



The Generationally Relevant Case Method: An Alternative Approach to Case-Based Undergraduate Level Management Instruction

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Abstract. Case studies require students to extend course content beyond theory into the realm of application. Despite popular use of case studies, recent criticisms bring to light their failure to sometimes engage students, spark excitement, incite deeper inquiry, and truly embrace the dubiety of management decisions due to their outdated nature. We propose the use of shorter cases utilizing popular press articles (i.e., real-time business issues) to stimulate more meaningful relevance and engagement, as such cases are relevant to not only the prevailing business environment but also the emerging topics that currently interest undergraduate students. A framework for integration is also provided.

Keywords: case method, case study, innovative teaching, management education

Developed as a learning technique by the Harvard Law School in the late 19th century, the case study analysis has emerged as a salient instructional technique in management education (Christensen & Hansen, 1987). Bridging the gap between theory and practice, case studies situate content in real-world scenarios that require students to consider the various ways in which course content can be applied to complex decision-making processes in organizational contexts. Although popular, case study analysis is not without its critics (e.g., Shugan, 2006). Particularly, the Harvard Case Method (HCM) has been criticized for its length, perceived lack of relevance, grading policies that favor outspoken students (as well as quantity rather than quality of responses), lack of preparedness from

students, cold-calling (i.e., forcing students to talk by choosing them), and lack of case recall by students (Desiraju & Gopinath, 2001).

We offer an extension to the traditional case method (henceforth referred to as HCM) that mitigates several of its weaknesses. It is important to understand the distinction between the cases (i.e., those found in a textbook or at Harvard Business Review) and the case method (i.e., Socratic methodology and class design). This paper presents our method for selecting and creating the *case* itself and a different approach to the case *method*. Collectively, we present this concept as the *generationally relevant case method* (GRCM). The GRCM is conceptualized as having two components: (1) a generationally relevant case and (2) an instructional case method based on class climate. This method differs from similar methods such as “real-time cases” (Theroux & Kilbane, 2004; Theroux, 2010) which are semester-long cases delivered weekly that cover events for a single company as those events unfold and “student-generated cases” (Ashamalla & Crocitto, 2001) which are cases selected and generated by students.

In the context of this paper, *generations* are students who enter classrooms at a similar time in history (i.e., chronological cohorts) (Joshi, Dencker, Franz, & Martocchio, 2010). Specifically, we focus on generational cohorts of undergraduate students in management courses—due to the idiosyncratic expectations and experiences of undergraduate students compared to graduate students regarding course content and effort. *Relevance* is the degree to which the individuals of interest perceive the topic as connected to their experiences, interests, and aspirations (Corso, Bundick, Quaglia & Haywood, 2013; Keller, 2010). Thus, *generational relevance* is the degree to which a given generation of students perceive content as related to their experiences, interests, and aspirations. Relevant content (a) reflects what a given generation of students want or believe they need to know and (b) is topical to the events currently occurring in the business world.

Perceived relevance is a significant motivational contributor to students’ classroom engagement (Ainley, 2012; Corso et al., 2013; Finney & Pyke, 2008; Macklem, 2014). When using cases related to dated events, instructors are in danger of diminishing students’ perceived relevance and value of the case and reducing behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement in class (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). More specifically, we suggest that generationally relevant cases require three primary criteria to increase student engagement and stimulate discussion: relevance (to students and the business environment), openness (i.e., no current solution), and brevity (i.e., 1-4 pages).

The GRCM also offers an approach to the case method that is conducive to the individual differences found across students (e.g., personalities, backgrounds). As an instructional strategy, generationally relevant cases are implemented using four phases: (1) instructor-led large group instruction, (2) individual examination of the case, (3) small group discussion of the case, and (4)

large group discussion about the case (i.e., HCM). The order of these phases may vary, as discussed in the implementation section.

The four phases indicate a departure from the traditional method in two distinct ways. First, students are exposed to the article *in class* rather than assigned the case as outside reading. Introducing students to the article for the first time in class reduces the opportunity to seek the opinions of others (e.g., Google or Wikipedia) and eliminates the possibility of ‘finding’ the correct answer online. It also reduces the number of students who come to class unprepared inducing higher participation rates. We will further discuss the implications of this unique phase in our implementation example.

