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Case Studies: A Brief Introduction and Suggested Guidelines for the Field

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Welcome to the Case Study Edition of the *Journal of Arts Entrepreneurship Education*. I am excited to present this format to you as a way to apply real-world case studies to entrepreneurship theory in order to enhance your pedagogical approach within the field of arts entrepreneurship.

As previously outlined by the editors, case studies are a common teaching and learning tool within entrepreneurship and its parent discipline, business, as a method of bringing the nuances of realism to complex theoretical problems. However, within the arts entrepreneurship field, they are used less frequently for pedagogical purposes and often with hesitation. Consequently, in this guide to the Case Study Edition, I aim to briefly:

- provide a rationale for using case studies in arts entrepreneurship education;
- illustrate what makes a good case study;
- highlight the mechanics of writing case studies by clearly outlining the expectations of a submission to JAEE for both traditional research cases and teaching cases;
- summarize the cases within this special issue and highlight why they demonstrate best practice example cases.

Why Use Case Methodology to Understand and Teach Arts Entrepreneurship?

Within entrepreneurship education, the case study methodology is an established teaching strategy to develop the analytical and problem-solving skills of students. Case studies can be used to teach complex theories whereby their application not only reinforces the theory in a real-world context, but also highlights the limitations of theory given that not all businesses “follow the rules.” Cases are used in a wide variety of educational settings because they have been noted to enhance critical thinking, communication and teamwork skills among students as well as facilitate interdisciplinary learning by illuminating the interconnections between academic topics.¹ Specifically

¹ Clement Adelman, “Case Study, Methodology and Educational Evaluation: A Personal View,” in *Case Study Evaluation: Past, Present and Future Challenges*, ed. Jill Russell, Trisha Greenhalgh, and Saville Kushner (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2015), 1-18; Maria de Nazaré Castro Trigo Coimbra and Alcina Manuela de Oliveira Martins, “Case Studying Educational Research: A Way of Looking at Reality,” *American Journal of Educational Research* 1, no. 9 (2013), 391-395; Kit Grauer, “A Case for Case Study Research in Education,” in *Action Research Methods Plain and Simple*, ed. Sheri R. Klein (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 69-79.

within entrepreneurship education, their effectiveness for pedagogical purposes was verified by Zotov et al., who provided an excellent summary of the benefits and drawbacks of case study methodology.² These include the improvement of decision-making skills through the ability to separate fact from assumption and the ability to determine the advantages and disadvantages of a situation and develop multiple proposed solutions to a problem.

But what does this mean for the arts student who practices eight hours a day to perfect a Liszt concerto? This student has no idea that one day they may need to translate this concerto into a ticket seller and deal with the complex administrative barriers that exist outside of that practice room. These can include but are not limited to such issues as starting a business or non-profit startup, raising capital or engaging in funding efforts, networking with donors and possible investors, grantsmanship and grant writing, competitive landscapes, consumer preferences, legal issues and taxes. These are not the focus of that student in that moment. Consequently, I believe that entrepreneurship education is a fundamental component within arts education, and the use of case analysis in this process can provide many benefits to include:

1. Provide an understanding of the operational aspect of the arts industries and how business and arts collide within the arts infrastructure;
2. Bring real-world context to venture creation within the arts by illustrating key concepts in entrepreneurship theory;
3. Provide entrepreneurial career models and hands-on learning for arts students that are not currently considered in a traditional arts education.

By using complex real-world problems as the focus, case analysis challenges students to learn skills appropriate to dealing with practical problems they may face within their arts discipline and/or as future arts entrepreneurs.

What Makes a Good Case?

Case studies are often in-depth investigations into a single event or business condition designed to engage students in the analysis of authentic problems and events. By presenting content in the format of a narrative (often accompanied by numerical data, charts, illustrations or visuals), a case should include questions and activities that promote group discussion and solving of complex problems. In this way, case studies can enhance development of the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive learning and facilitate analysis, evaluation and application rather than simple recall of knowledge.³

² Vladimir Zotov et al., "Case Study: An Effective Technology of Modern Entrepreneurship Education," *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education* 23, no. 1 (2020): 1-13.

³ Lorin Anderson and David Krathwohl, *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Complete Edition* (White Plains, NY: Longman Publishing Group, 2000).

While many cases are drawn from real events in which decisions have been made and the outcome is known, most cases do not describe the decision itself, leaving to users the task of analyzing case information and determining a course of action. Authors then provide teaching notes or an instructor's manual to support the educator in this analysis to guide their students to possible outcomes.

