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*A DEFENSE OF THE USE OF NATIONAL TEACHING CASES IN
ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION¹*

**EM DEFESA DO USO DE CASOS DE ENSINO NACIONAIS NA EDUCAÇÃO
EMPREENDEDORA**

João Paulo Moreira Silva² Liliane de Oliveira Guimarães³ Paulo Vitor Siffert⁴

Entrepreneurial activity represents an economic force of significant impact, capable of altering social and economic conditions at both local and national levels (Kuratko, 2005). Understanding the role of entrepreneurship as a development factor has enabled practical and theoretical advances in the field, such as reflecting on and recognizing different types of entrepreneurial activities — including social, sustainable, cultural, and other forms — as well as advancing efforts toward the dissemination of entrepreneurship education (Fayolle, 2013; Lackéus, 2015). The growing recognition of entrepreneurship's economic and social importance has encouraged universities to develop entrepreneurship education initiatives through teaching, research, and outreach practices conducted in collaboration with external stakeholders (Silva et al., 2021).

This recognition, however, was not always so straightforward. Until the second half of the twentieth century, the prevailing view held that entrepreneurship could not be taught, as it was thought to depend on innate individual traits (Kuratko, 2005; Sarasvathy et al., 2014). Put differently, the field of study — and practice — of entrepreneurship education is, from a historical standpoint, a relatively recent development. This short trajectory continues to raise questions about the intended audience, the pedagogical methods

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² Centro Universitário Unihorizontes. joao.msilva@live.com

³ Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais. lilianeog@pucminas.br

⁴ Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais. siffert.pv@gmail.com



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employed, and the criteria used to assess outcomes in entrepreneurial skill development (Guimarães, 2003; Fayolle, 2013).

Building on this methodological gap, it is worth noting that the last of these questions — the evaluation of entrepreneurship education programs in relation to students and their entrepreneurial aspirations — has remained particularly contested. Despite considerable scholarly attention, no methodological consensus has yet emerged regarding which approaches are most effective within entrepreneurship education programs (Bae et al., 2014).

Specifically, entrepreneurship education courses were first offered in the United States in 1947, aimed at qualifying World War II veterans for self-employment (Guimarães, 2003). It was not until the 1970s, however, and more markedly during the 1980s, that entrepreneurship training courses multiplied and gained prominence within U.S. institutions offering MBA programs (Kuratko, 2005). In terms of course content, entrepreneurship education has traditionally focused on functional knowledge (Fayolle, 2013). This type of content has, since the field's early development, favored the use of active or experiential methodologies, which seek to enable students to experience and reflect upon real-world business situations and problems (Alberton & Silva, 2018; Fayolle, 2013), as well as action-based, contextual, or problem-centered learning (Schaefer & Minello, 2020).

One of the representative approaches to practice-oriented entrepreneurship education is the teaching case method (Guimarães, 2003; Kuratko, 2005). But what exactly are teaching cases? Alberton and Silva (2018) offer a comprehensive and broad definition:

a form of work that encompasses an account of a situation experienced by a professional, a private, public, or third-sector organization, or a specific project of a practical and/or social nature, presenting a dilemma to be analyzed within the context of undergraduate or graduate teaching. In this way, the case method supports the decision-making process, fostering greater integration between theory and practice (p. 750).



