutionizing, it allows student better understanding what this is a student to learn how this can feedback and live case study is

It's an excellent learning method. I am looking forward for this interesting module.

Well i think leadership module is very important part of business studies. Without this quality and learning of that module it is difficult to run an organization and be an icon for others. And this different activities will help us to grow and learn.

it is good way to allow students to improve weaknesses by dividing work into two sections

b. Feedback from UU colleagues about the new module design.

I. From Dean Holmes, International Student Experience and Support Co-Ordinator (30 Jan 2020)



Holmes, Dean
Thu 30/01/2020 11:12
McGrane, Fodhla



Hi Fodhla

This is a fantastic concept and would be of fantastic particularly for international student for three key reasons.

1. The international students are very future career focused and to see the ideas and concepts in a practical setting would be of massive benefit to their learning.
2. As the majority of the international students are not being taught in their own language, even though all are very proficient, need to differing forms of learning to gain a full understanding to compliment the course material and lectures and this approach will employ kinetic delivery which will enhance the experience.
3. Delivery of this kind opens up avenues for employability while they are here and this approach develops external networks and links standardised university lecturing staff cannot provide effectively and efficiently.

Hope this helps and please use whatever from this correspondence that will assist with your submission.

Dean



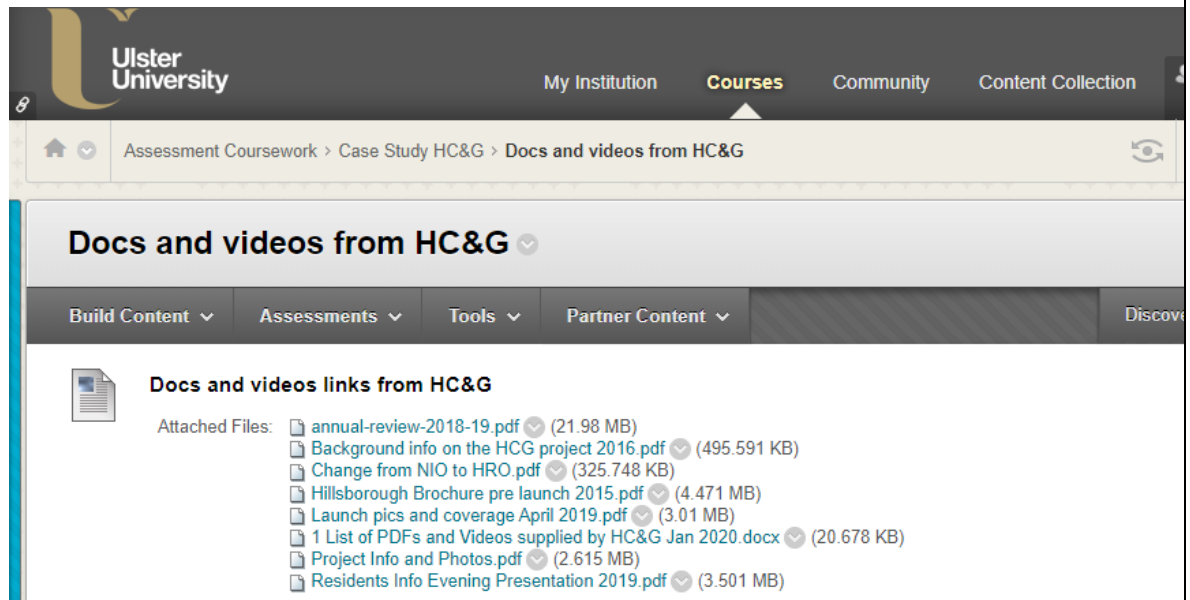
Dean Holmes
International Student Experience and Support Co-Ordinator
T: +44(0)28 9036 6539
E: d.holmes1@ulster.ac.uk W: www.ulster.ac.uk/global

II. From MBA Programme Director, Mark McCrory, Dept of MLM, UBS

"Live case studies bring real organisations and real issues into the classroom. What is special in what Fodhla is doing on BMG744 Leadership and Change is that she is taking the students to the organisation, which allows them to not just hear about but experience what is happening and brings a tangible reality to the case. Furthermore, she has negotiated access to an organisation that has not only gone through a significant change but in selecting Hillsborough Castle, an organisation which has a rich political and historic significance for our International Students in particular to visit".

2. Materials Used

- I. Screenshot below of information provided on the module folder on BBL for the students in week 1 to assist them with their case study and to help them prepare for the visit to Hillsborough Castle in week 3.



- ii Below: Students preparing for their live case study by reading Hillsborough Castle's new brochure (copy provided to each student in week 1, 29 Jan 2020)



- lii Photo of our first guest speaker, Olympian Stephen Martin MBE, who led change by increasing the GB sports inclusion in Olympic Games since 1998. At the time of this photo, he was leading change with charity, Sustrans. Photo taken in class week 1, 29 Jan 2020.



To conclude in the words of a student:

What have you learned about leadership and change?

Mentimeter

I learnt that there are loads of benefits in being an authentic leader too. So I am combining the two.

Changes are a constant within any organisation and to get all

Through different styles, I can adapt my style.

Life without a leader is like a postcard without an address, that means leadership and change is very very important in our lives and as well as every stem of life.

Leadership is like a compass. It guides us through change in our lives and every