



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
AHMEDABAD • INDIA

Research and Publications

Decision Sheet and Learning Diary: New Tools for Improved Learning through the Case Method

Abhinandan K. Jain
Mukund R. Dixit

W.P. No. 2008-01-03
January 2008

The main objective of the working paper series of the IIMA is to help faculty members, research staff and doctoral students to speedily share their research findings with professional colleagues and test their research findings at the pre-publication stage. IIMA is committed to maintain academic freedom. The opinion(s), view(s) and conclusion(s) expressed in the working paper are those of the authors and not that of IIMA.



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
AHMEDABAD-380 015
INDIA

DECISION SHEET AND LEARNING DIARY: NEW TOOLS FOR IMPROVED LEARNING THROUGH THE CASE METHOD

Abhinandan K. Jain*
Mukund R. Dixit*

ABSTRACT

Of the three phases of learning through the case method, instructors have focused on the in-class phase in training of both teachers and participants. The other two phases, pre-class preparation and post class-reflection, have not received much attention leading to lack of exploitation of the full learning potential from the method. This paper shares continued efforts to conceptualize and develop two tools, decision sheet and learning diary, to strengthen the two phases. These were designed and tested in three executive development programmes. The results and our reflections suggest that the tools enhance the process of learning and the learning itself.

* Professors at Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, INDIA

DECISION SHEET AND LEARNING DIARY: NEW TOOLS FOR IMPROVED LEARNING THROUGH THE CASE METHOD

INTRODUCTION

The case method continues to be one of the important methods of teaching marketing management in graduate and executive education programmes. The premise of the method is that superior capabilities of decision making can be developed through continuous and consistent involvement of participants in the process of decision making (Christensen and Hansen 1987; Dixit 2005). Instructors adopt the case method as a significant pedagogy in marketing courses and modules across the globe to develop competencies of designing and implementing marketing and competitive strategies to realize corporate objectives (Srinivasan 2005).

There are three distinct phases of involvement of participants in this method of learning: - pre-class preparation, class discussion, and post-class reflection. Perusal of recent literature (Delpier; Barnes, Christensen, and Hansen), interactions with academics, particularly in India, and our own experiences show that the class discussion phase has received maximum attention from learners and facilitators/ instructors. There are also recommendations to the instructor on preparing the class handling strategy and conducting the class choreography (Delpier 2006). The other phases have not received that much attention. The instructors expect participants to get involved in these phases actively on their own. They put less emphasis on structuring or hand-holding of participants during these two phases. This lack of attention to the two phases is unlikely to help in accumulation of learning of decision making or concepts.

This paper adds to the ongoing discussion on improved learning through the case method. Two important views can be found in the literature (Kim et. al., 2006, p. 867) about how learning takes place. One view is that the power of learning from the method lies in the skill of the discussion leader in unfolding the learning (Schulman, 1999). The other view argues that a well prepared case affects the quality of learning through the type and quality of enquiry that learners generate (Eskine, Leenders, and Maufette-Leenders, 1998). However, some disadvantages of the method have the potential to affect the learning significantly irrespective of the view taken. These, among others, include lack of preparation, reluctance to participate, and drifting away from the topic of discussion (Delpier 2006, 104).

The disadvantages become important, particularly in India, for learning in long duration entry level programmes (master's and bachelor's level programmes) as well as executive development programmes (EDPs). In long duration programmes majority of participants have neither the experience nor an earlier exposure to the method to appreciate, understand, and apply themselves in pre-class preparation and/ or after-class reflection phases. Lack of pre-class preparation affects the class discussion phase as well. In long duration programmes, it may still be possible to expect participants to learn the method well after some practice in the beginning.

Overcoming of the disadvantages becomes a real challenge in short duration executive programmes (SEDPs) where such luxury of slow learning is just not available and the programme learning needs to take off at a scorching pace from day one. EDPs mean a discontinuity in the routine of executives. They need to be inducted delicately into programme requirements. To the first time user, this is more critical. Hand-holding, providing feedback, and paying attention to individual expectations become necessary components of the learning process. Given the short duration nature, the tendency to switch off and get back to the corporate routine is very high. Alternatively there is a tendency to digress and move away from the case to be discussed. There could be greater efforts in merely satisfying curiosity like what is happening to the company now or what happened to the executive in charge in the case being discussed.

