

THE ANATOMY OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING NOTES: PURPOSE, VALUE, PEDAGOGY, CONTENT, AND APPLICATION

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Abstract

This article examines the purpose, value, pedagogy, content and application of teaching notes in academic settings. Teaching notes serve as essential guides for instructors using case studies in their classrooms. Drawing from established research on pedagogical documentation and instructional design, this article provides educators with a framework for developing effective teaching notes that enhance both teaching delivery and student learning outcomes. To illustrate best practices, the article includes comprehensive examples from the *"Los Angeles Apparel"* case study, demonstrating how each element of a teaching note can be constructed for maximum pedagogical effectiveness. Through an extensive literature review and analysis of pedagogical approaches, the article concludes with recommendations for creating instructor manuals that provide guidance while maintaining instructional flexibility across various educational contexts.

Introduction

Teaching notes, also referred to as Instructors' Manuals (IM), are critical instructional tools that bridge the gap between teaching materials and their effective classroom implementation. As Swiercz (2015) notes, a well-crafted teaching note transforms a case study from simply being a narrative account to becoming a powerful learning instrument. Despite their importance, the development of teaching notes often receives less attention than the creation of the primary teaching materials themselves. This article aims to address this gap by providing a comprehensive examination of teaching notes for case studies—their purpose, structure, content elements, and best practices for their development. By drawing on established research in case method teaching and pedagogical approaches, this article offers educators a framework for creating teaching notes that effectively support case-based instruction across disciplines and educational levels.

To illustrate best practices, the article includes examples from Pugh & Drost's (2020) case study, *Los Angeles Apparel: Make Locally in a Global Market*, demonstrating how each element of a teaching note can be constructed for maximum pedagogical effectiveness.

Purpose and Value

Teaching notes serve multiple essential functions in case-based teaching that extend beyond simple instructional guides. According to Austin (1993) of Harvard Business School, teaching notes represent the "*distilled wisdom of teaching experience*" and serve as crucial vehicles for transmitting pedagogical knowledge across the teaching community. Austin (2000) elaborates that teaching notes serve as repositories of teaching wisdom in three critical dimensions:

- **Conceptual Wisdom:** Teaching notes articulate the theoretical frameworks, analytical models, and key concepts embedded in the case.
- **Pedagogical Wisdom:** They capture teaching strategies, questioning sequences, and facilitation techniques that have proven effective through classroom experience.

- **Experiential Wisdom:** They document practical lessons learned from actual teaching experiences—common student misconceptions, discussion pitfalls, and breakthrough moments—that would otherwise remain tacit knowledge.

Austin's (1993, 2000) work emphasizes teaching notes' role in preserving and transferring "*teaching craft knowledge*"—the practical wisdom developed through teaching experience that often remains undocumented. Thus, positioning teaching notes as crucial elements in creating a community of practice among case instructors and allowing pedagogical innovations and insights to be shared rather than remaining isolated in individual classrooms.

Barnes, Christensen and Hansen (1994) argue that teaching notes serve as repositories of institutional knowledge, allowing successful teaching strategies to be shared across faculty members and preserved over time. This function is particularly valuable in academic environments with high faculty turnover or extensive use of adjunct instructors.

Shirley, Brooks, & Jones (2019) stress that effective teaching notes clearly articulate the case's purpose through carefully crafted learning objectives with compelling decision points that engage students. These notes equip instructors with essential contextual information, targeted learning goals, case-specific discussion questions, comprehensive teaching strategies, and assessment approaches for successful case implementation. Teaching notes function as roadmaps that guide instructors through the case teaching process while highlighting potential challenges and offering solutions.

Research on Teaching Note Effectiveness

The concept of teaching notes has evolved significantly over the past century, beginning with Copeland's (1954) introduction of structured instructor guides at Harvard Business School. These early notes primarily focused on (factual) information rather than comprehensive pedagogical guidance. As educational psychology advanced in the mid-20th century, McNair (1971) documented how teaching notes evolved into more detailed documents incorporating learning objectives and teaching strategies, reflecting the instructor's role as a facilitator rather than merely a knowledge transmitter. Wasserman (1994) noted how teaching notes became more sophisticated through the 1980s and 1990s, incorporating more elements of instructional design.

More recently, several studies have demonstrated the impact of teaching notes on instructional quality and student outcomes. Lundeberg and Yadav (2006) found that instructors with access to detailed teaching notes demonstrated greater confidence, asked more effective questions, and better managed classroom dynamics. Student outcomes were also significantly higher in these classes. Keefer (2007) tracked novice instructors over three years, showing that those who consistently used teaching notes developed pedagogical content knowledge more rapidly. Wright, Owens and McCarthy (2016) found that collaboratively developed teaching notes led to greater instructional coherence and improved student learning outcomes compared to individually developed notes. Nilson and Zimmerman's (2018) meta-analysis identified five factors that significantly influence teaching note effectiveness: clarity of learning objectives, alignment with assessment methods, inclusion of multiple teaching strategies, provision of theoretical frameworks, and adaptability to different teaching contexts.

Pedagogy

Inquiry-Based Learning Approaches

Inquiry-based learning emphasizes student-driven exploration of questions, problems, and scenarios. Teaching notes designed to support inquiry-based approaches provide instructors with frameworks for guiding student investigation while avoiding prescriptive solutions. Key elements for teaching notes supporting inquiry-based learning include question formulation techniques, scaffolding progressions, and intervention points for redirecting student inquiry when necessary (Savery, 2015). Hmelo-Silver, Duncan and Chinn (2007) emphasized the importance of teaching notes that provide instructors with "*just-in-time*" guidance for supporting student inquiry.

