Overview: International business teaching resources

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Teaching resources: Textbooks
Never before have students had such a plethora of resources in their quest for information and never before have IB faculty had so many options when choosing the most timely resources.

"Because things are changing so quickly internationally, textbook publishers are moving to a two-year revision cycle from what had been a three-year cycle," said Lee H. Radebaugh. As a result, the material will be more current, he said.

"Most textbooks provide a variety of resources, including instructors manuals, online quizzes, test banks, PowerPoint presentations, videos and downloadable content for iPods." Integrating these and other elements into classroom teaching depends on each professor's goals and comfort level.

- Videos. "One thing about videos is that they're out of date very quickly," said Radebaugh, recalling one he showed recently about Saudi Arabia. "They were talking about how the low price of oil was not generating very much revenue for the oil-producing countries. Students immediately recognized that this did not apply to the current situation. YouTube is "a great source of current and interesting shorter clips which can be imbedded in PowerPoint presentations," Radebaugh said.

- Current events. "Use the textbook as the base material for the class, the theoretical foundation. Use current events to illustrate the relevance of the theory," Radebaugh said. "In an hour-and-twenty minute class I'll spend 30 minutes going through current events. It's a good way to make the class a lot of fun for the students. Articles on international business can be found in publications such as The Economist, BusinessWeek, Wall Street Journal, and Financial Times.

- Short cases. "Most textbooks offer short cases and they’re used primarily to illustrate concepts presented in the chapter and foster discussion by the students," said Radebaugh, adding that short cases work well when heavy content material limits the time available for discussion.

- Longer cases. "These can be used for more in-depth analysis. Again, time limitations may require that breadth be sacrificed for depth and some chapters will not be covered. But cases are a good way to go because they involve critical thinking, presentation skills, participation, etc.”

- Games and simulations. "The challenge with simulations is that they take a lot of time and don't necessarily work well in conjunction with other class requirements." Consequently, there are choices to be made, said Radebaugh. "A simulation can be developed as a separate class that will build on the IB material or the professor can decide to make the IB class shorter in content, longer on simulation.” Whatever the choice, “do not just slap a simulation on top of everything you’re doing.” To find a simulation and other resources, Radebaugh recommended the Michigan State University (MSU) website globaledge.msu.edu. The site is continually updated and is "one of the best resources on the Internet.”

KELLY JETT MURPHREY is director of the Center for the Study of Western Hemispheric Trade and associate director of outreach for the Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) in the Mays Business School at Texas A&M University. Murphrey holds a PhD and other degrees from Texas A&M University, Thunderbird School of Global Management, and the University of Texas in Austin.

Teaching resources: Technology
Students need to start thinking globally even if an overseas job is not in their future. "We need our students to be able to make global decisions whether they are part of the 5 percent destined to work abroad or the 95 percent that will be employed in the United States,” said Kelly Jett Murphrey.

"Often, we start training toward the 5 percent rather than the other 95 percent.” There needs to be an emphasis on expanding the global mindset of all students and helping them “internalize the information in a way they can use it and express it.”

Why has this not happened? There are several reasons, said Murphrey.

"First, IB is an interdisciplinary process involving business, liberal arts and language faculty. These people don’t always want to talk to each other.

"Second, we teach all of this but we are challenged to make globalization relevant to students who think their jobs will not require it.

"Third, faculty fear. Professors in other disciplines may not feel comfortable with IB. And IB professors don’t always feel comfortable outside of their specialty.”

However, "you do not need to be an IB expert in order to help with the globalization process. You just need to be a facilitator of the process and direct students to available resources,” said Murphrey.

- Basic guide to exporting www.unzco.com/basicguide/index.html
- BBC News www.news.bbc.co.uk/

Recommended textbooks
Radebaugh recommended several textbooks which he said enjoyed the largest percentage of the domestic market.


“These books are comprehensive and very similar. They all use little cases; it’s just a matter of preference as to what you think will work best for your class.”
Developing IB programs in community colleges, small universities: Why do it?

It’s a global world

Why should small colleges invest in developing international business programs? Jan Smith is very clear about the answer.

“We live in a global world; students, faculty and employers need this kind of education,” she said, addressing a breakout session in which she and Kelly Jett Murphrey talked about internationalizing the curriculum at small colleges.

“It’s a disservice to our students if we don’t advance their knowledge in a global world,” said Smith, a principal with JMS Global and formerly director of international programs at Austin Community College. She has a BA and MBA from the University of Texas at Austin and holds a CPA license.

A program’s success depends on various factors. “It must meet well-defined needs, have support from the business community, commitment from the institution and faculty, and a cadre of champions among the staff.”

There are a number of steps to take before launching an IB program.

Needs-based. What skills/qualifications are businesses looking for when hiring? Do your students meet hiring needs or do they fall short of employer expectations in any area? What does the institution need to do to better prepare students to be fully employable? “Define the needs of businesses, students and school. This will enable you to develop a program that will serve the community’s interests and draw students.”

Business community. Is it future executives or technicians that are in demand in your local community? “This is something you’ll learn as you develop linkages with chambers of commerce; Sister Cities; the Small Business Development Center; economic development organizations; and local, regional and state agencies. It’s amazing the soft spot that business people have for students and you’ll find them eager to extend whatever support they can.”

Faculty. “Twenty years ago faculty didn’t have to know much about international business; today, faculty may be fearful and lack the competency to teach IB. Training and faculty development programs can help increase their comfort level and support.”

Smith said it is not necessary to “reinvent the wheel; research what similar institutions are doing. Ideas and support can be generated among academic organizations including CIBERs, NASBITE International (previously named National Association of Small Business International Trade Educators), CCID-Community Colleges for International Development, ACIE-American Council on International Intercultural Education, NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

Information provided by Kelly Jett Murphrey