Our experience in offering of executive and post-graduate courses in marketing and strategic management, with the case method as the dominant pedagogy, and interactions with colleagues have brought out the lack of sufficient pre class preparation as an important factor contributing to poor performance in the class discussions. Either the class tends to rehash the case facts or the progress from diagnosis to decision making is very slow. The learning potential of the case is underutilized. This in turn leads to moving to the next case with dissatisfaction or carrying the case discussion over to the next class and sacrificing the discussion in the case. We have also noted that the course progresses from case to case without sufficient check on the learning imbibed by the participants through their involvement.

Increased attention to pre-class preparation has the potential to significantly improve the preparation and the learning from the class discussion phase. Enhanced post-class reflection, at the end of each session, has two potential benefits. One, it can help enhance and consolidate the learning from a specific case situation through the other two phases. Two, through accumulation of learning at the end of each subsequent case discussion session, it has the potential not only to enhance the learning but also to inculcate the habit of decision making and learning from one's own experience.

To address these inadequacies and improve the learning from the case method, we, along with two faculty colleagues (Ramesh Bhat and Sunil Maheshwari), have been experimenting with two tools-decision sheet (DS) and learning diary (LD) - to improve the involvement of participants in pre-class preparation and post-class reflection while maintaining the emphasis on class discussion. This paper shares the experiences of experimenting with these tools. We briefly describe the tools we have developed. This is followed by sharing of experiences and reflections of designing, developing, and testing the tools in three executive development programmes: a one week programme on marketing for middle level managers, a marketing module in a general management programme for senior managers, and a customer-centric general management programme for senior managers. The paper concludes with implications of using the tools and suggestions for further research.

DECISION SHEET AND LEARNING DIARY

The tools - DS and LD - are complementary to each other. DS is primarily structured to help participants prepare well for class discussion. LD is designed mainly for improving after-class reflection. However, it also is helpful in better preparation for the next case by explicating the learning from earlier cases and linking it with the case for discussion.

Decision Sheet (DS)

Decision sheet (DS) has been conceived to enable each participant improve pre-class preparation for improved class discussion. Our experience has been that the level of preparation varies from session to session and from day to day. The traditional instrument for better preparation has been the guidelines for preparation. However, these are seldom sufficient to take the participants, especially first-time case learners, through the entire process of decision making. Adequate preparation includes comprehending the case and the associated readings, diagnosing the situation to define the decision problem(s), generating options, setting up criteria for making a choice, evaluating options on the basis of both qualitative and quantitative analysis, and recommending a course of action including an implementation plan. The decision sheet implores the participant to formally note these on a sheet of paper and bring it to the class. At times he/she is asked to submit the sheet on line before the class. The format of the DS requires each participant to take on the role of the decision maker in the case, analyse the case and write down the following:

- Key decision questions/ options faced by the participant and the rationale for judging them to be so
- Decisions taken by the participant and their rationale
- Anticipated positive and negative consequences of decisions taken
- Measures to mitigate the negative consequences

Participants are required to check that their decision sheet is ***complete in all respects, concrete to enable the decision maker to initiate action, and internally consistent***. The decision sheet needs to be prepared by each participant individually for each case. It could also be prepared by a learning group if participants are formed into groups for pre-class preparation.

DS can be used in the class discussion phase in different ways. It could be used as a basis for initiating and building class discussion. Alternatively, the instructor/ facilitator can ask participants to present the decision sheet and others, including the instructor, can comment on it in the class itself. The instructor can ask for a submission of sheets either in the beginning or at the end of the class and give written feedback. The participant may resubmit the decision sheet after incorporating the comments or use the comments to

strengthen the next session's decision sheet. The instructor can accumulate several decision sheets of participant and provide comprehensive oral or written feedback on the participant's competencies in analysis and decision making and suggest areas that need strengthening.