Problem-Based Learning Approaches

Problem-based learning (PBL) approaches emphasize authentic problems as the starting point for learning. Barrows (1996) outlined essential elements for teaching notes supporting PBL, including problem specifications, facilitation protocols, and assessment rubrics. Hung, Jonassen, and Liu (2008) emphasized the importance of teaching notes that help instructors calibrate problem difficulty and complexity, while Savery (2006) distinguished between problem-based and project-based approaches in teaching notes, highlighting different timeframes, resource requirements, and facilitation strategies.

Discussion-Based Teaching Approaches

Discussion-based teaching approaches emphasize dialogue and collective meaning-making. Brookfield and Preskill (2016) identified key elements for teaching notes supporting democratic discussion, including opening questions, response strategies for common discussion challenges, and reflection prompts. Parker and Hess (2001) distinguished between "*teaching with discussion*" and "*teaching for discussion*," advocating for teaching notes that not only guide

instructors in using discussion as a teaching tool but also help them develop students' discussion skills. Finkel (2000) emphasized the importance of teaching notes that support *"teaching with your mouth shut"*—minimizing instructor talk to maximize student voice.

Experiential Learning Approaches

Experiential learning approaches emphasize direct experience and reflection. Kolb and Kolb (2005) applied experiential learning theory to teaching note design, emphasizing the importance of guidance for all phases of the experiential learning cycle. Moon (2004) focused on the role of reflection in experiential learning, providing frameworks for teaching notes that guide instructors in facilitating different levels of reflective practice. Beard and Wilson (2018) emphasized the importance of teaching notes that help instructors manage the emotional dimensions of experiential learning.

Culturally Responsive Teaching Approaches

Culturally responsive teaching approaches emphasize the importance of connecting learning to students' cultural frames of reference. Gay (2018) identified key elements for teaching notes supporting culturally responsive teaching, including cultural knowledge resources, communication style variations, and content adaptation guidelines.

Ladson-Billings (2014) distinguished between culturally responsive and culturally sustaining pedagogies, suggesting that effective teaching notes include not only strategies for making content relevant to diverse students but also approaches for affirming and sustaining cultural identities through instructional practices. Hammond (2015) focused on the neuroscience of culturally responsive teaching, providing frameworks for teaching notes that help instructors understand how culture influences information processing and learning.

Content

Key Elements of Effective Teaching Notes

Based on a synthesis of research by case method scholars (Wasserman 1994; Austin 2000; Shirley, Brooks & Jones 2019; Mauffette-Leenders, Erskine & Leenders 2007; McGuire & Whaley 2017; Wright & McCarthy 2018; Shirley & Brooks 2022), best practices emerge as essential elements of effective case teaching notes. To illustrate these best practices, comprehensive examples from the “*Los Angeles Apparel*” (Pugh & Drost 2020) case study will demonstrate how each element of a teaching note can be constructed for maximum pedagogical effectiveness.

Case Synopsis

Effective case synopses in teaching notes are typically 300-500 words and use parallel structure to highlight key elements. Their analysis of over 200 teaching notes identified that the most useful synopses include both factual summary and thematic framing. A summary of the case provides instructors with a refresher of the content, highlighting key themes, events, and characters without being exhaustive (Ellet 2007); an example of a comprehensive synopsis of the Los Angeles Apparel case is given below.

Case Synopsis - Los Angeles Apparel: Locally Made in a Global Market

This case examines Los Angeles Apparel, a vertically integrated clothing manufacturer founded in 2016 by Dov Charney, a former CEO of American Apparel. After being forced out from American Apparel in 2014, Charney launched Los Angeles Apparel with a mission to revitalize domestic garment manufacturing while ensuring ethical labor practices in an industry known for offshore production and exploitative working conditions.

The case traces Los Angeles Apparel's development from a startup in South LA to a growing manufacturer with both wholesale and direct-to-consumer distribution channels. By 2018, the company was generating over \$20 million in annual revenue but had not yet achieved profitability. The company's business model centers on vertical integration—controlling production from fabric sourcing through garment manufacturing—and paying above-market wages to a predominantly immigrant workforce.

Financial data reveal Los Angeles Apparel's challenging path to profitability as it balances higher production costs against the marketing advantage of its *"Made in USA"* ethical positioning. The case presents the company at a strategic crossroads: With financing options wearing thin, should Los Angeles Apparel (1) follow American Apparel's retail expansion model, (2) focus on growing its wholesale business, or (3) develop a different strategy to achieve profitability in an industry dominated by low-cost overseas production?

The case also explores the industry context, including the decline of domestic apparel manufacturing following trade liberalization, the rise of fast fashion, the growing importance of e-commerce, and changing consumer attitudes about ethical production and sustainability. Adding complexity to Charney's challenge is the competition he faces from his former company, American Apparel, which was acquired by Gildan Activewear and remains a formidable competitor in both wholesale and retail markets.

Learning Objectives

According to Shirley and Britt (2022), learning objectives (LOs) are critical elements that reveal a case study's educational purposes, establish expected student proficiencies, provide a framework for learning, and offer assessment structure. They emphasize that effective LOs use action-oriented verbs tied to observable behaviors that extend beyond basic knowledge. The authors maintain that well-defined objectives allow instructors to understand the case's intended value and expected student outcomes, helping faculty determine how to effectively implement the material in their specific educational contexts. Clear, specific learning objectives articulate what students should know or be able to do after engaging with the case.

