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Piloting a Portfolio of Experiential Learning Activities for International Business Students

Justin Okoli, Nuno Arroteia & Oliver Barish

1. Introduction

Business Schools continue to face growing pressures to move away from the traditional pen and paper teaching style and adopt more innovative and hands-on pedagogic approaches that effectively connect theory with practice (Blicker, 2005; Brodie & Irving, 2007; Klein & Riordan, 2011; Rossatto & Dickerson, 2019; Treleaven & Voola, 2008). Experiential learning (EL) has received increased attention by business educators (Blicker, 2005; Brodie & Irving, 2007; Kolb, 1984; Rossatto & Dickerson, 2019) as it allows students to be equipped with a specific, employer relevant skillset and, most importantly, provides a more engaging experience for students. EL has thus been extensively adopted to enhance students' motivation, to increase their concentration levels and maintain their general academic interests (Luthans & Doh, 2012; Phatak et al., 2005; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002) while also augmenting the skills that are in high demand by employers (Paul & Mukhopadhyay, 2005; Yu et al., 2005).

As part of a faculty-wide initiative to move away from the traditional lecture and seminar format, the School of Strategy and Leadership (Coventry University) started a pilot project on a 1st year module named 'Introduction to the International Business Environment' (part of the BA degree in International Business Management) during the 1st semester of the academic year 2018/19. The plan entailed the introduction of a 2-hour workshop aimed at piloting a portfolio of EL pedagogical approaches across the 11-week duration of the module, thus complementing the traditional lecture-seminar format. The task of implementing the project was shouldered by the authors of this paper who made up the module teaching team.

Despite an extensive body of literature in support of adopting EL in international business (IB) teaching, the processes associated with integrating such approaches in the curricula are not sufficiently disseminated by scholars (Chavan, 2011; Sternad, 2015). While numerous studies have identified the need for new and innovative methods centred on EL (Paul & Mukhopadhyay, 2005; Ramburuth & Daniel, 2011; Yu et al., 2005), only a few have proposed practical guidance on how to implement them. Notwithstanding the advantages of EL, implementing such approaches can put higher demands in terms of time and effort on teaching staff (as well as for students) which may limit their interest in changing the course design (Aggarwal

& Goodell, 2014). Finding the right pedagogic approaches is undoubtedly a daunting task that could add multiple hours to a faculty member's workload (Biggs, 2014).

This research addresses this gap by suggesting a structured way of integrating a portfolio of EL pedagogical approaches in a classroom environment that enables students to enhance their cognitive, cultural and behavioral skills that are in high demand by global firms (Ashley et al, 2016; Milhauser & Rahschulte, 2010). This paper therefore contributes to the literature in its quest to integrate EL pedagogic approaches into HE, and particularly into teaching IB. In order to gauge the level of impact this initiative had on students' performance and engagement, we analyze students' feedback and grades obtained on the module prior to implementing the workshop EL activities (academic year 2017/18) and after the EL activities were developed and rolled out (academic year 2018/19).

The paper starts with a review of the extant literature to contextualize the current challenges of teaching in HE and particularly IB. Next, it addresses different pedagogic approaches currently used to embed EL into teaching by educators. This is followed by presenting the overall design procedure for the project. Subsequently, the paper presents the qualitative and quantitative feedback provided by students who participated in the workshops as well as an evaluation of their grades (as an objective measure of their performance). The paper concludes with a discussion on the learning points taken from the lecturers, who were actively involved in the delivery of the project, alongside further recommendations for other practitioners teaching IB.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Challenges of teaching International Business in Higher Education

The higher levels of complexity in the global business environment stem from the necessity to quickly react and adapt to the dynamic changes across different political, economic, and sociocultural environments (Sternad, 2015). Hence to function capably, IB students as future managers must develop cognitive skills to aid their problem solving and decision-making abilities in real world (Ashley et al, 2016; Dau, 2016). Cultural and behavioral skills are equally relevant to successfully work across national boundaries (Johnson et al., 2006; Milhauser & Rahschulte, 2010). Preparing students for their role as international business professionals is therefore becoming an increasingly difficult and complex task for practitioners in HE, since teaching IB requires not only subject-specific knowledge, but a combination of general, specific, abstract, and concrete

knowledge (Ashley et al, 2016; Mayer, 1992). It is paramount to not only provide students with subject-specific knowledge, but educators must equally strive to adopt a wider perspective in relation to human, moral, environmental, and social factors which are often encountered in real-life when managing international businesses (Beetham & Sharpe 2013; Koris et al., 2017).