Learning Diary (LD)

We have developed the learning diary to facilitate reflection on the learning by the participant. In designing this tool, we have tried to incorporate three elements: what is to be learnt, how it is learnt, and how would it benefit the learner in future. Learning of management has been identified to include learning of knowledge (K), attitudes (A), skills (S) to utilize the knowledge/habits (H) (Follett). This learning takes place through total involvement of participant inside and outside the classroom. The participant involves himself/herself in different roles, some of which are: initiator (of discussion), builder (building the logic on the basis of others' arguments and adding ones own), challenger (of other's arguments), integrator (of discussion), evaluator, persuader, observer and the like. Each role has a distinct contribution to make to the participant's stock of learning. Having learnt, the participant is expected to apply the learning in his/her context and draw up his own learning agenda for future.

In LD the participant is formally required to reflect on three aspects. First, he needs to reflect on the nature of involvement in class discussion and in interactions outside the class. Next, the participant reflects on the nature of learning itself. Finally, the learning is used to set an agenda for applying the learning and for further learning. The participant is also required to reflect on the unlearning that is taking place. The facilitator asks for a formal submission of the learning diary and provides feedback.

We first implemented the concept in an open format where participants were required to describe their learnings. No structure was given. On the basis of our experience and feedback from participants in the first two SEDPs, we decided on a structured format. In the third EDP we structured it tightly. This new format has three sections. The first section implores the participants to reflect on learning reinforced, added, and discarded on each dimension of KASH. The second section focuses on the roles played in class and those played out of class. The last section records the agenda for application of learning and professional development in future. (See Appendix 1 for the format developed)

Design and Development Experiences

We have designed, developed, and tested the two tools in three EDPs. The first one was to design, develop, and test the structured DS and get inputs for structuring LD. This was accomplished in a customized, short duration, and small registration programme on marketing management. The second was for adapting the tools for a large registration programme. The third was for testing the DS as well as designing, testing, and developing the structured LD. This was undertaken in a customized, short duration, customer centric general management programme.

EXPERIENCES IN A CUSTOMISED PROGRAMME FOR MARKETING PROFESSIONALS

Setting

This was a three-phase intensive EDP offered to middle level executives engaged in managing retail outlets in the fuel retailing strategic business unit of a large petroleum marketing company in India. The programme was designed to develop customer orientation among front line sales supervisors (who supervised the outlets) and executives who helped in order fulfillment, maintenance of equipment and infrastructure at retail outlets, and collection of receivables. The programme included topics related to marketing, accounting and finance, human relations, and competitive strategy. The programme had 24 sessions (of seventy minutes each) and 11 cases. Thus participants were to prepare two cases on any particular day. Each case was to be discussed over two sessions, each of 75 minute duration. Each batch of the programme consisted of about 30 participants. The participants of each batch were divided into several study groups to facilitate small group discussion before coming to the class. The performance of each participant was assessed on the basis of his/ her participation in class discussions. While the programme consisted of several batches, the two concepts were implemented in one of the batches of this programme.

Each participant of the test batch was requested to prepare DS for each case after completing individual preparation and before going for small group discussion for pre-class preparation. They could, if they so desired, modify DS after small group discussions. At the beginning of the class, the instructor asked some participants to submit their individual DSs. These were used as a base to initiate case discussion. The instructor also commented on some DSs. Participants were requested to revise the DSs after the class. They were asked to submit the entire bunch of DSs at the end of the programme along with a one-page statement of their learning from the programme using the format of KASH. All these steps were mandatory for the participants.

Measures of Feedback

The usefulness of the two concepts was assessed using the following feedback measures:

- Instructor's assessment of pre-class preparation through regular visits to the venue of pre-class group discussion at assigned timings. The programme was residential. Both participants and the instructor stayed in the same venue. The instructors could take rounds and interact with participants formally and informally.
- Instructor's assessment of involvement and learning by participants as reflected in class discussion/ participation, and discussion of selected DSs in class. Both authors were instructors in the programme and amongst them they discussed their own reflections on the adequacy of preparation and the progress of sessions based on DS. We also observed the level of enthusiasm in the class and its sustenance.