Second, students discuss their opinion with a *small group during class*. Many instructors who use the HCM encourage students to meet outside of class to discuss the case. Unfortunately for some students, meeting outside of class can be a difficult task. Discussing the case with an organized, in-class group encourages all of the students to participate as they co-construct knowledge in real time. Furthermore, students with diverse learning preferences are able to take control of their learning and feel included in the co-construction of knowledge (Latham & Hill, 2014).

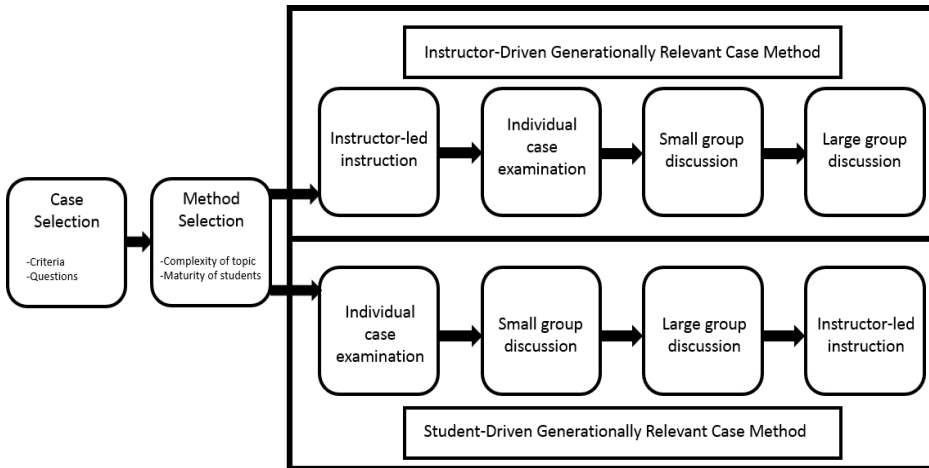
This manuscript contributes to the strategic management education literature by offering a case methodology that is future looking rather than reflective in nature and specific to the current business environment. The GRCM provides instructors an opportunity to understand the relevance of their case selection and the importance of the instructional methodology used to encourage all students to be active participants in the co-construction of knowledge. Furthermore, we answer the call to encourage an environment that enables integrative learning and moves away from “spoon feeding” students (Dehler & Welsh, 2014; Raelin, 2009). The remainder of the paper is as follows: We introduce the GRCM model, explain factors influencing the selection of the GRCM, and provide examples of the GRCM. We conclude by explaining the importance of grading policy and addressing common issues faced by instructors reluctant to implement the GRCM.

1. Generationally Relevant Case Method (GRCM)

Many instructors utilizing HCM are overly reliant on pre-written cases grounded in historical events—thereby decreasing the perceived relevance of course content. The use of cases from previous semesters, years, or decades can produce gaps between course content and the social and professional worlds in which a given generation of students live. The GRCM offers an alternative technique to the HCM predicated on the notion of generational relevancy. As described previously, the GRCM is a process that includes the selection of a generationally relevant case, the selection of an appropriate method, and the implementation of

the chosen method. The GRCM process is represented visually in Figure 1 below. In the section that follows, we describe the selection process for a generationally relevant case and how to generate case questions using the noun and verb framework.

Figure 1. The GRCM Process



1.1. Generationally Relevant Case Selection

One of the distinguishing factors of the GRCM is the *type* of cases used. When finding a generationally relevant case, an instructor must consider the characteristics of the case and the questions that should be asked concerning the case. In the following paragraphs, we discuss the nature of these criteria and how to choose an appropriate generationally relevant case.