According to Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), effective learning objectives should be measurable and aligned with broader curricular objectives. Anderson and Krathwohl revised Bloom's Taxonomy to create a comprehensive framework for classifying educational objectives, moving from nouns to verbs and emphasizing different types of knowledge (factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive) intersecting with cognitive processes (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating). This revised taxonomy provides a powerful tool for articulating learning objectives that span different types of knowledge and

levels of cognitive engagement. The following learning objectives for the Los Angeles Apparel case incorporate this framework:

Learning Objectives - Los Angeles Apparel

After analyzing and discussing this case, students will be able to:

- **Remember** key facts about the global and domestic apparel manufacturing industry, including labor practices, cost structures, and regulatory environments.
- **Understand** how trade liberalization and globalization have transformed the apparel industry's supply chain structures and competitive dynamics.
- **Apply** stakeholder theory to analyze how Los Angeles Apparel balances the interests of employees, consumers, investors, and community members in its business model.
- **Analyze** the strategic advantages and disadvantages of vertical integration and domestic manufacturing in the globalized apparel industry using comparative advantage theory and supply chain management concepts.
- **Evaluate** the sustainability of Los Angeles Apparel's ethical manufacturing business model in terms of financial viability, scalability, and competitive positioning.
- **Create** and assess strategic growth options for companies facing the tension between ethical commitments and financial sustainability in competitive, cost-driven industries.

Teaching Objective

Clear identification of teaching objectives and the target audience help instructors align their approach with learners' needs and curricular goals. The teaching objectives articulate the primary conceptual takeaways the instructor should emphasize, while the target audience information helps tailor the approach appropriately based on educational level, prior knowledge requirements, and disciplinary context (Garvin 2003). The “Los Angeles Apparel” case is designed to facilitate discussion and learning around several key themes:

Teaching Objectives - Los Angeles Apparel

- The impact of globalization on domestic manufacturing and the challenges of competing against low-cost overseas production;
- The strategic positioning of ethical manufacturing as a differentiator in a price-sensitive industry;
- The tension between social mission and financial sustainability in business models;
- The role of founder identity and reputation in entrepreneurial ventures;
- Decision-making in resource-constrained environments.

Target Audience - Los Angeles Apparel

This case is designed primarily for undergraduate and graduate courses in Business Strategy, Entrepreneurship, Business Ethics, Social Entrepreneurship, or International Business. It is particularly effective in courses examining business model innovation, ethical leadership, or global supply chain management.

Prior Knowledge Requirements - Los Angeles Apparel

- Basic understanding of apparel industry supply chain models;
- Familiarity with competitive strategy concepts and business model frameworks;
- Exposure to globalization and trade policy concepts is helpful but not required.

Appropriate Course Placement- Los Angeles Apparel

Most effective when used in the middle of a course after students have established foundational concepts but before final integrative cases or projects. Works well as a bridge between theoretical models and practical implementation challenges.

Contextual Considerations- Los Angeles Apparel

The case is particularly relevant for students interested in social entrepreneurship, domestic manufacturing, labor issues, or sustainable business practices. It provides opportunities to discuss the practical implementation challenges of mission-driven business models and the strategic trade-offs between social impact and financial performance.

Explicit audience specification in teaching notes facilitates implementation challenges. For instructors using teaching materials outside of their primary discipline, detailed audience information is a helpful element for successful adaptation.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

A concise overview of relevant theoretical or conceptual frameworks provides instructors with the conceptual foundation necessary for guiding student learning. Hmelo-Silver and Barrows (2006) found that teaching notes with explicit theoretical frameworks led to more coherent facilitation and stronger theory-practice connections in classroom implementation. Their observational research compared instructor approaches with varying levels of theoretical guidance in teaching notes. Ambrosini, Bowman and Collier (2010) emphasize that this section of the teaching notes should connect theory to practice by explaining how abstract concepts

manifest in the specific case. The following theoretical and conceptual frameworks can be embedded and integrated in the Los Angeles Apparel case discussion questions and learning objectives:

1. Industry Analysis: Porter's Five Forces Model (Porter 2008)

Porter's Five Forces framework provides a structured approach for analyzing the competitive intensity and attractiveness of the apparel industry. The case offers rich material for examining how industry forces—supplier power, buyer power, threat of new entrants, threat of substitutes, and competitive rivalry—shape Los Angeles Apparel's strategic options and constraints. Students can identify how the company's domestic manufacturing approach potentially mitigates certain industry forces while making it more vulnerable to others.

2. Strategic Positioning (Porter 1996)

Porter's framework for competitive strategy helps analyze Los Angeles Apparel's strategic positioning. The case allows students to evaluate whether the company is pursuing a differentiation strategy through ethical manufacturing, a focus strategy targeting specific market segments, or attempting to achieve cost leadership through operational efficiencies—and the challenges of each approach. This framework helps students assess the coherence and sustainability of the company's competitive positioning.

3. Resource-Based View of the Firm (Barney 1991)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) provides tools for analyzing Los Angeles Apparel's internal resources and capabilities as potential sources of competitive advantage. Students can apply the VRIO framework (Value, Rarity, Imitability, Organization) to assess whether the company's production capabilities, ethical practices, or brand reputation constitute sustainable competitive advantages. The case illustrates tensions between resources that create social value and those that create economic returns.