- Instructor's assessment of learning on the basis of presentations on a comprehensive marketing situation at the end of the programme. Participants were required to work in larger groups on a comprehensive marketing case and make formal presentation.
- Quantitative and qualitative feedback by participants at the end of the programme. The instructors collected formal feedback from participants on the learning and suggestions for improvement.
- Instructors' assessment of learning as reflected through the set of decision sheets submitted by participants at the end of the programme. The set was checked for monotony in response, progress across dimensions like completeness, concreteness, and consistency.

The instructor's own reflection was relative to the experience with the case in other programmes.

Key Findings and Reflections

We found the involvement of participants to be positive. Initially they were confused about the expected contents of DS and LD. They were not sure of what to include and what to exclude. They also experienced difficulty in separating the individual decision sheet from the conclusions arrived at in small group discussions before the class. They were clearer as they progressed from session to session partially helped through clarifications by instructors.

We noticed that, despite clear instructions, DSs remained incomplete. Some participants tended to provide a summary of the case instead of their decisions and other aspects expected in the format of DS. We also noticed incompleteness in matching the decision questions with decisions. While participants identified many decision questions, they chose to answer only a few. In some other sheets, the rationale for decisions was missing. Special weakness was noticed on identifying the consequences of decisions taken and in taking care of the negative consequences of their decisions. We also noticed that participants found the preparation of DS to be stressful. In the absence of handholding and personal feedback, they would have given up or adopted shortcuts.

End of programme presentations (on a comprehensive marketing situation) by participants were significantly better than the ones made by earlier batches. The learning of concepts and skills was of a much higher order. The presentations and class discussion after the presentations revealed improved learning of key concepts of customer and consumer behaviour, competitive behaviour, and environmental analysis. Skills of using numbers, including cost and financial analysis, and their use for making decisions were also amply demonstrated. The presentations and discussions reflected the positive attitude

to take decisions on a regular basis, thus indicating habit formation. However, we would not ascertain this.

End of programme feedback by participants was highly positive. Overall learning as reflected on a self-rating scale (1 to 5) was 4.76 and was higher than the ratings given by earlier batches where DS and LD were not used.

End of programme feedback on strengths and weaknesses of the concepts, assessed through an open-ended question, was quite revealing. There were large number of strengths and only one weakness. Illustrations of strengths included: “helped in reading and preparation”, helpful in crystallizing the learning”, “helpful in consolidating the learning”, “helps form habit of coming to class prepared”, “gave me confidence in decision making”, “more effective in our daily life”, etc. The weaknesses expressed were: “time available was too short” and need for greater clarity on the expectations from DS and LD.

A review of the set of DSs and LDs submitted at the end of the programme indicated a strong understanding of case situations, increasing degree of use of analysis (with each subsequent case discussion), and taking decisions. The write-ups reflected at least partial plans to take appropriate action if the actions taken did not lead to desired results. Learning of knowledge and skills was in evidence in almost all decision sheets. However, learning of habit(s) (of action orientation, of use of analysis, and skills) was not very clear. At best, we could infer initiation of some habits. Thus, the analysis of write-ups suggested that the four dimensions of KASH were possible to be identified by instructors.

The participants felt that preparing the sheet for every case put them under time pressure. However, no assessment of the time taken by participants was available from the feedback. The instructors felt that each submission on DS and LD took anywhere from 15 to 45 minutes to go through and discuss/ provide comments and feedback.

Adoption of DS and LD in the programme indicated their strong potential to contribute to the learning of participants, particularly in pre-class preparation and post-class reflection. We reflected that starting the session using DSs was a good idea. It recognized those who were ready and those who were picked received adequate comments and suggestions for modifications. But it left other eager participants, who did not get a chance, frustrated. We took care of this by asking participants to submit their sheets and providing feedback. We were available after the class for discussion. As we were all staying together, accessing us for a discussion was not a problem. However, as mentioned above, time implications for the instructors were significant.

MARKETING MODULE IN A GENERAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Several of the programmes offered by Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and many other institutions are likely to have large registrations. We therefore wanted to adapt the tools and test them for such applications. We got an opportunity to do so in a four week long general management programme offered to middle level executives from a large number of medium to large size organisations in India. We tested the tools in the marketing module of the programme.

