Case Studies And Their Impact On Teaching And Learning
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Abstract
Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to see if there are different types of case studies and if so, their impact on teaching and learning.

Design/methodology/approach – Literature review with discussion.

Findings – There are different types of case studies and their impact on teaching and learning is significant. The traditional case study is out dated, but the new more enhanced one, based on a real company is not as reliable. Students learn more from a living case study, but the scientific results are not always the entire truth.

Practical Implications - Case studies tend to improve students’ motivation and self-efficacy, but it also tends to discourage and/or demotivates them if they do not get the feedback that they need.

Originality/value - This paper is based entirely on secondary information and highlights benefits and disadvantages with the use of case studies, by knowing the difference and the result of using case studies as a teaching method, teachers may be able to motivate their students’ more.

Key words – Self-efficacy, Teaching style, Mismatch, Motivates, Learning

Intro
People all over the world are using different kinds of methods when it comes to learning, teachers also uses different techniques when it comes to teaching. None is proven to be better than the other, they are just different, and therefore the outcomes may vary from one to another (Fuches, 2008). Not only the methods are different, the preferences that a student or teacher has varies from person to person. A student can learn by sitting in class and observe and listen, he or she can learn by participating in a discussion where they have to reason with a counterpart, which leads to speculation and also operation (Felder, Silverman, 1988).

The way a teacher present the information depends on the teacher’s preferences, but can also depend on the subject that he or she instruct. Some teachers prefer to lecture and be the type of person who speaks to his or her students, others may prefer to ask the students a question to start a discussion. While some teachers’ values memory learning, there are some that rather see their students understand the full concept (Felder, Silverman, 1988).
The way that a student learn does not always match the teaching style of a teacher. Mismatches happen and according to Felder and Silverman (1988) the outcome could result in students scoring low points on tests, become bored or even dropping out of school. The author Michelle Schwartz (2016) mentions in her article Teaching methods for case studies that the first and most important step when having a case study as a teaching method is to get to know the students, by knowing the people the cases can easily be given to the right person. The authors also mention that teachers can start to question themselves if they are in the right place, or if they are doing the right thing. But the most negative part of a mismatch between learning and teaching is according to Felder and Silverman (1988) that we are losing conceivable competence.

There are different components that needs to collaborate to make learning and teaching able to work together. Something that hasn't been brought up yet are case studies. A teaching method that are used worldwide, from United States (Luck, Wu 2008), to Sweden (Bleckner, Omstedt, Rummukainen, 2002) and beyond. The definition of a case study is, according to Merrian webster (2010), “a published report about a person, group, or situation that has been studied over time; also: a situation in real life that can be looked at or studied to learn about something”. Not all case studies are the same, some studies are meant to define questions and hypotheses for further studies, these are called Exploratory case studies, there are other studies that tells a story about something that happened and a observation of that occasion, these go under the name Descriptive case studies, at last there are studies that try to explain why something happened, and why the outcome looks the way it does, these go further than the descriptive case studies and are called Explanatory case studies (Iveroth, 2012).

Method

To be able to do a research about Case Studies and Their Impact on Teaching and Learning, the search for secondary information were done by using Halmstad Högskolan’s webpage, with a student log in, on the webpage’s library. The reason why a student log in must be used is because as a student you will have access to paper, articles and other valuable information that other people must pay for. In the library, further searches were done on Google Scholar, Emerald Insight and Web of Science.

To find the different articles, papers and case studies, the following English words were used in the search for information: Case study, Studies, Teaching, Learning, Education, Impact, Efficiency. To find the Swedish articles for this study, the following words has been used: Fallstudie, Undervisning and Pedagogik.