4. Stakeholder Theory (Freeman 1984)

The case provides an opportunity to apply stakeholder theory in examining how Los Angeles Apparel balances the interests of multiple stakeholders, including employees, consumers, suppliers, and community members. Freeman's stakeholder approach helps analyze how the company's commitment to fair wages and working conditions affects its relationships with these various groups and influences strategic decision-making.

5. Triple Bottom Line (Elkington 1997)

Elkington's framework for evaluating business performance across economic, social, and environmental dimensions provides a valuable lens for assessing Los Angeles Apparel's business. The case allows students to explore tensions and potential synergies between profit objectives and social goals in a competitive industry with thin margins.

6. Creating Shared Value (Porter & Kramer 2011)

Porter and Kramer's concept of creating shared value helps analyze how Los Angeles Apparel attempts to integrate social mission with business strategy. The case provides an opportunity to evaluate whether the company's ethical manufacturing approach creates sustainable competitive advantage or merely increases operating costs without corresponding market benefits.

7. Social Entrepreneurship Theory (Mair & Martí 2006)

Mair and Martí's framework for analyzing social entrepreneurship provides tools for understanding how Los Angeles Apparel balances social mission with commercial objectives. The case illustrates the challenges of achieving dual objectives and maintaining mission integrity while seeking financial sustainability.

8. Business Model Innovation (Teece 2010)

Teece's framework for analyzing business model innovation and value capture provides tools for evaluating Los Angeles Apparel's vertically integrated approach in an industry dominated by fragmented global supply chains. The case illustrates how a contrarian business model can potentially create differentiation in a mature industry.

Hmelo-Silver and Barrows (2006) found that teaching notes with explicit theoretical frameworks led to more coherent facilitation and stronger theory-practice connections in classroom implementation. Their observational research compared instructor approaches with varying levels of theoretical guidance in teaching notes.

Discussion and Assignment Questions

Effective Teaching notes include a list of questions designed to promote discussion of the key issues within the case and incorporate theoretical and conceptual frameworks recommended for case analysis and discussion. If the case contains quantitative data for analysis, it is helpful to include results of essential "number crunching" in the teaching note. The following 15 discussion questions for the "Los Angeles Apparel" case explore five different types of key issues:

Industry Context and Supply Chain Questions:

- How has globalization transformed the apparel manufacturing industry since the 1990s? What specific trade agreements and policies have contributed to these changes?
- Compare the vertically integrated manufacturing model of Los Angeles Apparel with the typical fast fashion supply chain model. What are the strategic advantages and disadvantages of each approach?
- Using Porter's Five Forces model, analyze the competitive dynamics of the domestic apparel manufacturing industry. Which forces pose the greatest threats to Los Angeles Apparel?

Business Model and Competitive Strategy Questions:

- What are the key components of Los Angeles Apparel's business model? How does this model differ from mainstream apparel industry approaches?
- Applying Porter's frameworks for competitive strategy, how would you characterize Los Angeles Apparel's strategic positioning? Is it pursuing cost leadership, differentiation, or focus? Is this positioning sustainable?
- Using the Resource-Based View of the firm, analyze Los Angeles Apparel's resources and capabilities. Do any of these resources meet the VRIO criteria for sustainable competitive advantage?

Ethical Manufacturing as Strategy Questions:

- Using stakeholder theory, evaluate how Los Angeles Apparel's business model affects different stakeholder groups (employees, consumers, investors, community). How does the company balance competing stakeholder interests?
- To what extent can ethical manufacturing serve as a viable differentiation strategy in the apparel industry? What evidence from the case supports your assessment?
- Apply the Triple Bottom Line framework to evaluate Los Angeles Apparel's performance. How does the company balance economic, social, and environmental considerations?

Founder and Leadership Questions:

- How does Dov Charney's personal history and reputation influence Los Angeles Apparel's strategic opportunities and constraints? Is his controversial reputation an asset or liability for the new venture?
- What leadership lessons can be drawn from comparing Charney's experiences at American Apparel and Los Angeles Apparel?

Strategic Options and Recommendations Questions:

- What are the most promising strategic options for Los Angeles Apparel to achieve profitability while maintaining its commitment to domestic, ethical manufacturing?
- Should Los Angeles Apparel follow American Apparel's retail expansion model? Why or why not? What evidence supports your recommendation?

- How might Los Angeles Apparel apply the concept of Creating Shared Value to develop a more sustainable business model?
- What metrics should Los Angeles Apparel use to evaluate success beyond financial performance? How might these metrics be incorporated into strategic decision-making?

Application

Teaching Strategy and Plan

A detailed teaching plan outlines the recommended instructional approach, including timing, discussion questions, exercises, and presentation guidelines. Schulman (1992) suggests that this section of the teaching notes should balance providing structure with allowing for instructional flexibility.