Setting

The objectives of this programme included enhancing participants' general management capabilities. The programme included several modules on accounting and finance, human resources, operations, information technology, marketing management, etc. Participants came from diverse backgrounds. The programme was residential. The authors and one other colleague teaching in the programme also stayed on the campus. The number of participants in this programme was about 90 and the batch was divided into two sections. The participants were also divided into several study groups to facilitate discussion of cases before class. The programme had a separate session for initiating the participants to the case method of learning. This session was conducted by one of the authors of this paper. The concepts of DS and LD were introduced in this session. We mentioned that maintenance of the learning diary was compulsory and the coordinator of the programme could ask for the submission of learning diary any time during the programme. We used the tools in three modules: marketing management, strategic management, and human resource management. This paper shares the experiences with the marketing module.

The marketing module used six cases over seven sessions, each of 75 minutes. The number of cases to be prepared by participants in a day was about three. As the batch was large, we decided to ask for preparation of one DS per group to facilitate discussion of DSs in and out of class. However, to pursue individual learning and decision making, participants were requested to recapture their learning at personal level and in relation to their organization and report in the DS itself. One to three DSs were used in each class to initiate the discussion. We had planned to meet each group after the class to discuss their DSs. Each group was also to submit all DSs at the end of the module along with a brief statement on their learning from the module.

Measures of Feedback

The feedback measures used included all the measures used in the customized marketing programme and the following:

- Overall assessment of learning from the module through the feedback questionnaire.
- Assessment of learning from submissions of decision sheets and overall learning by study groups of 6 to 8 participants at the end of the programme.

- Feedback sought individual participants after one month of their return to their respective organizations.

Key Findings and Reflections

The overall feedback on the marketing module about the use of the tools was very positive on all measures outlined above. Pre-class preparation in study groups was very good. This assessment was made during the visits of the instructors to the venue of study groups at the time of group discussion. However, it was not always possible to meet the groups since they varied their time of meeting depending on the demands on their time.

The number of participations in class discussions and their intensity was found to be higher compared to earlier programme offerings. Participants presented their decisions and justified them quite well. We found some degree of preparation of action plans. This could be sharpened more through class discussion. We made these assessments while guiding the class discussion.

Presentations and discussions on a strategic marketing situation at the end of the module reflected a very high degree of knowledge assimilation from earlier sessions as well as from the assigned readings. Positive attitude towards use of knowledge and appropriate skills (of using profitability analysis, customer value analysis, and product portfolio analysis) was reflected in supporting the decisions taken.

DSs and LDs submitted at the end of the programme reflected a superior level of learning of KASH. This was at three levels: at the level of the group, at the level of individual participant, and at the level of applicability of the learning in the participant's organization. Such assessments could hardly be made without the introduction of DS and LD.

About 20 per cent of participants responded to our request to send their assessments of the usefulness of DS and LD. They found the tools to be extremely innovative and helpful in facilitating better understanding of the decision situation, better analysis, and in taking better decisions. The exercise of reflection also helped them compare their real-life decision making processes with the ones they were learning.

Participants pointed out a serious problem in using the LD and DS. This was the time taken to fill the instruments, i.e. do a serious reflection. Participants pointed out that, while they learnt more from the two modules which used the concepts, they were able to do so only at the cost of learning from other modules. Participants preferred group DSs and LDs primarily because of time taken. Another reason could be the help in crystallizing their own learning in the group.

The tools, particularly DS, were found to be useful in providing a structured approach to a participant's involvement in the programme. They also created a takeaway for the participant. He/she could reflect on his/her submission even after the programme. In a

way they amount to an implied evaluation of the participant's progress in a programme that does not have formal tests or quizzes. Evaluating LD and providing feedback on an overall basis was difficult. The tools put the instructors under time pressure. However, the pressure was worth bearing since they led to a more complete analysis and discussion of cases. In implementing the tools we were helped by the residential nature of the programme. The participants could devote their time to the harnessing the learning opportunity provided by the programme. However, the group sheet did not provide an opportunity to assess how the individual was progressing.

