

INTERNATIONALIZING THE BUSINESS CURRICULUM: AN INTRODUCTORY MARKETING COURSE EXAMPLE

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ABSTRACT

A report of a three-phase program to internationalize the introductory marketing course. The resulting two-week teaching module was based on a survey of international business practitioners, recommendations of a seven-university consortium, and analyses of current texts and course syllabi.

BACKGROUND

The School of Business Administration at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU), Tacoma, Washington, is the lead institution in a seven-school Consortium for International Business Education (CIBE) that is currently developing sample modules for internationalizing the business curriculum. PLU is serving as the clearinghouse for the modules, course outlines, syllabi, reading lists and other international business information. Results are available to all interested colleges and universities.

The member schools in the consortium include PLU, Eastern Washington University, Seattle University, Willamette University, Portland State University, the University of Portland and Idaho State University.

In a report prepared at the formation of the consortium, the following purpose was stated:

The seven schools conceive the consortium to be a regional association committed to the goal of fostering among their students and faculty a more mature and informed understanding of America's role in an economically and politically interdependent world.

The consortium's program was designed to be integrated under a three-year, progressive plan, as follows:

Year I. Core Modules. The objective was to prepare an intensive curriculum of internationalized business courses, consisting of international modules for incorporation into each of the nine "core" (AACSB Common Body of Knowledge) business courses.

Year II. Specialized Curriculum. The objective was development of a specialized curriculum in international business, including creation of one or two new courses to integrate the core modules, and to develop international modules for at least five upper-division specialization tracks.

Year III. Joint Degree Program. The objective was to develop a joint degree program in international business, combining a major or minor in

business with a major or minor in international studies and languages.

OBJECTIVES FOR INTERNATIONALIZING MARKETING

The first step in the program was to develop objectives for each of the common body of knowledge courses' internationalization. Representatives from the various universities' marketing departments agreed on these objectives for the introductory course in marketing:

1. To provide a structural framework which allows students to gain a measurable level of awareness of the aspects, opportunities and problems associated with business conducted across national boundaries.
2. To develop a framework that allows instructors of the introductory marketing course the greatest possible freedom of instructional method commensurate with presentation of a common core of knowledge.
3. To provide for instruction in specific content areas, the knowledge of which managers of local businesses that are engaged in international business recommend for prospective entry-level personnel.
4. To accomplish the internationalization of the introductory marketing course with the minimum of disruption in existing course content and style.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

An informal poll of consortium school marketing faculty revealed a nearly equal division on instructors' preferences for the following two approaches for integrating international modules into the introductory marketing course:

1. Incorporating international aspects and implications into the existing core of marketing knowledge by adding or replacing existing domestic examples of basic marketing concepts with international ones.
2. Introducing a distinct, one or two-week unit of instruction on international marketing into the syllabus; the "module" should include cases or readings which illustrate the special problems that are associated with marketing across national boundaries.

Preliminary recommendations from the CIBE administrators called for the preparers of modules for the marketing course to emphasize at least these four content topics:

1. Multinational product planning
2. Multinational pricing strategies
3. Multinational marketing channels
4. International marketing strategies

Whether Promotion was left out as a result of an oversight or planned for inclusion in the strategies section was never made clear.

Further complicating the possibility of standardization was the fact that some of the universities operate on a ten-week quarter system, while others on the 14-week semester system.

The PLU Experience

At PLU, which on the semester system, the development of an international module for the basic marketing course (BA 370, Marketing Systems) occurred in three stages. First, each marketing faculty member prepared a proposal for an international module for the course. Then, a consensus of the ideas in each individual proposal were incorporated into the final model, which was to be developed into a distinct, two-week unit of instruction dealing exclusively with international marketing topics.

Once the consensus model was adopted, the second stage--search of the available literature--was carried out. The literature searched included introductory marketing texts, textbooks dealing exclusively with either international or multinational marketing or trade, course syllabi from other universities and colleges both within and outside of the consortium, and course descriptions from special international trade schools.

Third stage in the project involved survey research of a sample of managers of local businesses and other organizations involved in international trade.