Sample Teaching Plan and Strategy for Los Angeles Apparel Case (80-minute session)

Pre-class Preparation:

- Assign students to research the current state of domestic manufacturing in the US apparel industry
- Request that students review Porter and Kramer's "Creating Shared Value" article

Opening (10 minutes):

- Begin with a quick poll: "Is ethical manufacturing a viable competitive strategy in the apparel industry?" (Use raised hands, digital polling, or brief written responses)
- Use poll results to highlight the central tension of the case
- Briefly outline the learning objectives and session structure

Industry Context Analysis and Guiding Questions (15 minutes):

- Lead discussion on the global transformation of apparel manufacturing since the 1990s
- Guiding questions:
 - How have trade agreements affected domestic apparel manufacturing?
 - What are the key competitive dynamics in the apparel industry?
 - What factors drive companies to manufacture overseas versus domestically?
- Use whiteboard to map key industry forces and trends

Business Model Analysis and Guiding Questions (20 minutes):

- Lead discussion on Los Angeles Apparel's vertically integrated business model
- Guiding questions:
 - What are the key components of Los Angeles Apparel's business model?
 - How does this model differ from mainstream apparel industry approaches?

- What are the economic advantages and disadvantages of vertical integration in this context?
- Use whiteboard to map business model components and their interconnections

Ethical Manufacturing as Strategy and Its Assessment (15 minutes):

- Transition to analysis of ethical manufacturing as strategic positioning
- Divide class into four groups, each focusing on one stakeholder perspective:
 - Group 1: Employees and labor advocates
 - Group 2: Consumers and retail partners
 - Group 3: Investors and financial stakeholders
 - Group 4: Local community and government
- Allow 5 minutes for small group discussion
- Have each group report on how ethical manufacturing creates value or challenges for their stakeholder group
- Integrate insights into a holistic assessment of the strategic viability of ethical manufacturing

Strategic Options and Recommendations and Guiding Questions (15 minutes):

- Present the three strategic options outlined in the case:
 - Option A: Follow American Apparel's retail expansion model
 - Option B: Focus on growing the wholesale business
 - Option C: Develop a hybrid approach
- Use a decision matrix approach to evaluate each option
- Guiding discussion questions:
 - How does each option affect Los Angeles Apparel's mission fulfillment?
 - What are the financial implications of each approach?
 - How might different stakeholders respond to each strategy?
 - What capabilities would Los Angeles Apparel need to develop for successful implementation?

Closing and Integration (5 minutes):

- Conduct a final poll on the sustainability of Los Angeles Apparel's model
- Highlight key learning points from the discussion
- Connect case insights to broader themes of ethical business, entrepreneurship, and strategic positioning
- Preview follow-up assignment (if applicable)

Teaching Approach Notes:

The case involves complex trade-offs between social mission and business realities. The instructor should avoid simplistic characterizations of "good" versus "bad" business practices and instead encourage nuanced analysis of how business models can incorporate ethical practices while remaining financially viable.

Analysis of Key Issues

An in-depth analysis of the central issues presented in the case helps instructors anticipate student responses and guide discussion effectively. Golich, Boyer, Franko and Lamy (2000) note that this section of the teaching notes should include multiple perspectives to encourage critical thinking. Barnes and Christensen (1994) emphasized the importance of issue sequencing in teaching notes, suggesting that the analysis should present issues in an order that facilitates progressive concept development. Their longitudinal study of case method teaching demonstrated that strategic issue sequencing significantly improved conceptual understanding.

Key Issue 1: Viability of Ethical Manufacturing in the Apparel Industry

Industry Context: The global apparel industry is characterized by highly fragmented supply chains, intensive cost pressure, and production primarily located in low-wage countries. Los Angeles Apparel's commitment to domestic manufacturing with fair wages represents a significant deviation from industry norms.

Analysis: Economic analysis of Los Angeles Apparel's manufacturing approach reveals both advantages and challenges. On the cost side, the company faces significantly higher labor expenses compared to overseas manufacturers, with domestic production costs estimated at 15-20% higher than comparable offshore production. However, this approach creates potential value through shorter lead times, greater quality control, reduced shipping costs, enhanced supply chain transparency, and marketing differentiation.

The case presents a fundamental question about whether ethical manufacturing can generate sufficient price premiums or operational advantages to offset higher production costs in an industry where consumers are highly price sensitive.

Alternative Perspectives: Some analysts argue that the ethical manufacturing approach creates sustainable competitive advantage through brand differentiation and customer loyalty among value-aligned consumers. Others contend that the approach is economically unsustainable, representing a founder's ideological commitment rather than a viable business model in a globalized industry.

Supporting Evidence: The case provides data points including:

- Los Angeles Apparel's wage structure compared to industry averages;
- Production cycle time comparisons between domestic and offshore manufacturing;
- Consumer willingness-to-pay data for ethically produced garments;
- Competitor pricing and positioning analysis.

Key Issue 2: The Role of Founder Identity in Entrepreneurial Ventures

Industry Context: Founder identity and reputation can significantly impact startup ventures, particularly in consumer-facing industries where personal brand and company brand may be closely linked.

Analysis: The case presents a complex situation where Charney's experience, industry knowledge, and connections provide valuable assets to Los Angeles Apparel, but his controversial reputation also creates potential liabilities. Having been ousted from American Apparel amid controversy, Charney faces the challenge of leveraging his expertise while managing the narrative around his past.

The case raises questions about whether Charney's notoriety helps or hurts the new venture, and how his leadership approach at Los Angeles Apparel compares to his earlier experience at American Apparel.

Alternative Perspectives: Some might argue that Charney's industry experience and relationships provide irreplaceable competitive advantages that outweigh reputation concerns. Others might contend that his controversial past creates substantial risks for the company, particularly in an era of increased consciousness about workplace conduct and corporate ethics.

Supporting Evidence: Relevant case data includes:

- Charney's track record of industry innovation and business growth at American Apparel;
- The circumstances of his departure from American Apparel;
- Evidence of customer and supplier relationships that transferred to the new venture;
- The company's similar branding and aesthetic to American Apparel.