The results clearly demonstrate the superior learning achieved through structured DS and unstructured LD in SEDPs. The number of cases to be prepared per day in the programme seemed to affect the preparation. Time needs to be set aside for reflection to get the most out of the use of the two instruments. It seems that assigning up to two cases a day, as in the customized marketing programme, could be adequate to take care of the time dimension at the participant's end. Instructors also need to set aside adequate time for assessing the learning of participants and for interactions and providing comments to participants. This could be in the class or out of class. In-class discussion has the advantage of multiplier effect by clarifying critical aspects from one participant's DS/ LD to the rest of the class. This may lead to better time management.

STRUCTURING THE LEARNING DIARY IN A CUSTOMIZED GENERAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

We got an opportunity to refine and structure the LD and assess its usefulness in another customized programme. The open format of the learning diary was redesigned on the basis of feedback of earlier two tests and findings from literature. The dimensions of learning of management, as identified in literature earlier, were: (K) knowledge, (A) attitudes, (S) skills, and (B) behaviour. We also added the learning of roles needed by managers. These were identified as initiator, challenger, builder, integrator, persuader, etc. These roles were thought to be essential for a manager for arriving and implementing decisions. Finally, all the learning in the classroom was to be applied in real life as well as to set the future learning agenda of the individual manager. Thus, the learning diary was designed to have three distinct parts: one reflects learning of KASH, second reflecting learning of roles, and the third reflecting the agenda for future.

Setting

The re-designed LD and the DS were tested in a customized EDP for senior managers of an international life insurance company operating in India. Participants numbered 16 and their responsibilities were varied. This was an intensive one week EDP. The programme had on average two cases per day and each case was discussed over two sessions of 75 minutes each.

The programme had an introductory session on the case method of learning. They were briefed to prepare their DS and LD for each case discussion. The instructors used DSs

and LDs, as in earlier two tests, to initiate the discussions. A full session of 75 minutes was also devoted to review programme learning in the middle of the programme (third day of the six-day programme). Participants were requested to send their learning diary after they returned to their work place. We assessed usefulness of the tools by using the same process as before.

Key Findings and Reflections

Participants found both tools to be useful and helped them get involved speedily and participate in the learning process. Conceptualizing learning in terms of KASH was assessed as “the major strength” of the programme by one participant. It was seen as significant by four of the 16 participants. Participants rated the contribution of LD to several aspects of learning on a five-point scale. The dimensions of learning on which the contribution was assessed were preparation before class; class participation; reflection after the class; and learning of decision making, concepts, skills, attitudes, behaviour, role taking in case, role taking in class, finding application area, and professional and personal enhancements. As anticipated, the contribution on “reflection-after-the class” was rated the highest at 4.60. The next best element was the “learning of concepts”. Also, all other elements were rated more than 4.00.

The most important insights were from the qualitative comments made on suggestions to improve LD. To begin with, 12 participants made positive comments about improving LD. Most of these were to clarify the concepts and the format at the beginning of the programme. Some comments were to simplify the format particularly after it was understood well. One suggestion was to provide a diary for recording ones learnings. Another comment described it as a support tool for learning and reflecting. One participant mentioned the possibility of using LD in his future work life.

The time taken by participants to fill LD varied from 1-15 minutes to 45-60 minutes. All of them felt they needed more time. Three participants referred to KASH in their “Any other suggestions” at the end of the feedback instrument. One of them mentioned “My takeaway: Have a KASH for all big decisions.” Formalization of the learning diary was very helpful.

IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE

The findings clearly demonstrate the potential for superior learning that can be achieved through use of DS and LD. We provide the implications for using the tools, limitations of the current effort, and directions for future research.

Conclusions and Implications

Time needs to be set aside for reflection to get the most out of the two instruments by both, participants and instructors. The programme schedule has to be so designed as to provide sufficient time to participants to reflect on the learning. Similarly time slots should be provided for interaction with instructors. The instructor/ facilitator need to provide adequate time for assessing the learning of participants and for interactions with them whether in or out of class. In-class discussion has the advantage of multiplier effect by clarifying critical aspects from one participant's DS/ LD to the rest of the class. This may lead to better time management.