Criteria of Case. The GRCM requires three primary criteria: relevance, openness, and brevity. First, the case should be generationally relevant. Specifically, in this paper, we are focusing on cohort-based generations of students. A cohort-based generation is defined as a group of individuals who “enter the same state, such as an organization or an educational system, at the same time” (Joshi, et al., 2010, p.396). Therefore, each new class who enters a course at the same time is a generational cohort of students. It is suggested that members of a given cohort develop similar characteristics (e.g., skill sets, knowledge, value systems, experiences, preferences, behaviors, cultural trends) and a shared identity attributed to the experiences (e.g., training, socialization) that occur during the timing of their entry into an organization (Joshi, et al., 2010; McCain, O’Reilly, & Pfeffer, 1983; Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin, 1999; Ryder,

1965). Therefore, each generation can be identified by their embeddedness in a classroom at a given time rather than their respective ages. In the context of the present paper, generational relevance is defined as the degree to which a topic, event, experience, or other phenomenon is perceived as significant to the wants, needs, interests, aspirations, and/or collective identity of a given generational cohort.

Second, generationally relevant cases are naturally open. Drawing on Harrington (1991) and Mascolini & Freeman (1982), a closed case is described as having a defined ending and providing students with the materials (e.g., articles, financial statements, legal briefs) required to formulate a *correct* solution to a given scenario (e.g. Harvard Business cases). Open cases, however, present a problematic situation with no set solution. Aligning with the Strategic Management notion of equifinality (Priem & Butler, 2001), the GRM employs open cases derived from recent and on-going management-related situations with no finite outcome; they, thereby, allow students to co-construct and debate possible, but not necessarily *correct*, solutions to complex issues. While there are benefits to closed cases, such as learning from the mistakes of others, management decisions are rarely made with certainty or with a definitive answer. Open-cases, therefore, better reflect the reality of managerial decision making, whereby there are better or worse paths to take, but the “correct” path is never revealed to the decision-maker. Moreover, as Shugan (2006) points out, using closed cases gives students a “false confidence” in their abilities and applied knowledge. Indeed, questions such as, “Should McDonald’s divest from Chipotle?” were difficult decisions in 2006 but would now seem clear to students—hindsight truly seems to be 20/20 in such cases. From a closed case perspective, we can learn from the mistakes of McDonald’s: how they evaluated their options and whether Chipotle’s success was a consequence of gaining autonomy from McDonald’s. It is unreasonable to suggest, however, that students would be able to objectively examine the case with only the facts presented—given the biases present in their knowledge of Chipotle as it *is* rather than as it *were*. We contend that open cases allow students to experience real-time decision-making under conditions of uncertainty. This is especially vital when the context of the case is relevant to the students—evoking a number of emotional attachments, knowledge, and a more realistic experience from the manager’s perspective.

Third, the generationally relevant case should be concise enough to be read and examined in class. With other class assignments, full-time employment, and family responsibilities, students either (a) do not take the time to read the class material before class, or (b) do not fully read for comprehension and/or misremember case facts. Traditionally, business cases average around 15-20 pages (Calkins, 2014; Westerfield, 1989). Rebeiz (2011) suggests, “The cases... are lengthy, highly complex and typically contain a plethora of financial and non-financial data, some of which may very well be irrelevant as it would be the case

in the real world” (p. 596). These demands seem reasonable for graduate students; however, to undergraduates they may seem like “busy work” disconnected from and irrelevant to their interests. Conversely, the GRCM calls for cases that are closer to the length of a popular press article (taking 10-15 minutes to read). It should be noted that this criteria is also viable using multimedia cases such as videos (e.g., Sheppard & Vibert, 2016).

Questions to Ask. In addition to the consideration of the case criteria, the instructor must also generate questions that will stimulate engagement and discussion. Borrowing from educational author, Mark Prensky (2010), learning outcomes in formal classroom settings can be divided into two categories: nouns and verbs. Verbs are the knowledge, skills, and abilities that instructors desire students to master from having been in their course (e.g., analyzing, debating, critiquing, synthesizing, writing, creating). Nouns are the subject matter, instructional methods, and materials through which students develop these skills and abilities. Situating Prensky’s insights within the example of our case, an instructor may want students to improve their ability to analyze an industry using Porter’s (1980) 5 Forces (verb). To do so, the instructor may design a case situated in the context of Uber and the modern taxi industry (noun). Prensky argues that while the verbs students master are slow to change over time, the nouns in which these verbs are contextualized in the classroom setting should be amended frequently to remain relevant to students.