All words have been used in different combinations, both in Swedish and English.
The author Richard M. Felder writes in his article *Learning and teaching styles in Engineering education* that there are different types of learning techniques as well as there is more than one way for a teacher to influence his or her students (Felder, 2002). Depending on what age the respondents are, different teaching methods should be applied. In this process, there is what the author likes to call a dimension, the dimension of inductive and deductive ways of teaching and learning (Felder, 2002). According to the author Klaus Solberg Sølien, case studies are being used mainly in the studies of economy, medicine and psychology (Solberg Sølien, 2006)

The inductive way has different themes, one of them is based on discovery learning, Felder (2002) mentions that it is most effective for students below graduate school. At a young age, children learn by observation and imitation (Facts for life 2016). The opposite of inductive learning is deductive and Felder (2002) describes it as something starting with fundamentals that leads to applications, Felder (2002) explains it in a situation where students would say to the teacher, “Just tell me exactly what I need to know for the test, not one word more or less”. According to Henke, Hötzecke and Reiss (2007) a possible reason for this attitude is that students tend to not like, or that they get bored, from reading texts.

According to the author Flink (2013) a traditional lecturing method will bring the following results; To retain the information given after course is over, the students will be able to transfer knowledge into different novel situations, achieve a higher level of thinking when it comes to solve problems and last, the students will achieve a motivation for further learning or some sort of change in attitude (Flink, 2013). Students from a university in England were given the opportunity to use their own class notes on a specific test, the students scored 42%, one week later, the students took the same test and now only scored 20 % (Flink, 2013)

People that consider them self’s having a high level of self-efficacy tend to believe that they are in control, the term self-efficacy is a common concept within social sciences, the concept self-efficacy refers to a person’s ability, willingness and confidence to do well and come up with fine results (Bandura, 1990). The author Ernest Abaho (2015) mentions in his article *Students’ entrepreneurial self-efficacy: does the teaching method matter?*, that social learning has a positive effect on self-efficacy and creates a certain behavior, especially with positive rewards. On the other hand, he also mentions that the behavior reduces when students consider the reward begin to less or not enough, if the student doesn’t understand what he or she is doing it can lower their confidence, since the learning part is considered a confidence builder (Howorth, Smith, Parkinson 2012).

Author Jackie Campbell (2012) writes in his article *Inquiry-based learning case studies for Computing and Computing Forensic students*, about students who studies computing with the help from teaching applications. By implementing inquiry based learning in a student’s studies, Jackie Campbell (2012) means that it will be a beneficial experience which will give
meaning and motivates the student, the author also speaks well of technology enhanced learning, which can help students to spread their wings and explore new depths of their own studies.

The interaction that occurs between students and their teachers during a case study pedagogy is said to enhance students’ self-management, their ability to solve problems, to communicate and making decisions by using a not fictive company (Barnes et al., 1994). The Author Mathews Nkhoma (2013) refers in his article *Examining the mediating role of learning engagement, learning process and learning experience on the learning outcomes through localized real case studies*, to (Kim, H.J, Pederson and Baldwin, 2012) that the learning that comes from cases-based teaching have had notably improvements in usefulness and the perception of satisfaction from a learner point of view.

Time aspects varies in case study writing and can be divided into three categories; the first one is a historical study where he researcher examines what has happened, the second is a study in present time, where the researcher digs into a current problem and its effect, the third and last one is something called a long-term case study researcher tries to see how something develops over a long time (Iveroth, 2012).

Iveroth (2012) also mentions pro’s and con’s in his presentation, some of them are that they can be used to test theories as well as develop new ones, it generates more qualitative data that is more attainable then just numbers and diagrams, the researcher can show the complexity that mirrors the reality and he also high lights that it is the Empirical study that pull the strings rather than the theory. Other authors high lights that case studies are something that can help scientific experiments conduct (Psud43, 2012).

Some disadvantages or negative aspects of case studies are according to Einar Iveroth (2012) that some scientist do not like the way a case study is case executed, and therefore miss the scientific reliability, he also mentions that it can be difficult to find something fun and/or interesting to research, the fact that people change their behavior when they know they are being studied, changes the outcome for researchers, and can therefore not have a genuine case, the last disadvantage that Einar Iveroh (2012) mentions is that it can be difficult to know how to analyze the data that has been collected, since they have been collected differently, studies are often inductive and abductive and not deductive. Mark Murphy (2014) also mentions in his article that that some researches have to many biases, if a case study is done on a company, that company sometimes tell the authors what to write about and demands that the research must be approved by the company before published.