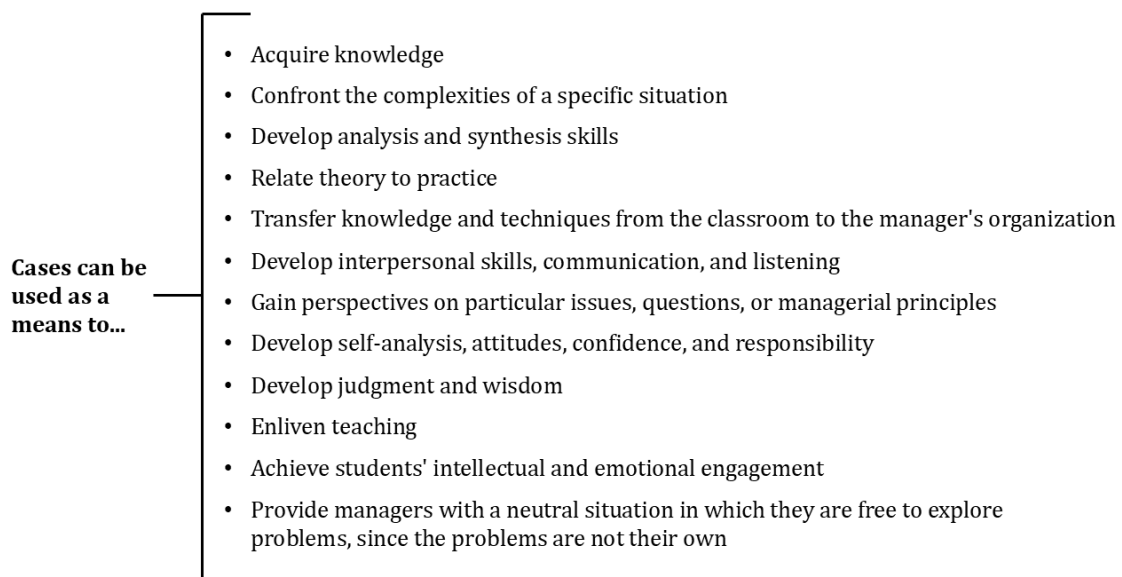
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Thus, teaching cases can be employed in various ways, depending on the instructor's experience and the objectives of the course (Jennings, 1996), spanning undergraduate and graduate courses (Alberton & Silva, 2018), as well as specialization and MBA programs, where application of the method has been well established (Guimarães, 2003; Kuratko, 2005). With respect to the definition presented above, it is important to highlight the perspective of connecting entrepreneurial practice with entrepreneurship research through the use of teaching cases. Observing real-life entrepreneurs (Sarasvathy et al., 2014) and their routine processes and problems (Kuratko, 2005), for instance, serves as a tool for integrating entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial practice, and the field of pedagogy more broadly (Fayolle, 2013).

Figure 1, below, presents the pedagogical objectives associated with the use of teaching cases in entrepreneurship education.

Figure 1 - Teaching Cases and Their Various Functions



Note. Adapted from Jennings (1996).

Based on the above, the breadth and range of opportunities that teaching cases offer to entrepreneurship education become evident. According to



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Jennings (1996), teaching cases can be widely employed by facilitators as a teaching method aimed at illustration, the development of strategic analysis and thinking, and also at sustaining student interest and stimulating discussion. With respect to the three objectives cited above, all of them can be understood as activities aimed at developing entrepreneurial skills (Lackéus, 2015), falling within the same category of initiatives that encourage students to recognize opportunities, create business plans, or conduct market research.

However, as Fayolle (2013, p. 700) emphasizes, “the ‘client’ of entrepreneurship education is the society in which it is embedded.” In other words, entrepreneurship education must align with the socioeconomic needs of the various actors involved in the local economy, which leads us to advocate for the study, practice, and exploration of teaching cases featuring national entrepreneurs as protagonists (Silva & Marinho, 2012).

THE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF TEACHING CASES IN BRAZILIAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

In Brazil, despite steady growth, the volume of published Brazilian teaching cases still falls short of its full potential (Faria & Figueiredo, 2013). Even so, the use of teaching cases has contributed to breaking down certain paradigms of traditional education, which has historically been more concerned with disseminating imported management techniques presumed to be readily replicable in the daily operations of large corporations.

Silva and Marinho (2012) point out that some of the principal shortcomings among newly graduated managers entering the Brazilian labor market stem from a disconnect between teaching and practice, a gap between academic training and market demands, and a lack of incentives for research. These factors tend to become even more problematic when considering the growing unpredictability of the market, which requires managers to possess an



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increasingly flexible repertoire of knowledge. Accordingly, teaching cases can be employed as learning instruments that contribute to the development of students' creativity and critical thinking, an aspect that is particularly essential when the specificities of the Brazilian business landscape are taken into account.