In keeping with this analogy, instructors should select questions related to the specific course topic (verb) and the specific case selected (noun). From the previous example, questions/prompts can range from, “Use Porter’s Five Forces to analyze (verb) the ride-share industry (noun)” to “What should traditional Taxi companies (noun) do to stay competitive in this market (verb)?” Using this framework, instructors are able to generate questions on their own or adapt questions from other cases that share similar topics. Moreover, this framework allows repeated use of questions across semesters by simply changing the noun. Table 1 demonstrates the utility of the noun and verb framework when generating questions. As we will discuss in the additional issues section, repeated question formats mitigate the limitations of not having publisher-provided case notes by increasing instructor’s familiarity with the questions and subsequent discussion topics, issues, etc.

Table 1: Noun and Verb Framework Example

Subject	Verb	Noun
Strategic Management	How should _____ respond to strategic actions from _____?	Time Warner Cable, Comcast, Amazon Prime, Netflix
	What are the business-level strategies of _____?	Chipotle, Burger King, McDonalds, Wendy's
	Conduct a SWOT analysis on _____.	Uber, Lyft, Yellow Cab, Curb, Sidecar

1.2. Generationally Relevant Case Method Selection

The GRCM is conducted in four phases: (1) instructor-led instruction, (2) individual case examination, (3) small group discussion, and (4) large group discussion.

As our model illustrates (see Figure 1), the four phases remain constant, but the order in which the instructor provides direct instruction (e.g., lecture) differs depending on the chosen method. There are two schools of thought regarding the order in which cases should be executed—providing instruction prior to distributing the case or distributing the case prior to instruction (Rees & Porter, 2002). Both methods have advantages and disadvantages that influence engagement and learning. Our technique allows for the instructor’s discretion on whether to lecture before or after the use of a generationally relevant case.

As McIver, Fitzsimmons, and Flanagan (2015) point out, many instructors are not trained in instructional design, so the selection of the method might seem like a daunting task. To ease the process for instructors who may be less experienced in making such choices, we incorporate instructional scaffolding as a mechanism to simplify implementation of the GRCM throughout a given semester. Instructional scaffolding is a teaching strategy derived from Vygotsky’s (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development. Neely (2014) describes the Zone of Proximal Development as, “the distance between one’s ability to complete a task on her own (i.e., actual development) and her ability to complete a task with the assistance of a *more knowledgeable other* (i.e., potential development)” (p. 28). When scaffolding instruction, instructors transition from providing extensive guidance and direct instruction to greater levels of autonomy and independence as students develop knowledge, skills, and confidence with a given task or content area (Dabbagh, 2003; Young, 1993). Although there are many variables to consider, we believe the learnability of the topic and maturity of students are the most vital factors to consider. In the following sections, we will

discuss how the learnability of the topic and the maturity of students influence the effectiveness and efficiency of the GRCM.

Learnability of Topic. Topics and learning objectives vary in difficulty. McIver et al. (2015) borrow from the Knowledge-In-Practice literature to define learnability in education as, “The type and amount of study, accumulated comprehension, and expertise that is required to understand the information and know-how involved in learning objectives” (p. 7). In their conceptualization of learnability, McIver et al. (2015) explain that instructors should be cognizant of the ease in which a student can perform activities working toward the learning objectives. Specifically, assuming no prior knowledge of the content, how difficult is the activity and subsequent content mastery?

For example, concepts with low learnability (i.e., difficult to learn) should be taught first through direct large group instruction—prior to introduction of the case. Scaffolding instruction in this manner ensures that students possess foundational knowledge of the concept prior to attempting application of said concept to a case. For example, Porter’s (1980) 5 forces is a complex and important concept in Strategic Management. It would be less productive to have students attempt to conduct a 5 forces analysis without first explaining the nuances of this concept. Instead, Porter’s 5 forces might be discussed at the beginning of the class or in a prior class period. Subsequently, the case is introduced to explore students’ ability to apply the concept to real-world business situations.