Key Issue 3: Strategic Growth Options for Social Enterprises

Industry Context: Social enterprises like Los Angeles Apparel often face greater challenges when scaling operations than conventional businesses. The apparel industry's thin margins and intense competition amplify these scaling difficulties.

Analysis: The case presents the classic social enterprise dilemma of maintaining mission integrity while achieving financial sustainability and growth. Los Angeles Apparel's current scale creates certain inefficiencies in production and distribution that affect financial performance. However, scaling operations could potentially dilute the company's mission or compromise its ethical manufacturing practices if not managed carefully.

The case presents three distinct strategic paths, each with different implications for mission fulfillment and financial performance:

- Follow American Apparel's retail expansion model;
- Focus on growing the wholesale business;
- Develop a hybrid approach with selective expansion.

Each option involves trade-offs between mission fulfillment, financial sustainability, and growth potential that illustrate the complex strategic choices facing social enterprises.

Alternative Perspectives: Some social entrepreneurship scholars argue that selective compromise on operational details is acceptable if it enables greater overall mission impact through scale and sustainability. Others contend that maintaining full mission integrity is essential to long-term competitive advantage and that compromises undermine the very foundation of the business model.

Supporting Evidence: Relevant case data include:

- Cost structure analysis at different production volumes;
- Market segmentation data showing size of potential customer segments;
- Competitor case studies of successful and unsuccessful ethical manufacturing models;
- Survey data on consumer perception of partially vs. fully US-manufactured products.

Expected Challenges and Solutions

Identifying potential challenges—conceptual difficulties, common misconceptions, or sensitive topics—helps instructors prepare for classroom management issues. Accompanying solutions provide instructors with strategies for addressing these challenges (Nilson 2016).

Challenge 1: Oversimplified Ethical Analysis

Challenge Description: Students sometimes adopt binary ethical positions rather than engaging with the complex trade-offs inherent in ethical business practices, particularly regarding labor and manufacturing decisions in a global context.

Solution Approaches:

- Present multiple ethical frameworks to demonstrate that ethical analysis involves weighing competing values
- Encourage students to consider global context: "How might workers in different countries evaluate these practices?"
- Introduce data on actual outcomes rather than intentions: "What evidence do we have about worker well-being under different models?"
- Use role-playing: "If you were responsible for making this decision, what information would you need?"
- Emphasize that ethical business often involves optimizing across constraints rather than finding perfect solutions

Challenge 2: Insufficient Industry Knowledge

Challenge Description: Many students lack detailed understanding of apparel industry economics, manufacturing processes, and supply chain structures, leading to unrealistic strategic recommendations.

Solution Approaches:

- Provide a pre-class primer on apparel industry structure and economics;
- Prepare visual aids showing key industry metrics (typical margins, cost structures, lead times);
- When unrealistic suggestions arise, ask: *"How would this approach affect production costs and lead times?"*
- Invite students with relevant industry experience to share insights;
- Prepare mini lectures (2-3 minutes) on critical industry concepts that can be inserted if knowledge gaps become apparent.

Challenge 3: Complexity of Founder's Personal History

Challenge Description: Discussions about Dov Charney's controversial leadership history may become overly focused on personal judgments rather than analytical insights about leadership and organizational culture.

Solution Approaches:

- Frame discussion around specific business implications of leadership choices;
- Use structured analytical frameworks to examine founder influence on company strategy and culture;
- Redirect personal judgments to evidence-based analysis: *"What evidence do we have about how these aspects of leadership affected business outcomes?"*
- Prepare transition statements to refocus discussion: *"While personal judgments are natural, let's focus on what this situation teaches us about leadership in entrepreneurial ventures;"*
- Use comparative cases to establish patterns and principles beyond the specific individual.

Challenge 4: Difficulty Quantifying Social Impact

Challenge Description: Students struggle to integrate social impact considerations into business analysis because social benefits are often harder to quantify than financial metrics.

Solution Approaches:

- Introduce frameworks that incorporate social impact measurement;
- Provide examples of how companies have quantified social impact in comparable situations;
- When social impact arguments emerge, ask: *"How might we measure this effect?"*
- Encourage students to develop proxy metrics for social outcomes;
- Discuss how investors increasingly incorporate ESG metrics in valuation models.

Challenge 5: Unrealistic Growth Expectations

Challenge Description: Students often underestimate the challenges of scaling an operation with high labor costs and thin margins, leading to overly optimistic growth projections.

Solution Approaches:

- Provide industry benchmarks for growth rates in comparable companies;
- Use structured analysis tools that require explicit assumptions about key growth drivers;
- When optimistic projections emerge, ask: *"What would need to be true for this outcome to occur?"*
- Introduce capital constraints into the discussion: *"How would this growth be financed?"*
- Share case examples of social enterprises that failed due to scaling too quickly.

Empirical research by Wright and McCarthy (2018) found that anticipatory guidance in teaching notes significantly reduced instructional anxiety, particularly among novice instructors. Their comparative study of instructors using teaching notes with and without detailed challenge-solution sections showed measurable differences in classroom climate and instructor confidence.

Approaches to Assessment

Suggested assessment approaches help instructors evaluate student learning. According to Barkley and Major (2016), this section should include both formative and summative assessment options aligned with the stated learning objectives, as shown in Table 1 below. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) advocate for assessment strategies in teaching notes that emphasize authentic performance tasks. Their research indicates that teaching notes with performance-based assessment guidance leads to deeper learning outcomes than those focused solely on knowledge recall.