2.2. The significance of Experiential Learning in International Business Education

Traditionally, IB education is focused on raising awareness about the various functional aspects of running a business with operations in more than one country, and thus deals mostly with subject-specific knowledge (e.g. marketing, or finance) (Ashley et al, 2016; Dau, 2016; Rauch & Hulsink, 2015). The growing level of interest in EL that has been observed in recent years is pushing the boundaries of IB education away from the use of passive learning approaches to teaching that do not encourage active processing of information (Béchard & Gregoire, 2005; Mughal & Zafar, 2011 Paul & Mukhopadhyay, 2005; Shakarian, 1995). Thus, HE institutions are increasingly adopting active learning approaches using a wide range of learning theories: behaviorism, cognitive, constructivist, or socio-cultural (Conole et al., 2004). Following this line of thought, numerous learning models have been proposed, such as the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984, 2014), the model of reflection and learning (Jarvis, 1987) and the conversational framework (Laurillard, 2002). Each of these models has a specific focus and strength that can be used to encourage explicit aspects of learning. One model which embraces a wide range of learning theories and is being extensively utilized in most business schools is experiential learning (EL) (Arroteia et al., 2018; Conole et al., 2004; Krivogorsky & Ballam, 2019; Rodgers et al., 2016).

According to Kolb (1984), EL is adjudged to have taken place when learners go through a cycle of dialectical modes of experiencing (the learner actively experiments with a concept), reflecting (the learner consciously reflects on that experience), thinking (the learner attempts to generalize a model of what is experienced), and acting (the learner applies the model to a new experiment) (Konak et al., 2014; Rauch & Hulsink, 2015). Through EL students are engaged socially with elements of the business context, thus moving them away from text-driven activities toward an action-driven learning mode − this way, students become constructive agents who accrue meaning from direct experiences (Morris et al., 2013; Mughal & Zafar, 2011). Research also shows that EL increases students' understanding of a subject area, improves critical thinking, creativity, analytical and problem-solving skills (Houser & Frymier, 2009; You, 2016), and enhances social competences

through which students demonstrate the willingness to collaborate and communicate with peers (Shellman & Ewert, 2010; Musteen et al., 2018). Furthermore, EL has been shown to enhance students' engagement in the classroom and by doing so improving their grades (Finn & Zimmer, 2012; Kirk et al., 2016) and satisfaction on a module (Lala & Priluck, 2011).

2.3. Embedding Experiential learning into International Business Education

One vital aspect of adopting EL into an educational context is the 'how' element, which is related to the operationalization of theory into practice. This paper adopts the concept of pedagogical practices, which are learning activities that support the unit of content to be delivered to students (Blicker, 2005; Brodie & Irving, 2007; Rossatto & Dickerson, 2019). Pedagogical practices can be categorized into two groups: semi-structured classroom activities and loosely structured experiential activities (Hamer, 2000; Schindehutte & Morris, 2016). Semi-structured classroom activities are usually shorter, more focused, and require students to use their knowledge to analyse a real-world situation (something that was adopted in this research); whereas loosely structured activities offer a broader scope and longer completion time, as students are required to analyse a problem in much more depth (Alon & Herath, 2014).

A varied range of pedagogical practices has been proposed in the literature to promote EL, such as problem-based learning, business simulations, role plays, challenge-feedback learning and action learning, among others (Aggarwal & Goodell, 2014; Ramburuth & Daniel, 2011). *Problem-based learning* empowers learners to conduct research, integrate theory and practice, and apply knowledge and skills to develop a viable solution to a defined problem (Kirkwood et al., 2014). *Simulations*, such *as computer-based or board games* are useful in enhancing students' decision-making experience. Focused on trial and error learning they allow students to apply theories and exposes them to the need to plan ahead (Coleman et al., 2012; Faria & Wellington, 2004). Wolfe (1997) summarized the value of simulations as experiential whereby learners are put in realistic, yet psychologically safe learning environments where they can experiment, with immediate, constructive feedback. According to Bandura (1977), human beings acquire new patterns of behavior by observing and imitating other individuals or symbolic characters represented in a given context through a game or a *role-play*, that subsequently allows students to relate theories to a given situation (Cano et al., 2019). Sternad (2015) proposed the *challenge-feedback learning* method which combines pedagogic approaches with feedback and reflection techniques, thus developing the cognitive structures of the individual through information

processing, recombination and problem-solving. Hamer (2000) advocates the use of multiple EL pedagogical approaches, arguing that they provide far more additional benefits. Paul & Mukhopadhyay (2005) stress that EL must be "part of the pedagogy and not a substitute for course content" (p. 20) and that course content should be structured so that basic knowledge and skills are supplemented by EL (Alon & Herath, 2014). Considering that business environments are intensely social and subject to conflict of ideas, opinions and solutions, it is expected that knowledge is also developed in the same way, meaning that students should be able to learn from social contexts that replicate real business cases, thus preparing them to respond to challenges in their future professional roles. In this regard, *collaborative learning* (Souitaris et al., 2007) requires students to work together in small groups to analyze, critique, solve study problems and actively participate in the classroom, thus developing social skills that will be useful in solving difficult challenges and managing conflict at the workplace.