It should be noted that learnability varies by generation. Specifically, each course has a different collection of students with different motivations, knowledge, skills, and abilities. Thus, the learnability of concepts should be determined by the instructor on a semester-by-semester basis. In the following section, we will describe how students’ maturity must also be considered when choosing which GRCM to implement.

Maturity of Students. Hersey, Blanchard, and Natemeyer’s (1979) situational leadership model provides a framework for understanding the decision of how to lead the classroom using this method. Specifically, their situational model looks at the maturity of followers and the leadership style necessary to maximize achievement with that group of followers. Hersey et al. (1979) argue that there are four types of follower maturity levels: (1) unable, unwilling, non-confident followers, (2) unable, willing, confident followers, (3) able, unwilling, non-confident followers, and (4) able, willing, and confident followers. Analogous to this as a management style, instructors should be aware of the maturity of their students as well as their general knowledge, skills, abilities, and confidence. If a class does not have the ability to comprehend and evaluate a topic without prior instructor-led discussion, then the instructor should follow the instructor-driven case method. However, if a class does have this ability, the instructor should focus

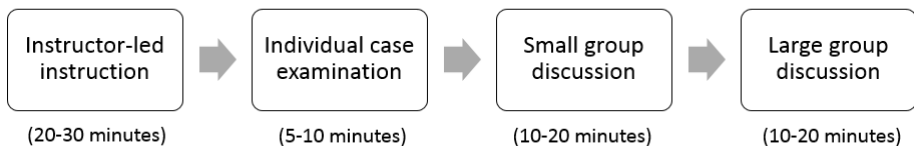
on the student-driven case method. Taken together, the learnability of a topic and student maturity should be considered concurrently when determining the implementation order of the GRCM. Both instructional methods have their advantages, and we encourage instructors to choose the method that works for their class, their comfort level, and the learning objectives they wish to achieve.

1.3. Generationally Relevant Case Method Implementation

After considering the learnability of the topic and the maturity of the students, the method that is most beneficial to the student is selected. To demonstrate both types of GRCM, we will provide an example of an instructor-driven case method on business-level strategies in a strategic management class and a student-driven case method on competitive dynamics using the same “cases.”

Instructor-Driven Case Method. As stated previously, the GRCM is implemented as a four phase process (see Figure 2). First, the instructor discusses the new management concept (e.g., 20-30 minutes). In this example, the instructor covers material about competitive dynamics—including the awareness-motivation-capability model, likelihood of attacks/responses, strategic actions versus tactics, and the red queen effect. In doing so, the instructor ensures that the students understand the content before administering the case.

Figure 2: Instructor-driven GRCM



Second, the instructor distributes the case to students via hard copies or electronic versions. This step in the GRCM differs from the HCM in that students are provided time in class to read and examine the cases. Through this step, instructors ensure that all students are provided with an opportunity to be prepared for the day’s discussion. This phase in the GRCM allows students to think about the content: aiding reading comprehension (i.e., written for popular press rather than academia), the ability to recall relevant facts, and ensuring that students have read the case. During this phase, students are given time to read and examine the case independently (e.g., ~10 minutes). For example, students may be presented with the following two competing articles: *CBS to Offer Its Own Streaming Service, Will Include Macgyver, Star Trek, and Twin Peaks*

(Weissmann, 2014) and *The Future of TV Is Here. And It's Decidedly Meh* (Yarow, 2014). These articles are accompanied by content-oriented questions/tasks such as: (1) What are the business-level strategies for Time Warner, Comcast, Netflix, and Amazon? (2) Describe how Netflix and Hulu create value through the value-chain and support functions. (3) How might their value-chain and support functions change if they implement a different business-level strategy? (4) Are any of the firms fighting for the future of TV in danger of being stuck in the middle? Individual students will formulate their own answers to the case-related questions and write them down for later discussion. The benefit of this phase is that students will have time to formulate their own opinion and thus be more likely to participate in the co-construction of knowledge during the small group phase.