For teaching cases to fully realize their potential in connecting the classroom with the real challenges of the Brazilian business market, Chimenti (2020) notes that instructors must have a clear sense of what they intend to develop in students—in terms of knowledge, competencies, and skills—when employing a specific case. Furthermore, the author identifies what she considers to be the key elements that should be present in every teaching case for it to be regarded as memorable: a charismatic protagonist, a clear dilemma without an obvious resolution, data that ground the discussion, and teaching notes that assist instructors in planning the class. Table 1 presents the basic elements of a teaching case.

Table 1 - The basic elements of a teaching case

Elements	Observed aspects
Protagonist	A protagonist profile that fosters closeness with the reader. Every memorable case has a protagonist with whom students need to identify.
Dilemma	A memorable case has an impactful dilemma whose solution is far from obvious. Controversies must be raised that can give rise to different interpretations, decisions, and courses of action.
Length	Cases should not be too long — between 8 and 10 pages of text and up to five pages of appendices (teaching notes, data, etc.).
Writing style	Impartial, engaging writing, using the past tense. If possible, add a touch of personality to the case, including quotes from participants and descriptions of formal and informal organizational processes.
Confidentiality	When necessary, changing the name of the company and/or characters to preserve confidentiality.
Sources of information	Indication of the sources used to develop the case. Use of multiple sources: interviews, primary and secondary data — the data must provide information that allows for in-depth analysis and leads to a rich classroom discussion.

Note. Adapted from Abell (1997), Faria and Figueiredo (2013), and Chimenti (2020).

The opening paragraph of a teaching case should introduce the protagonist (along with their position), the central issues at stake, the company, and the timing of the events described (Faria & Figueiredo, 2013); this is generally regarded as the most important paragraph in the entire case. The narrative then



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proceeds to present the organization's background and current context. At this stage, the case introduces the data — whether essential to its resolution or not — along with the critical facts in the company's history and the relevant characters involved, such as partners, suppliers, and clients, as well as a description of how the organization is structured. Because teaching cases are, by nature, simplifications of reality, Chimenti (2020, p. 377) argues that "the data presented should replicate reality as much as possible."

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that, although the text should ideally remain neutral, the characters who populate the case may themselves express their own opinions. This aspect adds a certain depth to the case, and such viewpoints may be incorporated into the text through direct and/or indirect quotation.

In the final paragraph, the ideal approach is to revisit the dilemma introduced in the opening paragraph, prompting the target audience to reflect on the problems presented. According to Roesch (2007), this can take four distinct forms: (i) asking students to define the problems posed by the case; (ii) presenting the problem situation and asking students to propose solutions; (iii) presenting both the problem situation and its solutions, and asking students to evaluate the solutions presented; and (iv) asking students to evaluate the alternatives presented and, as a variation on the previous approach, to propose additional possibilities of their own.

Chimenti (2020) explains that the more detailed the teaching notes, the better the class that a given case will generate. The teaching note represents the moment in which the author's generosity comes into play, as it is when they share their knowledge with fellow instructors. Ultimately, "the guiding thread of a good teaching grade is the takeaway, that is, when that class ends, what we want the student to take with him. Each class is organized from a takeaway, which must be surprising and important" (Chimenti, 2020, p. 378). It is worth noting that



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teaching notes are not part of the "body" of the case text and are typically presented as a separate document.

The elements described in Table 2 contribute to the development of a consistent and informative teaching note.