3. Module design

The objective of this research is to implement and measure the outcomes of a pilot project related to integrating a portfolio of experiential learning pedagogical approaches in an introductory international business undergraduate module comprising of about 150 students. The research was initiated with a literature review of the relevant skills required for graduates in IB, which subsequently informed the choice of pedagogic approaches to be employed. The decision to adopt EL as our preferred model of learning was inspired by previous studies (Arroteia et al., 2018; Conole et al., 2004; Krivogorsky & Ballam, 2019; Rodgers et al., 2016). Simultaneously, to better understand the skills gap of the students as perceived by their future employers, a consultation process began with colleagues across the School, who liaise regularly with industry stakeholders including those tasked with providing work placement support to students, as well as relevant external accreditation bodies. The rationale for the design of the module and specifically which EL pedagogical approaches to be piloted was influenced by a wide range of factors. From the outset, it was clear that the workshop sessions would utilize a range of pedagogic tools that reflect various individual learning styles of the students. We adopted the VARK model (Visual, Aural, Read-Write and Kinaesthetic) which is often seen as a useful starting point in understanding what learning entails in different contexts (Drago & Wagner, 2004; Lujan & DiCarlo, 2006; Marcy, 2001). VARK enhances the discovery of a variety of teaching and learning strategies as tutors continue to reflect on ways to accommodate different groups of learners. The underpinning

philosophy is that learning must meet the cognitive demands of a learner and match their learning preferences to be effective. Since it was not feasible to assess the individual learning preferences of the one hundred and fifty students enrolled on the module, it became important to ensure that each workshop session cuts across at least one of the four (VARK) learning styles. The choice of which EL pedagogical approach to be piloted was also influenced by time and budgetary constraints wherein low cost and user-friendly activities were prioritized. Our preferred choices were also derived from approaches that had been tested with large cohorts of undergraduate students from distinct cultural, social and economic backgrounds (Arroteia et al., 2018; Biswas-Diener & Patterson, 2013; Breckwoldt et al., 2014; Musteen et al., 2018). (See Table 1).

<Insert Table 1 here>

The format of delivery of the project followed a process whereby the lectures and the seminars preceded workshops (constructive alignment); and a conscious effort was made to link the lecture and seminar theoretical topics with corresponding workshops to facilitate effective knowledge transition from theory to practice (Biggs, 2014; Treleaven & Voola, 2008; Walsh, 2007). This way, students were able to systematically map the learning outcomes intended for each workshop session to the bigger picture, subsequently resulting in enhanced extrinsic motivation once this link was established. Clarification pauses were also incorporated into the workshop sessions (Felder & Brent, 2003; Gilmore & Anderson, 2011) whereby students had time to think about their immediate experience, look at the results, review their decisions and ask wider questions, thus encouraging the development of their reflective skills in the form of self-monitoring and self-evaluation (Ericsson, 2006; Fenwick, 2001). Although students were not assessed based on their participation in the workshops, space was created to provide formative feedback about their performance, acknowledging that this was also a trigger to engage students in reflective thinking (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Sternad, 2015).

4. Evaluating the results

4.1. Analysis of the student's satisfaction survey

To assess the impact the project had on student performance and on their level of engagement, we evaluated the quantitative and qualitative feedback provided by students through the conventional satisfaction survey (internally designated as module evaluation questionnaire or MEQ). The MEQ includes 20 question items that relate to the organisation of the module, assessments, teaching staff, as well as broader questions in relation