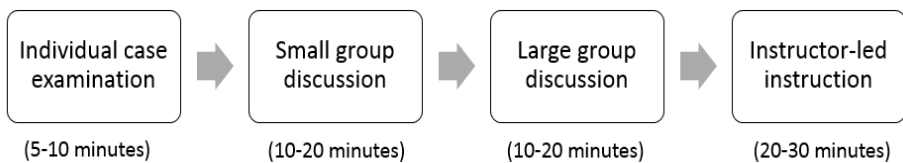
Third, students engage in a small group discussion (e.g., 10-20 minutes) concerning how the course content applies to the generationally relevant case. By going through and answering the list of instructor-generated questions with their group members, students can more effectively apply the course content. During this discussion, there is an opportunity for silent students to have their voices heard. When all students have the opportunity to voice their ideas, student engagement increases (Lyman, 1981). At this point, interactions with the smaller groups will serve as another opportunity for instructors to gain rapport with the students (by moving around the classroom during this time) and let silent students feel that their voice is valued. In this example, some group members might view a la carte programming as unsustainable over time while others may view these non-traditional delivery systems as the future of television. Group members compare their individual responses, devise collective responses to the questions, and record their answers to receive instructor feedback and share during the larger group discussion.

During this last phase, the case is discussed by the class at large to promote further co-construction of knowledge. After the groups have finished discussing and writing answers to the provided questions, the class discussion begins (e.g., 10-15 minutes). The large group discussion is more analogous to the HCM and should be Socratic in nature, allowing the instructor to transition from the role of content expert to that of discussion facilitator. In the example given, the instructor could open by asking an emerging set of questions related to the case such as, "How many of you have cable?" or "Why do/don't you have cable?" Furthermore, the instructor might interject relevancy cues by answering the same questions and adding personal anecdotes such as, "Back in my day, we only had three broadcasting channels"—to further demonstrate changing social and business landscapes across generations (i.e., both age and cohort-based). Again, in this phase, the instructor is an active participant in the co-construction of knowledge within a community of practice (i.e., classroom); thus, such relevancy cues and personal anecdotes are intended to promote on-going dialogue and active classroom engagement in the large group discussion. Class discussion

should always wrap up by reviewing what was discussed and how it applies to the target concept from the class material.

Student-Driven Generationally Relevant Case Method. Unlike the instructor-driven GRCM, the student-driven GRCM has a different order of operations (see Figure 3). Specifically, these methods differ concerning the timing of direct instruction. As stated previously, the student-driven GRCM begins with the case and ends with the lecture; whereas the instructor-driven GRCM begins with the lecture and is proceeded by the case.

Figure 3: Student-driven GCRM



First, the instructor passes out the case to the students with the questions attached for each individual student to read by himself or herself. Using the previous cable articles as an example, the student driven questions examine lines of inquiry that are less difficult. For example, the two articles pose two intriguing competitive dynamic questions: (1) Is a la carte television a credible threat? and (2) What types of competitive actions should each of the groups (i.e., traditional cable providers and streaming services) implement to maintain a competitive advantage in the shifting landscape? These two prompts serve as the dilemma questions analogous to that of the HCM. Additionally, using the noun-verb concept, other questions from the competitive dynamics chapter are asked such as (a) Who are Netflix's competitors? (b) How would you describe their rivalry? (c) What are some recent competitive behaviors taken by CBS and their rival? (d) Is Amazon Prime a first mover, second mover, or late mover? How might this influence the likelihood and type of attack by rival firms? Students record their answers to the above questions for later discussion.

Second, small groups of students discuss the case and how course content applies to it. Students can effectively co-construct content knowledge at this phase. In this discussion, the small groups can provide potential answers to the questions listed above while the instructor walks around the classroom to listen to discussions. Again, these discussions provide an outlet for even the most shy and introverted students to speak up and share their insights. The small groups are a significant part of this method, specifically in the student-driven case method. Because the students are relatively self-sufficient and knowledgeable regarding the content, these small groups are the formulation of their collective knowledge, skills, and abilities. This discussion could take many directions, and students are

free to reflect on various aspects of competition and the companies in the competitive landscape. Again, groups should write down their answers to the questions, so the instructor can collect them for feedback.

