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Business Policy as Responsible Leadership: A Collection of Open Educational Resources for Integrating Sustainability into the Strategy Curriculum.

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Introduction and Overview

Business Policy (also titled Business Strategy at some institutions) is a common capstone course for undergraduate business majors. These courses strive to build student competency in business strategy development to attain sustainable competitive advantage. In the business policy context, “sustainable” typically refers to sustainable economic advantage (i.e., building shareholder wealth) by presenting customers with a unique value proposition that can be maintained for years.

Current business policy/strategy textbooks typically emphasize sustainable economic advantage. Some introduce natural environment and social sustainability concepts in the introductory, ethics, or governance chapters. Still, sustainability, as captured in the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), is often not effectively integrated throughout the text nor captured in the case study analysis tools and metrics typically included in business policy/strategy texts and courses.

Project Objective

This collection of open educational resources (OER) – teaching notes, discussion guidelines, and cases – can be used to integrate SDG-based sustainability concepts into undergraduate capstone business policy/strategy courses. The materials and exercises are built around standard course topics and can be used with any existing business policy/strategy textbook.

Integration Strategy and Components

The business policy as responsible leadership integration strategy is built around four components: the Economics of Mutuality framework, sustainability-related summative cases, sustainability-related classroom discussion cases for examining common business policy theories and models, and preparing students for discussion of controversial topics.

1. **The Economics of Mutuality.** The Economics of Mutuality (EOM)¹ model, developed at MARS, Inc, provides a practical and accessible framework for students to discuss and examine sustainability concepts. EOM broadly addresses all of the 17 SDGs and includes a succinct set of metrics for measuring human, social, and natural capital in organizations. This parsimonious framework and metrics-set facilitates integration into the business policy curriculum. See the [EOM Instructor Summary](#) for more information.
2. **Summative Cases Focused on Sustainability.** Many business policy courses include case study analysis as a summative assessment of learning tool. Some textbooks include case studies, while other texts require instructors to source cases each

¹ Bruno Roche & Jay Jakub (2017). [Completing Capitalism: heal business to heal the world](#). Barrett-Koehler.

semester. Incorporating sustainability-focused cases and requiring students to include an assessment of all four forms of capital in the EOM model (human, social, natural, and financial) regardless of their case selection, further integrates sustainability topics into the business policy curriculum. See the [summative cases instructor notes](#) for more information.

- 3. Classroom Discussion Cases with Sustainability Themes.** Short cases are often used in the classroom to discuss common business policy theories and models (e.g., PESTEL Porter's Five Forces, core competencies, business-level strategies, corporate-level strategies, etc.). Integrating cases with sustainability themes for classroom discussion keeps the sustainability conversation alive throughout the semester and helps students recognize how sustainability issues are pervasive in organizations and managerial decision-making. See the [classroom discussion cases instructor notes](#) for further discussion.
- 4. Preparing Students for Discussion of Controversial Topics.** While interest in the natural environment and social issues is strong among Millennials and Generation Z, a significant segment of the global student population is less concerned.² Like many issues in contemporary society, these topics are often politicized and can make for contentious classroom discussions when examining sustainability-related topics, issues, and cases. Instructors can prepare students to ensure these sometimes passionate discussions are also productive and learning-oriented. See the [co-creating class discussion norms activity](#) and [giving voice to values activity](#) for guidance. These activities are most effective when conducted in the first few weeks of the semester.

These resources can be used in an integrated fashion or separately to suit student and instructor needs. See each resource for specific guidance.

² Bask, A., Halme, M., Kallio, M., & Kuula, M. (2020). [Business students' value priorities and attitudes towards sustainable development](#). *Journal of Cleaner Production*, pp. 1-9. doi:/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.121711

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