to the quality of feedback provided by staff on submitted assessments, guidance, and overall support provided on the module (see Appendix 1 for the full list of MEQ questions). On the quantitative end, students attribute a score to the different items choosing from a 5-point Likert-scale (5 = definitely agree; 4 = mostly agree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 2 = mostly disagree; 1 = definitely disagree). To achieve greater comparability of the lower and higher scores we removed the middle point of the Likert-scale (scale 3) which contained neutral responses. Table 2 shows the highest-ranked scores (scales 4 and 5) and the lowest-ranked scores (scales 1 and 2). The percentages shown in the tables were calculated for each statement dividing the number of occurrences for each item being considered by the total number of occurrences for all items (with the exception of item 3). In this paper, we only present the results of statements which we considered to align significantly with our overarching aim - measuring the impact of the EL pedagogic tasks that were implemented. The results highlighted in bold concerning the variation of the scores added for scales 4 and 5 (see Table 2) show that students' satisfaction increased between the academic year 2017/18 and 2018/19 (respectively before and after the new approach was implemented). The student's feedback further suggests that the pedagogic approaches supported the acquisition of knowledge and enabled students to explore ideas in greater depth, developed their critical thinking and created opportunities to apply theory to practice (House & Frymier, 2009; Johnson and Jordan, 2019; You, 2016). This is highlighted by an increase in the highest scores with a reduction in the lowest scores with regard to statements 1 to 5. Furthermore, students seemed to appreciate the communication (Musteen et al., 2018; Shellman & Ewert, 2010) and socialization processes that ensued from the afore mentioned activities (Johnson et al., 2006; Milhauser & Rahschulte, 2010), evidenced by the increase in the highest scores and decrease in the lowest scores with regard to statements 17 and 18. Statements 6 and 7 had divided opinions, which can be related to the survey having been conducted before either coursework or exams took place, and students were yet to see in practical terms how to apply the knowledge acquired into new situations beyond classroom activities. Findings also reveal that the variation of the scores added for scales 1 and 2 weakened between both years suggesting a drop in the less satisfied students comparing both years.

<Insert Table 2 here>

On the qualitative end, students were able to identify up to three things they perceived were good about the module, and what changes to the module or its delivery would improve their learning. The analysis of the

qualitative feedback suggests that the design and delivery of the module has improved their overall learning experience:

Student A: "Interesting content"

Student B: "Good at stimulating my mind"

Student C: "The curriculum is well-designed and contains a lot of interesting topics"

Student D: "the module changes our view in a positive way"

Student E: "value the range of different learning approaches used"

Student F: "You get to learn more about yourself and others... It keeps you updated about the business sectors"

Student G: "The module is the most interesting out of all... the module encourages discussions"

Specifically, the workshops were highlighted as contributing to their overall learning experience:

Student H: "The workshops are taught in a very innovative and challenging way"

Student I: "lectures are very good and informative, and I find myself learning new things... application of theory in the workshops"

Students J: "The workshops… are always really interesting and really help me understand and apply what we've learnt"

Student K: "The workshops are really interesting... we learn things that we can apply in the business world"

Student L: "Positive aspects are the learning experience and the interactive workshops"

Student M: "The knowledge applicable to my career... I am learning new theories... I am able to apply what we have learned in the lecture during my workshop or seminar practically

Student N: "teaching principles are in-depth, and workshops allow for a good base to apply learning"

The following section describes the impact in terms of students' grades at the end of the semester.

4.2. Analysis of students' final grades on the module

The assessment for the module was split into two separate components: group coursework (50%) and examination (50%), both making up the final module mark. The choice of having two assessments in the module was advised as best practice at University level, providing students with a variety of assessment methods. It was also important to include group coursework and presentations as part of the assessment

because the university is gradually substituting traditional assessment methods such as exams with more innovative and interactive assessment types as employed on the module. For the coursework, students worked in groups of five to choose a company and non-EU country in which to internationalize its operations. The overarching question was to screen the selected market and demonstrate its fitness for their chosen company using a wide range of scholarly and statistical evidence. Within the coursework, each group was required to produce a written report, a group presentation and an individual reflective written piece. The group assessment was due at the end of week 9, while the exam took place at the end of the semester in week 12. Table 3 compares the results for both academic years in perspective, highlighting a slight decrease in coursework grades (one reason for this slight difference could be attributed to the change in weightings ascribed to the course work components between both years).

<Insert Table 3 here>

As shown in Table 3, the mean difference between students' final grades across both cohorts (2017/18 and 2018/19) was 2.9, with the mean score for the 2017/18 cohort (m= 56.47) appearing higher than the 2018/19 cohort (m= 53.57). In order to determine if the difference in the grade scores for both cohorts was statistically significant, we ran a paired sample t-test as summarized in Table 4. Our intention was to measure how much impact the experiential learning activities ultimately had on students' performance when compared to the previous year where the workshop sessions were yet to be implemented.

<Insert Table 4 here>

We do not speculate a definite improvement in grade scores following the implementation of the workshop, hence a 2-tailed test seemed more appropriate in this regard. Findings from the t-test [t (92) = -1.403, p= 0.164] suggest that the grade differences between both cohorts are not statistically significant even though students performed slightly better in the 2017/18 cohort (Table 5).