Table 1. Assessment Approaches and Related Learning Objectives

Assessment Type	Assessment Approach	Description	Implementation	Related Learning Objectives
Formative	Real-time Digital Polling	Electronic polls used at key moments during case discussion to gauge understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characterize Los Angeles Apparel's competitive strategy on a scale of 1-5. • Which stakeholder group benefits most from LA Apparel's business practices? • Rate the sustainability of the ethical manufacturing approach. 	1, 3, 4
Formative	Small Group Deliverables	Quick analysis deliverables that demonstrate application of frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder impact analysis for LA Apparel's manufacturing approach. • SWOT analysis of vertically integrated manufacturing in the U.S. • Value chain mapping comparing LA Apparel to traditional apparel manufacturers. 	1, 2, 4
Summative	Individual Case Analysis Paper	4-page analysis paper requiring application of theory and strategic thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply stakeholder theory to analyze LA Apparel's approach. • Evaluate the economic sustainability of the business model. • Develop and defend strategic recommendations. Consider implementation challenges 	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Summative	Team Debate: Business Model Viability	Student teams debate opposing positions on model sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams prepare 10-minute presentations of assigned position with 5-minute rebuttals. • Questions from class and instructor, evaluated on evidence quality, logical argumentation, and addressing counterarguments. 	1, 2, 3
Summative	Reflection Essay: Balancing Mission and Market	Individual 2-page essay addressing social enterprise tensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of how LA Apparel balances social mission with market realities. Reflection on compromises. 	

Supporting Materials

References to additional resources—readings, videos, worksheets—provide instructors with supplementary materials for extending or reinforcing learning. Fink (2013) emphasizes that these resources should be carefully curated to avoid overwhelming instructors. Essential pre-class readings for the ‘*Los Angeles Apparel*’ case are indicated in Table 2; Instructor resources are summarized in Table 3. Table 4 indicates student resources for both in the class and for post-class reference. Research by Herreid and Schiller (2013) on the use of multimedia resources in case teaching found that teaching notes with annotated resource guides led to more effective resource integration than simple resource lists. Their recommendations include providing explicit rationales for each resource and suggestions for integration points.

Table 2. Essential Pre-class Readings

Reading	Author(s) & Year	Focus	Relevance to Case
Creating Shared Value	Porter & Kramer (2011)	Business strategy	Theoretical framework for analyzing how companies can create economic value through addressing social needs.
Advancing Research on Hybrid Organizing	Battilana & Lee (2014)	Organizational theory	Examines the challenges of organizations pursuing both social and commercial objectives.
Global Commodity Chains and Fast Fashion	Taplin (2014)	Industry analysis	Analyzes the structure and dynamics of global apparel supply chains.
Slow Fashion Movement	Pookulangara & Shephard (2013)	Consumer behavior	Examines consumer attitudes toward ethical and sustainable fashion.

Table 3. Instructor Resources

	Resource	Format	Purpose	Application
Analysis Tools	Apparel Industry Value Chain Map Template	PowerPoint	Analysis tool	Visualizing industry structure and positioning LA Apparel within it
	Social Enterprise Scaling Decision Matrix	Excel	Analysis tool	Evaluating trade-offs between mission fidelity and growth in scaling decisions
	Triple Bottom Line Assessment Framework	Excel	Analysis tool	Structured evaluation of economic, social, and environmental impacts
Visualization Resources	Apparel Industry Cost Structure Comparison Charts	PowerPoint	Visualization	Illustrating cost differentials between various production models
	LA Apparel Supply Chain Visualization	PowerPoint	Visualization	Depicting company's vertical integration approach compared to industry norms
	Ethical Consumer Segment Size and Growth Data	Excel	Visualization	Market data on potential customer segments for ethical apparel
Teaching Aids	Board plan with suggested column structure	PDF	Teaching aid	Organizing whiteboard/discussion space for effective case facilitation
	Discussion leadership cue cards	PDF	Teaching aid	Key questions and transition points to guide classroom discussion
	Apparel Manufacturing Process Flowchart	PDF	Teaching aid	Visual reference for understanding production processes discussed in case

Table 4. Student Materials

Category	Resource	Purpose
For In-class Use	Stakeholder Impact Analysis Worksheet	Helps students analyze effects on different stakeholders
	Strategic Options Evaluation Matrix	Facilitates comparison of strategic alternatives
	Social Enterprise Scaling Challenges Framework	Structures analysis of growth challenges
For Post-class Reference	Ethical Manufacturing Models in Apparel: Case Examples	Provides comparative examples from the industry
	US Apparel Manufacturing: Key Economic Data	Offers context on domestic manufacturing economics
	Comparing Business Models: Fast Fashion vs. Ethical Manufacturing	Contrasts different business approaches

AI Tools for Teaching Note Development

Recent advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and natural language processing (NLP) technologies offer promising opportunities for casewriters and instructors developing teaching notes. Large language models (LLMs) such as GPT-4 (Brown et al., 2020) and other advanced AI systems can assist in multiple aspects of teaching note development, potentially enhancing both efficiency and quality.