Table 2 - Guiding elements for developing teaching notes

Elements	Desired content
Synopsis	What is the case about — The specific situation that constitutes the focus of the case (the dilemma/problem situation) and its causes and implications; who the protagonist is; the role of management, employees, customers, and suppliers in the case.
Positioning	Context of the case — The place where the case took place and the period in which it occurred. How long the organization has existed, its line of business, the company's products, and whether significant changes to the business occurred over its history; how the organization is structured and its financial situation.
Learning objectives	Why did we use this case? — the pedagogical objectives of the case and the skills and knowledge of students that will be addressed in the activity.
Analysis	What are we going to teach with this case? — the main issue to be resolved in the case and the theoretical content that may be useful/relevant for the analysis; whether alternative solutions to the case exist; the availability of supplementary materials — articles, books, websites, videos — that instructors can use to help support the discussion.
Teaching process	How are we going to teach? — which concepts already familiar to students will be introduced and addressed in the analysis; how the data — drawn from secondary sources and interviews with managers and entrepreneurs — will be presented to students.
Pastures (Case Map)	The major discussion blocks of a case — the possible interpretations at each stage of the teaching case and how they affect the subsequent section of analysis.
Twist	Memorable cases have twists, the "icing on the cake" — elements of the case that can be highlighted and used to offer an unexpected turn in the analysis (the "eureka moment").
Discussion suggestions	Indicate some possible questions to guide the debate among students.

Note. Adapted from Silva and Marinho (2012) and Chimenti (2020).

Finally, we reinforce the view expressed by Faria and Figueiredo (2013, p. 192): "It is important for the development of teaching cases focused on Brazilian companies to gain momentum, so that Brazilian instructors have at their disposal cases that reflect the reality of their students."

As a means of contributing to the wider use of teaching cases developed from Brazilian business experiences, Table 3 presents a list of cases published



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in academic journals in the field, along with their corresponding access links. It is worth noting that this list represents only a fraction of the cases available for classroom use; nevertheless, it can certainly contribute to a more dynamic entrepreneurship education, one more closely attuned to the challenges and problems of entrepreneurship within the Brazilian context.

Table 3 - List of teaching cases and their keywords published in national journals, along with the corresponding access link

Título	Palavras-chave	Link
Fique em casa, a Casa Porto entrega: empreendedorismo humanizado na pandemia [Stay home, Casa Porto delivers: humanized entrepreneurship during the pandemic]	Entrepreneurship, humanized entrepreneur, Covid-19, crisis	https://rac.anpad.org.br/index.php/rac/article/view/1469
Facile/LigFerv: água quente em três segundos, trinta anos de processo empreendedor [Facile/LigFerv: hot water in three seconds, thirty years of an entrepreneurial process]	Entrepreneurial process, effectuation, business model, pandemic	https://rac.anpad.org.br/index.php/rac/article/view/1471
O caso da empresa Brazilian Secrets Hair [The case of the company Brazilian Secrets Hair]	International entrepreneurship, firm internationalization, cosmetics industry, behavioral theories of internationalization, teaching case	https://rac.anpad.org.br/index.php/rac/article/view/1404
Empreendedorismo feminino de baixa renda: quando o negócio é a privacidade [Low-income women's entrepreneurship: when the business is privacy]	Entrepreneurship, e-commerce, operations, retail, sales channels	https://doi.org/10.14211/regepe.v9i3.1796
Pequenas empresas são um grande negócio! [Small businesses are a big deal!]	Customer Relationship Management (CRM), financial services, entrepreneurship	https://doi.org/10.12660/gvcas osv11n1c5
Energia em dobro: os desafios de uma startup no varejo brasileiro [Double the energy: the challenges of a startup in Brazilian retail]	Distribution, marketing, metrics, entrepreneurship, startup	https://doi.org/10.12660/gvcas osv10n1c1
Meu negócio não pode morrer: dilemas da expansão de um cemitério-parque [My business can't die: dilemmas in the expansion of a memorial park]	Cemetery, entrepreneurship, strategy, strategic positioning	https://doi.org/10.12660/gvcas osv10n2c9

Note. Adapted by the authors from teaching cases published in the journals RAC, REGEPE, and GV Casos



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