<Insert Table 5 here>

4.3. Discussion

This paper presents a way of integrating a portfolio of EL pedagogical approaches in a classroom environment that enables students to acquire and further develop their cognitive, cultural and behavioral skills, that are in high demand globally (Ashley et al, 2016; Milhauser & Rahschulte, 2010). As noted initially, the main novelty of this research is that it reports on the process implemented by the team of lecturers as well as the reflections

upon it, allowing us to share our experience with other colleagues who may wish to adopt a similar approach in the future. While the final grades for the summative assessments seem to have dropped slightly below our expectations, the t-test results showed that the grade differences when compared to the previous year were not statistically significant. We found this outcome somewhat logical given that students faced a relatively heavier cognitive task compared to the previous year, in addition to the fact that more students were assessed in cohort 2 (n= 138) than cohort 1(n= 93). However, going past the numbers and taking a closer look at the qualitative aspects of the feedback, the positive disposition of the qualitative feedback makes it illogical to assume that the slight drop in students' grades reflected their perceived value of the workshops. We advocate that grades may have to be analyzed across a longer period of time (say 4-5 years) to mitigate the risk of producing misleading results. It is worth mentioning that the authors witnessed a stable classroom attendance (lectures, seminars and workshops) throughout the semester, although we had no means to compare the attendance between both academic years and thus have not reported this indicator in the paper. Additionally, the authors observed a very positive class atmosphere and improved levels of motivation and willingness to engage in the workshops. There were also indications that students related frequently to the activities in the workshops when asked to provide their opinion or discuss a theoretical concept that underpinned the experiential learning task. It is therefore no surprise that students consistently made references to the workshop activities in the qualitative MEQ comments (as shown above), thus providing further evidence that those activities effectively aided their understanding of both the theoretical concepts and their practical application.

5. Conclusions and future direction

This paper presented a range of experiential learning activities designed for IB students across an 11-week duration as part of the faculty's effort to embrace more innovative teaching in the business school. Examining some specific MEQ items that more directly measured students' perception of the workshops alongside the qualitative comments from students' feedback, we found the entire project and its contribution to students' satisfaction highly successful. In terms of the impact of the EL activities on student performance, however, we suggest the need to apply some caution. Whilst a slight decrease in overall grades between the two immediate academic years (pre and post-implementation) was observed, albeit with no statistical significance, we argue that this outcome could easily be attributed to a number of other factors beyond the classroom, such as differences in talent and/or level of intrinsic motivation, including a considerably high variation in the

number of students that were assessed across both cohorts. Overall, the results of this research suggest that students benefited from the practicalities of the experiential learning activities and have enhanced their cognitive, behavioral and cultural competencies (Conole et al., 2014), as well as satisfaction (Lala & Priluck, 2011). Although the impact of the workshop sessions on students' grades was not as we had initially expected, it would be misleading to have judged the effectiveness of the entire workshop sessions solely on grades as other factors could have possibly accounted for the grade differences. The main limitation of this research therefore is that it draws on the results of the implemented project in just a single module, spanning a limited time frame of two academic years. Further research should investigate the results from different modules in which a similar approach is adopted, as well as comparing data sets beyond two consecutive academic years. In addition to analyzing the MEQ, future research could utilize additional indicators to measure performance, such as National Student Survey, student attendance records, and how much the cognitive skills gained in the workshops facilitated their employability skills. A deductive approach to learning was adopted in our case wherein lectures preceded the workshop sessions, but going forward we recommend adopting an inductive approach to the delivery process whereby the workshops are delivered before lectures and seminars. This way, students would have generated the need for facts beforehand prior to being presented with theoretical information.

As with every project, we also faced some implementation challenges - foremost of which is the difficulty in finding appropriate rooms with the desired layout to fit the various workshop designs for the number of students enrolled on the module. Potential users must first check and ensure there is access to open spaced lecture rooms for the delivery of the role playing and kinesthetic focused games (e.g. weeks 1, 2 & 5), as well as access to computer equipped rooms for the delivery of the software simulation-based games (e.g. weeks 6 & 7). A lack or shortage of appropriate fit-for-purpose learning rooms will undoubtedly create implementation bottlenecks and ultimately affect overall satisfaction.

In sum, the pedagogic insights presented in this paper is intended to stimulate further innovative ideas to experiential learning for educators faced with similar prospects, and not to be perceived as the ultimate approach to learning. Based on evidence from our MEQ data in addition to personal observations, we have reasons to believe that the students who participated in the workshops had much-improved experience. We, therefore, offer our portfolio of activities as a starting point for future use.