Our experience suggests that there should be no more than two cases a day (a total of four sessions of about 75 minutes each) for getting the best results. This implies that programme directors and instructors may need to consider cases which cover more dimensions to deliver the same programme objectives. An option is to extend the duration of the programme. However, the latter may need a careful assessment of costs and benefits on using the tools. Our assessment is that extension of time may be a better option particularly for customized programmes. In the case of open programmes, the marketing effort to convince the administrators and programme participants for a longer duration may be a Herculean task.

Sustenance of involvement of participants in the tools is dependent on the commitment reflected by instructors in going through submissions and providing feedback. They should also provide for face-to-face interactions. Participants may require handholding. The time to be devoted to the tasks is very high. In the absence of this, there is risk of submission becoming a chore and participants adopting shortcuts.

The two tools seem to have the potential to be developed as some kind of knowledge management system for executives not only for learning from programmes but also from day to day experiences.

Limitations

The tools have been developed through an evolutionary process. They have thus not been tested in a rigorous manner. The dominant mode of refinement has been continuous involvement, observation, and reflections by authors and their colleagues. The applications have been on limited samples and limited type of programmes.

Directions for Future

DS and LD may be modified to include different types of programmes with different sets of objectives. They may also be tested more rigorously through a better research design to assess their validity and reliability for assessing the contribution to pre-class preparation, class discussion, and post class reflection phases separately. Such research along with research to assess the overall contribution of the tools to different elements of learning may be carried out in a variety of settings.

The most immediate benefit of using DS and LD is a reinforcement of the kind of logic that one needs to use in decision making. The two tools have the potential to integrate themselves into a knowledge management system of executives. They can create DS and LD in their work situations and manage their KASH. The essence of the logic, if used in regular managerial decision making, is likely to make the manager conscious of the implications of decisions taken. Once, the concepts and tools become a regular part of the managerial toolkit, they have the potential of being used as personal learning devices.

To make the two tools as part of personal learning devices, some developments have to happen. Firstly, each DS and associated LD can be stored as an Excel sheet. They can then be linked to each other on the basis of key dimensions such as industry situation, company situation, position involved, and specific decision, or specific type of learning, roles, or application. An attempt of this nature can make the DS-LD combination a database for personal learning of managers.

REFERENCES

Barnes, B. Louis; C. Roland Christensen; and Abby J. Johnsen (1994) Teaching and the Case Method: Instructor's Guide. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press

Christensen, Ronald C. and Abby J. Hansen (1987) "Teaching and the Case Method: Text, Cases, and Readings." Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press

Damle, C. S. (1989) "The Case Method of Instruction in Management Education: A Critical Review." In Klein, Hans E (editor). Case Method Research and Application: New Vistas. Needham, MA: World Association for Case Method Research and Application, pp 3-16

Dixit, Mukund R (2005) "Case Method in the New Milieu: An Opportunity for Reinvention," *Vikalpa*, 30(4), 89-100.

Delpier, Terry (2006) "CASES 101: Learning to Teach with Cases" Nursing Education Perspectives, 27 (4), 204-09

Eskine, J; Leenders M; and Maufette-Leenders L (1998) Teaching with Cases London, Ontario: Richard Ivy School of Business, University of Western Ontario.

Follett, M.P. (1927) "How must business management develop in order to possess the essentials of a profession", in Metcalf, H.C. (Eds), Business Management as a Profession New York: A. W. Shah Company

Jain, Abhinandan (2005) "The Future of the Case Method for Learning in Management Education," *Vikalpa*, 30(4), 124-131.