Literature Consensus

The following topics represent a researcher-determined consensus of the most often mentioned/discussed topics contained in the literature examined:

1. The importance of international marketing
2. Theories of international marketing
3. The environment of international business
4. International marketing practices
5. International marketing, organization and policy
6. Financing international trade transactions
7. International distribution
8. International promotion
9. International marketing research and opportunity analysis
10. Effects of politics and law on international marketing
11. Financing export and/or import programs

These topics were compressed into the following broad areas: 1) Theory and practice of international trade/marketing, 2) the environment of international marketing, 3) International market opportunity analysis and research and 4) the International marketing mix.

Survey Research

Ramenarides and Mullens (1981) suggest a survey be conducted of the managers of businesses and industries engaged in international business in order to determine practitioners' perceived course-content needs. Following this recommendation, a survey instrument was designed by the researcher and administered to the memberships of the Tacoma and Seattle, Washington, Propeller Clubs. The instrument was developed in a modified Delphi method through a series of personal interviews with officers of the two clubs.

Subjects were first asked to rate the importance of 28 international business/marketing topics on a four-point scale. Second, they were asked to divide a total of 50 classroom instruction hours among those topics they felt should be included in a proposed one-semester course in international marketing.

The data were tabulated and analyzed, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) on PLU's DEC VAX/VMS computer. Rank order preference and factor analyses were carried out.

In descending order of importance, the sample of business practitioners named these as the most important topics for inclusion in a course on international marketing:

1. Financing export/import programs
2. Researching foreign markets
3. International marketing concepts
4. International contracts
5. Theories of international trade
6. Political/legal factors in international trade
7. U.S. customs laws

SPSS's principal factoring with iteration (PA2) and varimax rotation for a four-factor solution resulted in formation of four distinct clusters of content for development as class lecture/discussion groupings. These data are displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Loading</u>	<u>Factor</u>	<u>Content Label</u>
1. Financing Ex/Im	.53558	I	Developing, managing and financing products for exports and imports.
2. US Customs Laws	.40258	II	
3. Export Trade Develop	.59374		Theoretical, legal, political and cultural aspects of international marketing.
4. Letters of Credit	.54457		
5. Ex. Transport Mgmt.	.50635		International logistics and promotion.
6. Consignments	.81054	III	
7. Inland Transport	.70552		
8. Customs Clearance	.86164		
9. Shipping/Collecting Documentation	.56440	IV	Pricing and the economic environment of international marketing.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION			
10. Theory of Int'l Trade	.62309		Pacific Lutheran University's School of Business Administration is, like most colleges and universities accredited by the AACSB, engaged in the process of internationalizing its business curriculum. The cooperative effort of the CIBE consortium of seven Pacific Northwest schools has served as a catalyst for developing model international components (modules) for most if not all of the core or common body of knowledge courses in the business major, as well as for many of the upper level concentration courses. This report represents the experience of one department--marketing--as it carried out its charge to develop such a model for the introductory marketing course.
11. Int'l. Mktg. Concepts	.68423		
12. Int'l. Trade Relations	.56802		
13. Int'l. Contracts	.52574		
14. Pol/Laws of Int'l. Trade	.62715		
15. Int'l. transportation	.60479		
16. Economic Implications	.54127		
17. Government Relations	.47087		
18. Ocean Transportation	.79253		
19. Marine Insurance	.78445		
20. International Promotion	-.44455		
21. Cultural Environment	.54688		
22. Int'l. Monetary System	.62095		
23. Int'l. Pricing	.46000		
24. Research Foreign Mkts.	.45781		
25. Air Cargo Transport	.41142		

FINDINGS

No consensus is apparent in the perceived importance of international marketing course or module content. The item mentioned/used most often in the texts examined was "the Importance of International Marketing." The CIBE consortium staff determined that "Multinational Product Planning" was most important. Business practitioners felt that "Financing Exports/Imports" was most important. Similar differences occurred for each ranking.

Because of this lack of agreement, the researcher elected to rely most heavily on the factor analysis of practitioners' survey responses for development of a sample international content module.

The four factors were subjectively interpreted and determined to be content areas for the four two-hour lecture discussion meetings scheduled for the two-week module. Factors and their labels were:

Major problems associated with the project were the lack of consensus among the sources for the module's content, and the split in focus or approach to take in implementing the module into the classroom.

As of the beginning of the 1984-85 fiscal year, CIBE had received and transmitted to other institutions more than 50 individual modules for internationalization of business courses at both the core and upper division level. Also, a joint degree program as called for in the third year of the program had been instituted at PLU and two of the other member universities.

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