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Table 1 – Overview of the workshops in the module

Week	Lecture and Seminar	Workshop	Desirable learning outcome (Conole et al., 2014)	Learning style (VARK model)	Type of experiential activity	Purpose	Pedagogic materials and further guidance	Reflective questions
1	Introduction to the global business environment	The World on a String	Cognitive	Kinesthetic	Role-play	Appropriate for sessions that relate to global trading, including the pull and push factors that influence the exchange of goods and services between countries. This workshop is more ideal after students have been exposed to the theories and principles of world trade, and where they have been introduced to the major trading blocs and understand who the key players are.	http://www.iupui.edu/~geni/documents/WorldOnString.pdf	What does the world on a string game tell students about world trade? How would each country effectively trade with their respective partners considering the uniqueness of each product and other logistics issues, such as meeting transportation needs? What might affect a country's ability to trade? (poverty, civil unrest, governmental crisis, natural disaster, innovation and technology, etc.)
2	Theories of firm internationalization	The Trading Game	Cognitive/ Behavioural	Kinesthetic	Role-play	Aims to demonstrate how trading works between countries drawn from various geo-political zones. Presented with a range of products that offer both comparative and competitive advantages, each country is to engage in trade with nine other countries with no trade restrictions or barriers. The overarching goal of the game is to accumulate as many points as possible through a well-set out strategy that includes hoarding, joint venturing, strategic alliance, etc.	https://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/the-trading-game/	Did any country end the game richer or poorer than they started? Why so? What was it like to be a rich or poor country? How easy was it to trade between countries? Why? Did any country feel particularly powerful or powerless at any point? Why? Which items were most popular, and which were least popular? Why?
3	Assessing foreign market attractiveness	Analysis of Porter's Five Forces Model	Cognitive	Visual, Read-Write	Problem-based learning	Aims to demonstrate the practical implications of Porter's Five Forces, wherein students are made to predict the attractiveness of a particular industry. This workshop was inspired by Michael Porter's (2008) seminal work and Dobb's (2014) contribution in quantifying the Five Forces.	In groups, students are required to choose an industry from within a fairly competitive market in a country of their choice. Each group will have to critically evaluate the variables for each force (Dobb, 2014). Ranked scores for all the variables representing a particular force is then aggregated and averaged. This represents the final score for that force.	Each group will determine and present the viability and profitability of their chosen market for a new intending firm. A discussion is encouraged about the justification in support of their ranking for each force.
4	The global environment: PESTLE framework	Practical application of PESTLE analysis	Cognitive	Visual, Read-Write & Aural	Problem-based learning	This workshop aims to better understand the key external factors that can influence or inhibit internationalization decisions using the PESTLE framework. Each group will provide a pitch to attract multinational firms to trade with and/or invest in their selected country.	In groups, students are required to play the role of a host country of their choice with the task of attracting as many foreign investors as possible through a pitching exercise. Each group will analyze the data in line with the PESTLE framework: Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and	Once each host country group has delivered their pitch, the other groups (posing as potential investors) will query the basis of their claims and raise further areas of concern, which must then be addressed by the host country. The debate continues until other groups are convinced of the market attractiveness of the host

							Environmental, and present a 5-minute pitch to attract multinational firms to trade with and/or invest in their selected country.	country and potentially assured of a good return on investment.
5	Global supply chains and entry mode strategies	The Coffee Game	Cognitive/ Behavioural	Kinesthetic	Boardgame/ Role-play	This board game aims to demonstrate the complexity and interdependence in a global supply chain. Students will be able to better understand how uncertainty in demand and supply impacts on the stock, and ultimately on customer satisfaction. The concept of the game was inspired by the popular Beer Game but students trade coffee beans instead.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElYNhGbOTOQ https://beergame.org/	The game also shows the ripple effects these disruptions create amongst stakeholders in global supply chains, therefore leading students to reflect on the importance and risks related to managing the interdependencies between businesses in a globalized world.
6	Globalization: opportunities and challenges	Dark Side of Globalization	Cognitive/ Cultural	Kinesthetic & Visual	Problem-based learning	This activity explores the negative effects of globalization by collecting a range of original evidence and/or artefacts from a location of their choice.	https://www.nationalgeographic.com/illicittrade/	Students develop and discuss an evidence-based portfolio following their field observation that reflects the downsides of globalization across economic, social, political and cultural spectrums.
7	Technology, innovation and globalization of markets	Platform Wars	Cognitive/ Behavioural	Kinesthetic & Visual	Computer simulation/ Role-play	In this simulation, students play the role of a senior management team of a video game hardware platform producer (e.g. Sega, Nintendo, or Microsoft). This activity helps students to experience how customer networks affect the growth of businesses globally.	https://mitsloan.mit.edu/LearningEdge/simulations/platform-wars/Pages/default.aspx	Students can be asked to relate the challenges which they have experienced in this simulation to other businesses which are affected by network externalities such as e-commerce, social media, games, telecommunications, personal computers, etc.
8	Corporate social responsibility	Fish banks	Behavioural/ Cultural	Kinesthetic & Visual	Computer simulation/ Role-play	In this simulation, students assume the role of a management team of a fishing fleet and seek to maximize their net worth as they compete against other players to deal with variations in fish stocks and their preferred mode of catch. This activity helps students to balance business objectives related to growth and profitability constrained by the scarcity of resources upon which the business thrives	https://mitsloan.mit.edu/LearningEdge/simulations/fishbanks/Pages/fish-banks.aspx	Participants decide whether to fish or keep the boats in the harbor, where to fish, and whether to buy new ships or sell ships which they own. Students were therefore encouraged to reflect on whether the best ways to maximize profits are always depending on the intense exploitation of resources, as the downside of this is that draining resources endangers the sustainability of the business.
9	Global firms and culture	Multicultural diversity and awareness	Behavioural/ Cultural	Visual & Aural	Problem-based learning	This activity aims to demonstrate the role of cultural awareness for global businesses. Through the aid of video material, students will be able to better understand the possible impacts that poor understanding of customers' culture or the culture of the host country could have on organizations.	https://www.ethnoconnect.com/multicultural-diversity-and-awareness-videos	Students discuss how global firms could avoid the identified cultural mistakes.
10	Assessment (Group report and presentation)					Summative assessment	For this assessment, students had to choose a company from any industry looking to expand their operations to a destination market of their choice.	Appendix 2 includes a sample of the grading rubric utilized in assessing the group reports.