Lundeberg, Mary A.; Barbara B. Levin; and Helen L. Harrigan (eds.) (1999) Who Learns What from Cases and How London, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers

Sara Kim; William R. Phillips; Linda Pinsky; Doug Brock; Kathryn Phillips; and Jane Kerry (2006), "A Conceptual Framework for Developing Teaching Cases: A Review and Synthesis of the Literature Across Disciplines," Medical Education , 40, 867-76

Schulman, L. (1999), "Toward a Pedagogy of Cases" In: Schulman J., (ed.), Case Method in Teaching Education. New York: Teacher's College Press, 1-30

Srinivasan, Shiva Kumar (coordinator) (2005) "What is the Future of the Case Method in Management Education in India" *Vikalpa*, 30 (4), 87-131

APPENDIX-1 FORMAT FOR DECISION SHEET AND LEARNING DIARY**Decision Sheet**

1. Decision Making Situation

Industry
Company
Position
Decision

2. Decision Sheet

Identify key decision questions/ options faced by the participant and the rationale for judging them to be so,

Write the decisions taken and their rationale for the same

Write the positive and negative consequences of the decisions taken, and

Specify measures to mitigate the negative consequences

Learning Diary

3.1 Learning of

	Addition	Reinforcement	Deletion
K			
A			
S			
H			

3.2 Learning Roles: My Involvement as (Initiator, Builder, Challenger, Destroyer, Evaluator, Integrator, Listener)

Situation	Role 1 Initiator	Role 2 Builder	Role 3 Destructor/ Challenger	Role 4	Role 5 Evaluator	Role 6 Integrator
In Class						
Out of Class						

3.3 My Agenda for Future Learning:

Application Areas	Enhancement Areas

APPENDIX-2 EXCERPTS FROM FEEDBACK INSTRUMENT ABOUT LEARNING DIARY IN THE THIRD PROGRAMME

Your Feedback on Learning Dairy

- KASH is excellent.
- A very effective tool which channelises your learning in a structured manner so that you can refer back to it for refreshing your thought process.
- Good way to capture daily important learnings to help in future
- Could be a very effective tool of done regularly
- An excellent way of ensuring key learnings are captured & enhancement areas are given a greater thought
- It is a wonderful tool which I will complement in my work life and family life
- An excellent tool. Can be more effective of 20 minutes are provided at the end of each case to consolidate learnings
- A tool which I will use myself and pass down
- Good tool to effectively manage personal learning more both in professional and personal life
- Great; new concept, can be replicated in All situations/decisions in life
- Very helpful to introspect and apply learnings
- Excellent tools to review learnings and take away from sessions
- The most critical guiding tool I have come across. Can rarely keep you focused.

Please rate the effectiveness of learning diary in

[5 = Excellent; 4 = Very Good; 3 = Good; 2 = Fair; 1 = Poor]

No		5	4	3	2	1	Avg.
1	Preparation Before the Class	5	6	4	-	-	4.07
2	Class Participation	7	6	2	-	-	4.33
3	Reflection After the Class	10	4	1	-	-	4.60
4	Learning of Decision Making	7	6	2	-	-	4.33
5	Learning of Concept	10	3	2	-	-	4.53
6	Learning of Skills	7	5	3	-	-	4.27
7	Learning of Attitudes	7	5	3	-	-	4.27
8	Learning of Behavior	7	5	3	-	-	4.27
9	Role taking in Case	7	5	3	-	-	4.27
10	Role taking in Class	6	6	2	-	-	4.29
11	Finding Application Area	7	6	2	-	-	4.33
12	Professional / Personal Enhancements	8	6	1	-	-	4.47

For each learning, how much time (put tick marks in the appropriate box)

	1-15 mts	16-30 mts	31-45 mts	46-60 mts
I <i>took</i> to prepare:	2	6	4	4
I <i>need</i> to prepare:	1	4	7	3

Suggestions for improvement in learning diary

- The material could have been given in advance and participants should have come here a day in advance so that they can complete reading.
- If it is possible to share in a printed form with candidates on the first day what each field means, we can make better use of it.
- A standard format to be designed and circulated – content could be left feasible
- Could be made more simple
- None
- Enhance it every day which means daily learnings to lead to weekly and monthly so on.
- If you provide a small diary like the program handbook would be useful for capturing learnings in the class.
- Will do and communicate a more regular usage. Will communicate on mail.
- Nil
- Support tool. We not only learn new things but also learn how to reflect on those learnings. I am still in the process of evolution on how to use it better
- Your structure can at times be restricting until you're really learned will how to use or conform to it.
- May be have a time for implementation piece.