

Assessment Case Study

Learning through doing: Using digital tools to facilitate a simulated business project

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Course: Z11EN MSc Stage 1 Engineering Project Management

Module: 7056MAA: Advanced Strategic International Project Mgt



AN EXAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT THAT INVOLVES...

- Authenticity
- Assessment as/for learning
- Group work

SUMMARY

The lecturer wanted to devise a “real-world” assessment which would enhance students’ understanding of business performance analysis, as well as adding value to the student experience. He decided to use the “[Phone Ventures Simulation](#)” provided by the educational publishing house [Edumundo](#). In this simulation, students work in teams of up to 5 to manage their own multi-national smartphone company. This comprises multiple stages, from devising a business plan through to developing company profile and taking strategic and operational decisions for all their target markets.

ACTIONS

Students were given access to the planning tool [Monday.com](#) to use during their group projects. This is a widely used tool within engineering project management, so using it added to the **authenticity of the task**, while enabling group discussion and planning simultaneously.

The students “ran” the company for 6 rounds, with each round equating to one business year of operation. The first rounds were during a scheduled day of teaching to encourage students to **engage synchronously** in the presence of the academic team and Edumundo support team. Subsequent rounds had longer duration times to enable students to analyse the results, discuss and strategize, make decisions and apply their knowledge.

Following the simulation, students were **assessed on how they worked as a team** during the exercise, rather than on their individual performance. This was captured by writing a reflective essay at the end of the module, where students had to deliver a recorded reflective video presentation collating their experience and self-development and incorporating a logbook in the appendices of their Power-Point slides.

IMPACT

Students gained a greater **understanding of key concepts** relating to the module, e.g. business strategy. They also had chance to develop and apply valuable **professional skills**. For example, the teams had to work within international time zones as there were students in different parts of the world.

SCALABILITY

Both software packages could easily be used for assessments in different educational contexts. The **simulation with Edumundo** afforded students chance to enhance their team-working, collaboration and long-distance communication skills.

Meanwhile, the **Monday.com tool** was very beneficial as it offered clear visibility of team workload and outstanding tasks. The license is free when used by students and staff who support with their coursework. Individual students are also able to use the tool for planning their own work.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Students were very positive about the experience. They particularly valued the opportunity to be involved in decision making at different stages, and to consider the various factors inherent in international project management.

The module team received 100% for **student satisfaction** in the recent Module Evaluation Questionnaire. As one student commented, “the modules and content are all well-crafted and detailed with industry partners, simulations and collaborations [providing a] robust learning experience.”

MESSAGE TO PEERS

- Don’t be shy about **trailing new experiences** for students, particularly if the envisioned outcomes will help overcome existing challenges.
- Ensure that students are clear on the **aims of the assessment**, and how they link to module-/course-level learning outcomes.
- Assessment is an opportunity to **make education fun**, with hands-on skills and experiences that students will remember at job interviews and beyond.
- *Karim is happy to speak to colleagues about the use of Edumundo or Monday– please email him for details.*