Third, the class discusses the case and how it applies to the course content. Because the case was delivered before the lecture, many students will have strong opinions about the topic at hand. It is the instructor's duty to facilitate the discussion in a way that will culminate in conversations that stimulate points of contention (i.e., playing devil's advocate)—while maintaining respect for all opinions.

Lastly, the instructor provides direct instruction. In this example, the instructor would cover competitive dynamics with more nuance—using the case as the ongoing example. For example, students are more engaged with a lecture on how market dependence influences the likelihood of response to a competitive action when they have invested thought into the organizations. Through this exercise, students have the benefit of grappling with the material on their own first to determine what they think. Then, the instructor provides valuable insight regarding the application of the content to the case.

Having addressed case selection and implementation of the GRCM, we will now discuss other considerations concerning this pedagogical method (i.e., grading and instructional preferences).

2. Additional Issues

2.1. Grading Policy

One of the antecedents to the successful implementation of the GRCM is the proper use of motivation. At a basic level, there are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Ryan and Deci (2000) explain, "The term extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome and, thus, contrasts with intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself" (p. 71). Deci (1976) suggests that external rewards can undermine intrinsic motivation, such that the existence of rewards changes the primary motivation for engaging in certain activities. With this in mind, the most common motivational method in academia is extrinsically regulated in the form of grading criteria. For example, Harvard Business School, known as the premier educator using the HCM, often allocates *half* of the students' final grades to case participation (C. Roland Christensen Center for Teaching and Learning, 2015). The traditional grading method—with case participation as a significant part of the grade—disproportionately benefits outspoken students while hurting silent students (Manikar, 2008). Moreover, heavy reliance on pre-class case write-ups may

potentially transition cases from a low-stakes (i.e. intrinsic motivation) to a high-stakes (i.e. extrinsic motivation) activity; which can raise stress, incentivize cheating (i.e. searching the internet for answers), promote compliance, lower satisfaction, and create a hostile learning environment centered around what could be seen as *busy work* for the students. Because of the extensive time and effort, many undergraduate management students perceive traditional cases as overwhelming and unnecessary (Rebeiz, 2011).

HCM was designed to create a classroom dynamic in which students participate in a robust discussion about the topic. As Rebeiz points out, “Specifically, the CSM [case study method] encourages group interaction inside and outside the classroom, while negating the students’ option of ‘hiding in the crowd’ inside the classroom” (p. 592). This assumption has important justice and motivational implications. First, behaving in order to achieve a grade shifts the motivation to participate from internal drivers to external rewards (i.e., grades). This causes forced answers that are safe and add little value (i.e., details from the article). Moreover, it causes further anxiety for students who would otherwise prefer not to participate in large group discussion (Desiraju & Gopinath, 2001).

Another implication is that participation is sequential rather than concurrent and constrained by content and time. In other words, in a given case there is a limited amount of input and a limited amount of time—causing a forced grade distribution. Students might feel as though *overbearing* students are disproportionately rewarded for having a personality predisposed to active participation. Students who do not participate, or find it personally difficult (i.e., exerting tremendous emotional effort), might feel as though they understand the material and flow of the conversation as much, if not more than their assertive classmates. It is at this moment that the HCM potentially fails a large portion of the students for not having traits or personalities that are rewarded in this environment.

The interesting dynamic presented suggests that there is an opportunity for an alternative approach to grading. While other scholars have proposed unique and valid grading policies based on traditional case analyses (e.g., Gopinath, 2004); in the proposed GRCM, the mechanism used for participation is coupled with attendance. That is, if students attend, the majority of their participation grade is derived from their reading and discussing the current case amongst their peers. A benefit of this approach is silent students gain procedural and distributive justice—otherwise not present in an outspoken dominant classroom dynamic. Furthermore, outspoken students still have an opportunity to engage in robust discourse with the instructor during the classroom discussion. Therefore, we suggest a participation policy that rewards attendance—as this case method promotes participation by virtue of being in the classroom.