In the article *Supercharging case-based learning via simulators* written by Bennet, Davidsen & Lopez (2014), the authors describe the traditional case studies and discussion as something that is not up to date or well suited for students to explore the path-dependent causes of a variety of choices, the feedback provided is limited, the one that is given is often criticism from the teachers or peers. The limitation of feedback is said to be a good way to refine an action plan, the knowledge gained on the other hand is to be questioned (Bennet et, al., 2014).
In the article, *Impact student learning using a living case study, written by Grassberger & Wilder (2015)* the term significant learning is being described as something that will make a difference, not only how people act, but how they live and open their eyes for what they can become (Grassberger & Wilder, 2015). Another author that talks about Significant learning is Dee Fink (2013), he describes it as a teaching method that gives the students a deeper knowledge, beyond application learning.

Dee Fink (2013) writes in his book, *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses*, that the main problem today is that factually members which for their students to have a higher level of learning. Even if the teacher’s do want that, they still use a variety traditional and ineffective way of teaching methods. The methods are ineffective because they do not promote to achieve such level of learning (Fink, 2013).

Author Mathews Nkhoma (2013) mentions in his article *Examining the mediating role of learning engagement, learning process and learning experience on the learning outcomes through localized real case studies* seven different hypotheses, which are:

- **H1.** "The case study method is positively correlated to undergraduate students’ learning outcomes”
- **H2a.** "The case study method is positively correlated with undergraduate students’ learning engagement”
- **H3a.** “Undergraduate students’ learning engagement is positively correlated with their learning outcomes”
- **H2b.** "The case study method is positively correlated to undergraduate students’ learning process”
- **H3b.** “Undergraduate students’ learning process is positively correlated to their learning outcomes.”
- **H2c.** “The case study method is positively correlated to undergraduate students’ learning experience”
- **H3c.** “Undergraduate students’ learning experience is positively correlated to their learning outcomes.” (Nkhoma, 2013 p. 288-290)

Nkhoma (2013) says that case studies play an important role in the learning process of students and their creative thinking, this is something that gets strengthened by the authors Grassberger & Wilder (2015) whom explains in their article *Impacting student learning using a living case study* that there are two different types of case studies.

The living case study and the traditional case study, both increasing the students interests as well as understanding the subject, enhancing the learning satisfaction, giving them a deeper knowledge and increasing their capability to think critically, it has also been demonstrated that students, who have had a teacher using the case study method has developed a better retention, than students who have just had the original lecture formats (Grassberger & Wilder, 2015). The living case study, mentioned by Grassberger & Wilder (2015), is said to be an advanced version of the traditional case study. This is because a living case study concern an ongoing problem, with a real company in present time (Raelin, 2008). Raelin (2008) also states that living case studies are supposed to give the students a greater satisfaction to solve problems that are not fictive.
Klaus Solberg Sølien, writes in his book that the students who studies economy, medicine and psychology are the students that most likely will use case studies (Solberg Sølien, 2006). The students seem to prefer to use the deductive way of learning, with minimal effort, and a vision of a clear picture, students want to make it easy for them self by not doing more what it takes (Felder, 2002). This attitude or behavior gets reinforced by the authors Henke, Hôtecke and Reiss (2007) who have done studies about students’ attitude towards reading texts. Some of the students seem to want to do good in school and achieve high scores on their tests, Bandura (1990) explains that the people who do want high test results are people who consider them self’s having a high level of self-efficacy.