A good case should be engaging and simple to read. It should not include complex theoretical concepts; rather, it should be a starting point to illustrate those concepts in a real-world context. According to Dorothy Robyn from the Kennedy School of Government Case Program, a good teaching case should be brief and address a specific theoretical situation.⁴ It should contain institutional or historical knowledge to provide the reader with context and include information such as tables, charts or visuals that require interpretation. A good case might also encompass conflict-provoking decisions so students are asked to synthesize and defend a position or view a situation from more than one perspective. Finally, a good case should be generalizable to a larger population so wider discussions can occur and the class session itself can be an active learning experience for students.

Submitting a Case to the *Journal of Arts Entrepreneurship Education*

In developing the guidelines for these cases, best practice models were taken from established business and entrepreneurship case journals. Consequently, the *Journal of Arts Entrepreneurship Education* seeks submissions in two formats: (1) Teaching Cases and (2) Research Case Studies. Case study data can be generated through qualitative techniques (observations, textual or visual analysis, interviews, focus groups), quantitative methods (objective measurement and analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires and surveys) or a mix of both types of data within a case. The *Journal of Arts Entrepreneurship Education* is also open to alternative case approaches, and authors should work closely with the editors to discuss possible opportunities.

1. Teaching Case Studies – As a Pedagogical Tool to Support Student Learning and Assessment

A teaching case study is a pedagogical tool presenting a critical issue in arts entrepreneurship that can be used as a lens through which one can examine the theoretical underpinning and practical application of a topic. The average teaching case is 10-12 pages long (including figures, tables, appendices and references), but shorter cases and twists on traditional formats are welcome for consideration. All teaching cases must be accompanied by an Instructor's Manual that provides information about the intended target audience, relevant theoretical concepts or models, research methodology

⁴ Dorothy Robyn, "What Makes a Good Case?" Case No. N15-86-673.0* (Boston: Kennedy School of Government Case Program, 1986).

(if appropriate), discussion questions and suggested responses and possible teaching strategies for the case.

Guidelines for Authors

A submission in this format should comply with following guidelines:

Teaching Case

- cases must be factual: that is, using real people, real companies, real situations. The author should conduct primary research with the protagonist, but supporting materials can include secondary sources. If appropriate, the author may disguise the company and individuals involved (and note this on the first page of the case), but this does not relieve authors of the responsibility for obtaining a release;
- cases should highlight/demonstrate 2-3 core theoretical concepts, but the theory discussion is not included in the case;
- cases should be easy to read;
- all cases must be written in the past tense, except for direct quotes;
- cases do not always have a decision focus; illustrative, descriptive and analytical cases are welcome;
- cases must include an instructor's manual.

Instructor's Manual (IM)

The Instructor's Manual must have the same rigor applied as the case study itself. This manual is a pedagogical tool to support the teaching of theoretical concepts and, as such, should contain the following information (at minimum):

- synopsis/abstract- summarize the case and the theoretical concepts it can be used to explore;
- suggested target audience;
- learning objectives (3-4 maximum);
- recommendations for commonly-used textbook chapters or other published works that support the theoretical concepts used in the case;
- theory discussion- this is where the case study must be clearly linked to 2-3 theoretical concepts in the discipline;
- discussion questions and possible answers that illustrate how the real-world concepts illustrate or defy our theoretical understanding of an entrepreneurship concept;
- teaching strategy (if appropriate);
- student response (if tested);
- epilogue (if known);

- pre/post readings and activities to prepare/reinforce learning objectives–annotated bibliography;
- suggested outline of methods used to assess knowledge.

2. Research Case Studies

A research case study should exemplify, contradict, generate, test and/or elaborate upon existing theory in the field of entrepreneurship. For this journal, the context of the case should relate to the arts in its wider context. Research case studies can be explanatory, descriptive or exploratory in nature and the methods can be qualitative, quantitative or mixed. Research case studies can follow the single-case or multiple-case design. The case should include questions for discussion and, if appropriate, the authors may want to consider adding teaching notes (but these are not required).

Guidelines for Authors

It is highly recommended that authors use the guide provided by Yin to support this format of submission.⁵

A submission in this format should comply with following guidelines:

- an abstract (200 words or fewer) that summarizes the study;
- the case must be factual: that is, using real people, real organizations, real situations. You may disguise those involved via pseudonyms, but this does not relieve you of the responsibility for obtaining a release where needed;
- clearly articulate the purpose of the study and the research questions to be explored using the case;
- explain the theoretical framework(s) you used to understand, analyze and interpret the phenomena of interest in the case;
- describe the methodology you chose to employ (e.g., grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative analysis, ethnomethodology, etc.);
- if appropriate, articulate how you circumscribed or “bounded” the case into a single unit of analysis;
- in the Method section, detail the setting and participants and how you gained access to them, any materials or instrumentation you used to collect data, a stepwise account of the procedures you used to carry out the research and a description of your data analysis techniques;
- if necessary, provide definitions for terminology that may not be understood widely within the JAEE readership;
- provide assurance you employed multiple sources of evidence (i.e., triangulation) in your analyses, and that you took steps to ensure validity/trustworthiness;

⁵ See Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 6th ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018).