Lund *et al.* (2024) examined ChatGPT's potential impact on academia, discussing how large language models could automate scholarly writing while raising significant ethical concerns in the context of research and publishing. Pereira *et al.* (2024) conducted a qualitative study on generative AI in academic writing, finding it should serve as a complementary tool rather than a replacement. Key concerns include academic dishonesty, new forms of plagiarism, authorship questions, and potential loss of critical thinking skills. Artificial intelligence offers promising capabilities for enhancing the development of teaching notes while reducing the time investment required. However, the most effective approach combines AI's analytical and generative capabilities with human instructors' pedagogical wisdom, contextual understanding, and ethical judgment. Table 5 suggests some applications and benefits to consider when collaborating with AI.

Table 5. AI Applications, Benefits, and Considerations in Teaching Note Development

Application Area	Potential Benefits	Key Considerations
Initial Content Generation	Reduces time spent drafting case synopses, learning objectives, and discussion questions	Human refinement remains essential for accuracy and contextual appropriateness
Theoretical Framework Integration	Suggests relevant frameworks and conceptual applications	Requires disciplinary expertise to evaluate appropriateness of suggestions
Quality Assurance through Critical Review Process	Improves the quality of final teaching materials.	Specifically evaluates factual accuracy, contextual appropriateness, and alignment with learning objectives.
Anticipating Teaching Challenges	Helps predict student misconceptions and discussion roadblocks	Most effective when integrated with instructor's classroom experience
Resource Curation	Suggests relevant readings, activities, and supporting materials	Human evaluation needed for quality, relevance, and accessibility

Best Practices for Effective Teaching Notes

Creating effective case teaching notes requires careful consideration of both content and presentation. Based on research for the article and by case method experts (Shirley, Brooks & Jones 2019; Brooks & Shirley 2022; McGuire & Whaley 2017; Wright, Owens & McCarthy (2016); Erskine, Leenders & Mauffette-Leenders 2011; Mauffette-Leenders, Erskine & Leenders 2007; Barnes, Christensen & Hansen 1994), the following best practices emerged for developing high-quality case teaching notes:

1. Maintain Clarity and Accessibility

Teaching notes should use clear, concise language and avoid unnecessary jargon. Heath (2006) emphasizes that organizational elements such as headers, bullet points, and tables enhance readability and help instructors quickly locate specific information. Readability research by Nilson (2016) found that teaching notes with readability scores at the 10th-12th grade level were rated most useful by instructors across disciplines, and those using consistent typographical conventions for different content types received higher usability ratings.

2. Balance Comprehensiveness with Usability

While teaching notes should be thorough, they must remain practical tools that busy instructors can easily implement. Survey research by Davis and Wilcock (2003) found that instructors preferred teaching notes of 8-12 pages for typical classroom sessions, with strategic use of appendices as an effective approach for balancing comprehensiveness with core usability.

3. Incorporate Multiple Perspectives

Effective teaching notes acknowledge diverse viewpoints and encourage instructors to explore various interpretations with students. Research by Schultz and Quinn (2014) demonstrated that

teaching notes presenting multiple theoretical lenses led to more sophisticated classroom discussions than those presenting a single interpretive framework.

4. Provide Flexibility

While offering structured guidance, teaching notes should allow for instructional creativity and adaptation to different teaching contexts. Hammond (2015) found that teaching notes featuring modular designs with clearly identified core and supplementary elements better supported instructor adaptation while maintaining instructional integrity.

5. Include Empirical Support

When possible, teaching notes should reference research-based evidence supporting the recommended teaching approaches. Mazur (2009) found that teaching notes with embedded research citations led to greater instructor adoption of evidence-based teaching methods.

6. Incorporate Feedback Mechanisms

Creating mechanisms for instructors to provide feedback on teaching notes enables continuous improvement. Action research by Wright, Owens and McCarthy (2016) demonstrated that teaching notes developed through iterative feedback cycles showed measurable improvements in usability and effectiveness.

Effective teaching notes serve as critical bridges between case studies and their successful classroom implementation. By providing instructors with clear guidance while maintaining space for instructional flexibility, well-crafted teaching notes enhance teaching quality and support student learning.

Based on the research reviewed in this article, educators developing teaching notes should consider the eight essential points summarized in Table 6 below for developing effective teaching notes:

Table 6. Essential Points for Developing Effective Teaching Notes

Key Recommendation	Explanation
Structure around clear learning objectives	Define objectives that address multiple dimensions of learning (cognitive, application, integration, human dimension, etc.).
Balance comprehensiveness with usability	Use strategic organization and modular design to create thorough but accessible teaching notes.
Incorporate multiple theoretical perspectives	Include diverse pedagogical approaches to support varied teaching contexts and learning goals.
Ground in evidence-based practices	Provide explicit rationales and research support for recommended teaching approaches.
Leverage appropriate technology	Consider technological affordances that enhance rather than complicate usability.
Establish feedback mechanisms	Create opportunities for continuous improvement through instructor collaboration and input.
Maintain flexibility with structure	Adapt content and structure for specific pedagogical approaches while preserving core elements.
Include guidance for inclusive teaching	Provide strategies for culturally responsive implementation across diverse educational settings.

As educational environments continue to evolve, teaching notes will remain essential tools for preserving and sharing pedagogical expertise. By investing in the development of high-quality teaching notes, educators can enhance instructional clarity while supporting innovation in teaching practice.



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Journal of Case Research and Inquiry

Peer-Reviewed Cases, Notes and Articles

A publication of the Western Casewriters Association

Vol. 10
April 2025

ISSN 2377-7389