Dee Flink (2013) mentions in his book that one of many problems with todays’ society is that teachers are not willing to change their teaching methods. Most all teachers still use the traditional teaching method that according to the author is ineffective, it is shown by the study from the English university where students lowered their test result by almost 50% in one week (Flink, 2013). By using case studies as a teaching method, the students will be more motivated to learn more, the information that is given will make people transfer their knowledge into different novel situations (Grassberger & Wilder, 2015). Case studies are something that Grassberger & Wilder (2015) describes as significant learning, by having a deeper knowledge about a subject, students will tend to both understand and remember it better, which could prevent misunderstandings and low test results.

The significant learning is said to include or lead to a more motivated student because of a greater understanding (Grassberger & Wilder, 2015). Greater understanding of a subject is something that author Felder (2002) talks about in his article, he refers to Bandura (1990) and her self-efficacy description which suggests that students will be gain more confidence and a higher level of self-efficacy when they learn more about a subject, this is being strengthened by the authors Howorth, Smith and Parkinson (2012) whom suggest that social learning has a positive effect on self-efficacy. Positive feedback or rewards will form a certain behavior (Abaho, 2015), but it is not only a positive attituded that will change the behavior, if the student does not understand the assignment and feedback is left out, it may lower the confidence of the student, which Howorth, Smith and Parkinson (2012) reinforce with statements that the learning and understanding part of a new subject increases the confidence and therefore also motivation.

Barnes, Christensen and Hansen (2012) says that when students and teachers interact using a case study pedagogy method the students’ ability to solve problems will increase. The way they communicate with one another will come more easy and their decisions will be more accurate if the students work with a non-fictional company. Mathews Nkhoma (2013) is another author whom speaks well of case-based teaching and the positive effects that comes with it, including improvements in the students’ perception of satisfaction, from a learner point of
view. Something like non-fictive case studies is also mentioned by Grassberger & Wilder (2015), the authors have decided to name it living case studies. It is described as an enhanced version of a case study and the benefits are better understanding, more motivated students and better problem solving skills, Raeln (2008) also highlights the non-fictive case study, saying that it will bring greater satisfaction to the students.

Not all types of case studies are being highlighted (Bennet, et al., 2014), the traditional one is said to not be up to date or tailormade for today’s students, the reasons they are not up to date is because the feedback is said to be limited, which gets reinforced by Howorth, Smith & Parkinson (2012) and their article about lower self-efficacy, the feedback that is given is often criticism (Bennet, et al., 2014) which will lower the students confidence and therefore reduce their motivation and understanding (Bandura, 1990). Some disadvantages using case studies, are that the data collected can be difficult to analyze, scientists do not approve of the studies scientific reliability, one of the reasons that studies lose their reliability is that people change their behavior when they know that they are being studied (Iveroth, 2012), something that Mark Murphy (2014) brings up in his article about doing studies on real companies.

Konklusion/slutsats

The impact that case studies has on teaching and learning differs from person to person. Something that can be shown in this research is that the teaching method that includes case studying is more effective than the ones that are not. What most of the authors are saying is that by using case studies, the students will be more motivated to do further studies and their hunger for more information and knowledge increases. Because of a better understanding, the students will have a higher level of confidence and self-efficacy for as long as they get the feedback and help that they need.

The traditional way that case studies have been used doesn’t seem to be wrong, but not all authors agree on that it is executed the right way. By using living case studies, the students will gain a more realistic picture and because it is a study based on a real company, students tend to treat it in a different way. On the other side, by doing researches on a real company, limitations are unavoidable. The company wants to be seen in the best way possible and therefore biases are a common fact, this leads to skepticism from scientist and therefore the entire truth is rarely presented.

The final thought about this study is that case studies should be used more frequently, not only to satisfy students, but to increase their understanding and knowledge. This is because the school system is old, students has an attitude that do not involve the preference of reading long texts or listening to lectures. Students seems to be interested in a different learning method that involve discussions and problem solving.
Further studies

Since it was easier said than done to find information about how the case study impacted the teacher, I would suggest to do more research about that. Most of the information that was found in this paper is from a student’s point of view and therefore it only answers half of the questioned asked.

Referenser


study.html