- along with the presentation of your findings and interpretations, discuss the limitations of your study and implications for both research and practice;
- all cases must be written in the past tense, except for direct quotes;
- provide a researcher positionality statement that acknowledges how your background, experiences and biases may have influenced your analysis and interpretation of the case.

In submitting a teaching or research case to JAEE, it is expected that authors apply rigor to their content and methodology, that they write in a style appropriate to the readership (e.g., research case versus teaching case) and that they seek the appropriate Institutional Review Board approval for their submission (when appropriate).

Model Submissions to JAEE

This inaugural case study issue of JAEE includes two *teaching case* submissions that provide models for future submissions to the Journal. They have been carefully selected due to their ability to highlight a number of theoretical concepts from the entrepreneurship literature as it pertains to the arts.

Single Carrot Theatre

The teaching case by Chin and Pink examines Single Carrot Theatre, a mid-sized theatre company in Baltimore. Started by a dynamic group of graduates with a passion for authentic art, this case takes us through their entrepreneurial journey as they experience growing pains such as physical and financial resource constraints. The researchers take a qualitative approach to the research design and, through interviews with the founders, provide readers with unique insight into the decision-making process that led to the focus, and refocus, of the company's mission. In addition, we learn first-hand about the leadership style that was embedded in the organization's culture.

The case then describes how the threat of closure forced the leadership at Single Carrot Theatre to use creative problem solving in order to pivot their entire business model while working to retain their identity and artistic focus. Finally, readers will learn how effective communication was used to overcome the perception of failure so that the company could grow and thrive through continuous innovation.

As per the guidelines for a teaching case, the authors provide educators with an Instructor's Manual (IM). In this section, they clearly articulate the learning objectives of this teaching case, which are to:

1. Explain the risks and rewards considered during a major arts organizational pivot;
2. Discuss how management structures and adaptive capacity can support an organization's ability to pivot;
3. Consider how artistic vision impacts decision making in an arts organization.

The proposed questions and exemplar answers included in the IM show how the case can explore complex theoretical concepts and facilitate discussion, which can take place in a classroom or be used as part of an assessment of knowledge. In addition, the authors provide suggestions for readings that would enhance and deepen knowledge in these areas. Within this best practice case, the authors also provide implementation guidelines for teaching the case, which is easily accessible and can be used in a variety of arts education settings to include Arts Entrepreneurship, Arts Management and Theatre Management.

Powell Flutes

This teaching case by Steven Wasser uses a self-reflective approach, as the author was the owner of Powell Flutes, the organization in review. It focuses on the concept of innovation, one of the most fundamental aspects of entrepreneurship theory. Using the evolution of his company as the case, Wasser asks if innovation is feasible in a stable market with a relatively fixed product design. He clearly demonstrates that innovation can be derived through multiple methods, and in this case, he highlights innovations in the materials used to produce the flute, the mechanics (i.e., the techniques used to manufacture the instrument) and the market (i.e., driven by market fit for sound, quality and brand).

By interweaving these concepts, Wasser demonstrates the many drivers of innovation to include market research, having an open mind, assuming away constraints and deep experience in your product or industry.

The Instructor's Manual provided with this case highlights three learning objectives:

- **Operations:** How to achieve technological innovation in a stodgy industry producing a device that impacts the production of art;
- **Marketing:** How to identify and quantify customer needs and understand a product's "value equation"; further, the establishment of a "fighting brand," and how to use technology and operations to address market opportunities;
- **Entrepreneurship:** How to innovate products and technology in an arts industry where the art itself establishes constraints on innovation.

In addition, Wasser provides users with a thorough understanding of the theoretical concepts informing this case; namely, the concept of market disruption. Finally, discussion questions and model answers are provided for the user and an epilogue provides a narrative of the company's current status.

The Advancement of Case Study Scholarship in Arts Entrepreneurship Education

Case studies published in the *Journal of Arts Entrepreneurship Education* will provide a framework for teaching entrepreneurial concepts within the arts disciplines. Consequently, the two teaching cases in this issue were chosen as best practice examples

based upon a number of factors. Not only have the authors followed the instructions set out in this guide, they have used arts disciplines as the context of their cases. They are easily read and understood by a wide variety of audiences in the arts and other disciplines and yet, do not require prior knowledge of entrepreneurial theories and concepts. Additionally, they are of an appropriate length but provide the reader and instructor enough depth to explore entrepreneurship theory through use of the Instructor's Manual.

I hope you enjoy the cases in this edition and see them as one of the many models that can be published. My sincere thanks to Dr. Jonathan Gangi (Penn State College of Arts and Architecture) for his support in this process.

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