			Students had to submit a group report and deliver a group presentation. The presentations took place during the time slots of lectures and workshops.	
11	Final reflection and exam revision	Preparation for the summative assessment	Being the final week, we saw the need to create an opportunity for students to reflect on what they have learnt throughout the module. In the workshop, students were asked to summarize any six topics that they found most compelling in the course of the semester. The second part designed to competitively test knowledge amongst students, for which we prepared a quiz.	
12	Exam	Summative assessment	In the exam, students are asked to select and respond to three out of five IB-related questions.	Appendix 3 includes a sample of the questions used in the exams in both academic years, all related to the field of IB.

Table 2 – Comparison of the two highest and two lowest scores in the academic years 2018/19 and 2017/18

Statement	% of results in year 2018/19 (scales 4 and 5)	% of results in year 2017/18 (scales 4 and 5)	Difference in percentage points between 2017/18 and 2018/19 (scales 4 and 5)	% of results in year 2018/19 (scales 1 and 2)	% of results in year 2017/18 (scales 1 and 2)	Difference in percentage points between 2017/18 and 2018/19 (scales 1 and 2)
(1) Staff on this module are good at explaining things clearly	95.1% (n=49)	91.9% (n=39)	**3.2%**	4.9% (n=49)	8.1% (n=39)	**-3.2%**
(2) Staff on this module make the subject interesting	90.5% (n=48)	86.1% (n=39)	**4.4%**	9.1% (n=48)	11.1% (n=39)	**-2.0%**
(3) This module is intellectually stimulating.	90.5% (n=48)	86.1% (n=38)	**4.4%**	9.5% (n=48)	13.9% (n=38)	**-4.4%**
(4) This module has challenged me to achieve my best work	83.3% (n=48)	82.9% (n=39)	**0.5%**	16.7% (n=48)	17.1% (n=39)	**-0.5%**
(5) This module has prompted me to explore ideas and concepts in greater depth	88.6% (n=48)	83.3% (n=39)	**5.3%**	11.4% (n=48)	16.7% (n=39)	**-5.3%**
(6) This module has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learned	85.4% (n=48)	91.9% (n=39)	-6.5%	14.6% (n=48)	8.1% (n=39)	6.5%
(7) I can see how this module relates to the rest of my course	97.8% (n=48)	97.2% (n=38)	**0.6%**	2.2% (n=48)	2.8% (n=38)	**-0.6%**
(17) I feel part of an academic community of staff and students	94.9% (n=47)	85.3% (n=39)	**9.6%**	5.1% (n=47)	14.7% (n=39)	**-9.6%**
(18) I have had the right opportunities to work with others to enhance my learning	92.9% (n=48)	91.7% (n=39)	**1.2%**	7.1% (n=48)	8.3% (n=39)	**-1.2%**
(20) Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of this module	90.5% (n=48)	94.6% (n=39)	-4.1%	5.7% (n=48)	5.4% (n=39)	0.3%

Table 3 – Comparison of students' grades in the two components of assessment for the academic years 2017/18 and 2018/19