2.2. Instructional Preferences

Some instructors might find this method intimidating, due to a lack of closure and uncertainty. Indeed, this method is somewhat ambiguous in the direction of discussion. One of the benefits of using established cases, from resources such as Harvard Business Review, is the provision of extensive case notes. Instructors looking to implement the GRCM might be unfamiliar with developing discussion questions, points of contention, and nuance within a given article; however, textbooks typically include resources that can be applied to GRCM. The instructor's job is made easier by such resources—as questions are developed that capture the learning objectives corresponding to a given chapter. Instructors simply need to find a generationally relevant article that can apply the stated objectives.

With the availability of quality business outlets (e.g., Business Insiders, Fortune Magazine, Time, Economist, etc.), there are a plethora of generationally relevant cases. Many instructors subscribe to popular press in their expert fields, and searching for relevant keywords is efficient due to advances in search technology (e.g., Google). These articles are typically shorter (e.g., 1-4 pages), offer an opinion, and often have firm and industry-specific details. Additionally, as students develop content mastery and familiarity with the GRMC, they may propose articles themselves to be used in the classroom.

Instructors should be able to draw on their content expertise to facilitate discussions in the context of the current event topic. Therefore, the lack of instructor notes should not pose a major hindrance. Because generationally relevant cases are open, in that they have no solution at the time of the case, the instructor's task is to stimulate thought and discussion without steering toward a predetermined solution. This can be advantageous, as the instructor is co-constructing knowledge with the students in real-time rather than guiding students to a predetermined outcome.

Taken together, the brevity and availability of potential cases allow for minimal prep time. Furthermore, the instructors can use the same core chapter tasks each semester (e.g., analyze the 5 forces of XYZ company) and simply adjust the generationally relevant case questions to fit a specific article (e.g., Would you purchase an Apple Watch?). In Table 1, we described how framing the GRCM in terms of nouns and verbs can help mitigate the preparation time for instructors.

2.3. GRCM as a Supplement to HCM

Some instructors and institutions have had a great deal of success with the implementation of the HCM using traditional historical cases (Peterson & Govindarajulu, 2003). We do not deny the merits of the traditional method, as it

has been well documented as a productive means of education (Christensen & Carlile, 2009). Rather, our intent is to extend the options available to instructors that see the potential of the case method but feel as though their students are not engaged in or prepared for more extensive case discussions. Moreover, in our experience, the GRCM can be used in *conjunction* with the HCM.

For example, Harvard Business Review has an excellent case by Yoffie and Kim (2010) titled *Apple Inc. in 2010* which explores the successes of Apple under Steve Jobs. An updated case titled *Apple Inc. in 2015* (Yoffie & Baldwin, 2015) was later published examining the rise of Tim Cook and the challenges facing Apple in 2015. Both of these cases give great insight into Apple; which remains one of the most valuable companies in the world. In conjunction with these cases, an instructor might use articles from Business Insiders titled *Apple Bullish on New iPhone Following Drop in Watch Sales* (Smith, 2015) and *Apple is Trying to Recreate a Vast, Legal Conspiracy to Make You Pay for Music—and It's Going to Work* (Edwards, 2015) to offer updated insights into the current strategies being deployed by Apple. Utilizing the GRCM, students can draw from the knowledge obtained by the Harvard Business Review cases to inform them on the strategic intent of Apple's current strategies. Moreover, students will be able to see how firms evolve over time and the changing nature of the competitive landscape.

3. Conclusion

We have proposed the *GRCM* process as an innovative case method that capitalizes on the instructional benefits of the HCM, while also circumventing some of the criticisms of the traditional method. Specifically, the GRCM selects cases from current popular press publications and follows a four phase implementation procedure that caters to students with diverse learning preferences and personalities not conducive to the HCM (e.g., introverted). This innovative teaching process deviates from the HCM in the case selection and the instructional methodology. This article encourages instructors to be cognizant of the generational relevancy of their selected cases, to be aware of the different learning styles of the students, and to take into account the difficulty of the topic and the maturity of students when deciding how to implement the GRCM (which is likely to change throughout even single semesters). We contribute to the body of literature by offering a new approach to the case method that is inclusive, relevant, and encourages students to become active participants in their education. Furthermore, we offer a new way to enable integrative learning—crucial to the advancement of developing students as “knowers” (Dehler & Welsh, 2014) and, one day, practitioners in an ever changing, uncertain landscape.

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