	CW 1 - Group presentation	CW 1 - Group report	CW 1 - Individual element	**CW 1 total**	**Exam**	Resit Exam	**Final grade**
Weight	30%	60%	10%	**50%**	**50%**		**100%**
Average 17/18	60.20 (n=91)	61.96 (n=91)	62.87 (n=89)	**61.38 (n=91)**	**55.25 (n=89)**	38.11 (n=9)	**56.47 (n=93)**
Weight	25%	55%	20%	**50%**	**50%**		**100%**
Average 18/19	58.22 (n=129)	56.16 (n=135)	58.86 (N=132)	**56.34 (n=136)**	**53.95 (n=130)**	42.70 (n=10)	**53.57 (n=142)**
Difference in percentage points	-1.98	-5.80	-4.00	**-5.05**	**-1.29**		**-2.82**
Final grade difference in percentage points between 2017/18 and 2018/19							
<40	-4.9%	10.4%	1.1%	**7.4%**	**9.1%**		**7.9%**
>=40 e <50	17.1%	14.1%	17.4%	**16.2%**	**-13.3%**		**0.5%**
>=50 e <60	4.0%	-1.5%	9.3%	**-1.7%**	**9.1%**		**0.8%**
>=60 e <70	-4.2%	-13.9%	-29.3%	**-26.6%**	**-1.5%**		**-7.1%**
>=70 e <80	-15.3%	-9.1%	-0.9%	**4.8%**	**-3.8%**		**-2.2%**
>=80 e <90	3.4%	0.0%	2.3%	**0.0%**	**0.4%**		**0.0%**
>=90	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	**0.0%**	**0.0%**		**0.0%**

Table 4 - Summary of paired sample statistics for 17/18 and 18/19 final grades

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	1819 cohort	53.5661	138	14.61095	1.51509
	1718 cohort	56.4670	93	11.98742	1.24304

Table 5 - Summary of paired samples test for 17/18 and 18/19 final grades

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	1819 cohort - 1718 cohort	-2.90086	19.93654	2.06732	-7.00674	1.20502	-1.403	92	.164

Appendix 1 – Statements in the MEQ

#	Statement
1	Staff on this module are good at explaining things clearly.
2	Staff on this module make the subject interesting.
3	This module is intellectually stimulating.
4	This module has challenged me to achieve my best work.
5	This module has prompted me to explore ideas and concepts in greater depth.
6	This module has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learned.
7	I can see how this module relates to the rest of my course.
8	Marking criteria have been clearly explained in advance.
9	Marking and assessment have been fair.
10	I have received helpful and timely feedback on my work.
11	Sufficient academic advice and guidance are available on this module.
12	Staff respond to module queries in a helpful and timely manner.
13	This module is well organized and running smoothly.
14	Any changes to the module have been communicated effectively.
15	The library, IT and specialist equipment (where appropriate) support my learning well.
16	Moodle and/or other online learning environments are used effectively to support my learning.
17	I feel part of an academic community of staff and students.
18	I have had the right opportunities to work with others to enhance my learning.
19	Staff value and respond to my views and opinions about this module.
20	Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of this module.

Appendix 2 – Grading rubrics to assess group reports

Criteria	Proportion of overall module mark
Analysis of company profile, including a clear justification/rationale for the selection of the organization and host country.	20%
Knowledge and understanding of the internal and external business environments/application of theory	40%
Workable recommendations, based on evidence from a wider research	20%
Accurate citations and referencing using the CU Harvard referencing style (at least 20 reference sources are required)	10%
Presentation, grammar and spelling	10%
Total	100%

Appendix 3 – Example of the exam questions

Academic year 2017/18	**Academic year 2018/19**
Building cross-cultural competence and understanding the local culture of the host country is key to the success and survival of businesses in a foreign market. To what extent do you agree with this statement?	What factors drive management decisions to expand their business operations abroad? Discuss your answers using clear concepts and with appropriate examples
Using appropriate theories and examples, discuss four factors that should be considered by businesses when making internationalization decisions.	Understanding the local and national culture of a host country is key to the survival of multinational firms in that environment. To what extent do you agree with this statement?
Critically discuss PESTLE analysis as a strategic management tool to support the internationalization of firms, and explain its relevance in understanding the external business environment.	According to Porter, the state of competition in an industry depends on five basic forces. Critically evaluate these forces in light of their relevance in assessing the suitability of a global market.
Using appropriate examples discuss three theories of firm internationalization	Does being 'socially responsible' contribute to enhanced business performance and increased profitability in the global environment?
Why should multinational firms be concerned with corporate social responsibility (CSR)?	Scholars have developed a range of theories that have aided the advancement of knowledge in the area of firm internationalization. Discuss three of such theories, identifying the strengths and limitations of each.