

Case-Based Learning in Accounting and Business

WATERLOO
ACCOUNTING AND
FINANCE

saf.uwaterloo.ca

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Workshop Approach*

1. What are the important situational factors?
2. What are the learning outcomes?
3. What feedback and assessment methods should we use?
4. What teaching and learning activities should we use?
5. Would we make the same choices again?

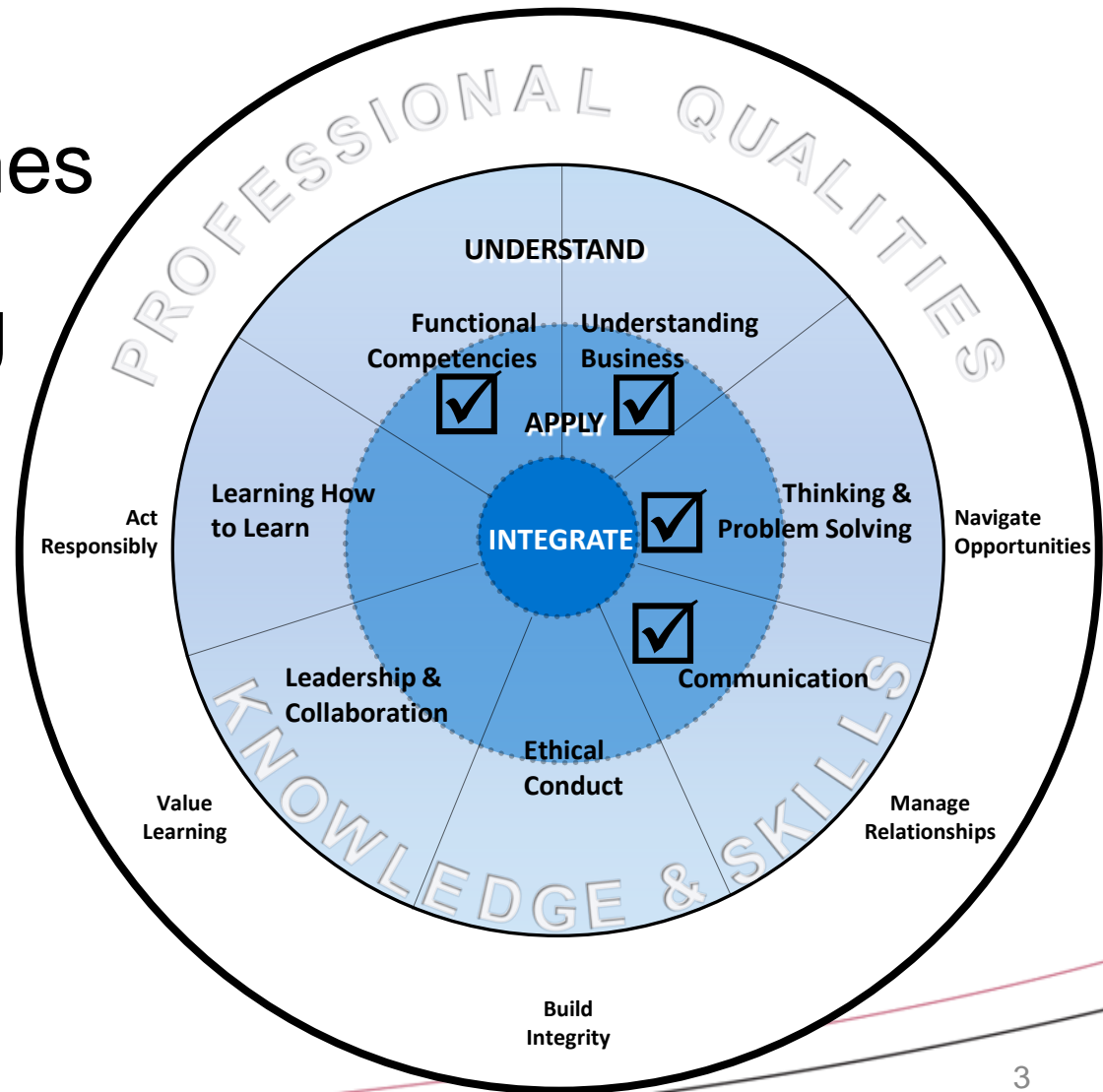
Situational Factors

- SAF Learning Outcomes
- Professional Competencies
- Role of Course in Program – Intro to Cases
- Context for Classes

SAF Learning Model

Program Outcomes

- Understanding Business
- Functional Competency
- Others?



Professional Competencies

	Technical Competencies	Enabling Competencies
Chartered Accountant (CA)	✓	✓
Certified Management Accountant (CMA)	✓	✓
Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA)	✓	
Various Additional Specializations	✓	

Intro to Cases: Business Case

- A story about a business: 15-30 pages long
- A simulation requiring the student to:
 - do strategy, accounting, and finance
 - solve an unstructured decision problem⁽¹⁾
- An opportunity to create something, not just accept information and give the “right” answer⁽²⁾

Basic case analysis process

- Who are you? → Role
 - Where are you? When? → Current Situation
 - What do you need to do? → Requirement (it)
-
- How will you do it? → Plan or Approach
-
- Do it. → Analysis + Decision
-
- Communicate it. → An Answer + Why
-

Context for Classes

- Introduction to Business Strategy
- Third-year accounting & finance majors
- Five (5) sections with 75 students/section
- Spring 2012: 12-weeks in the term
- Two 80-minute class slots per week (M/W)

First decision required

How do we manage the workload?

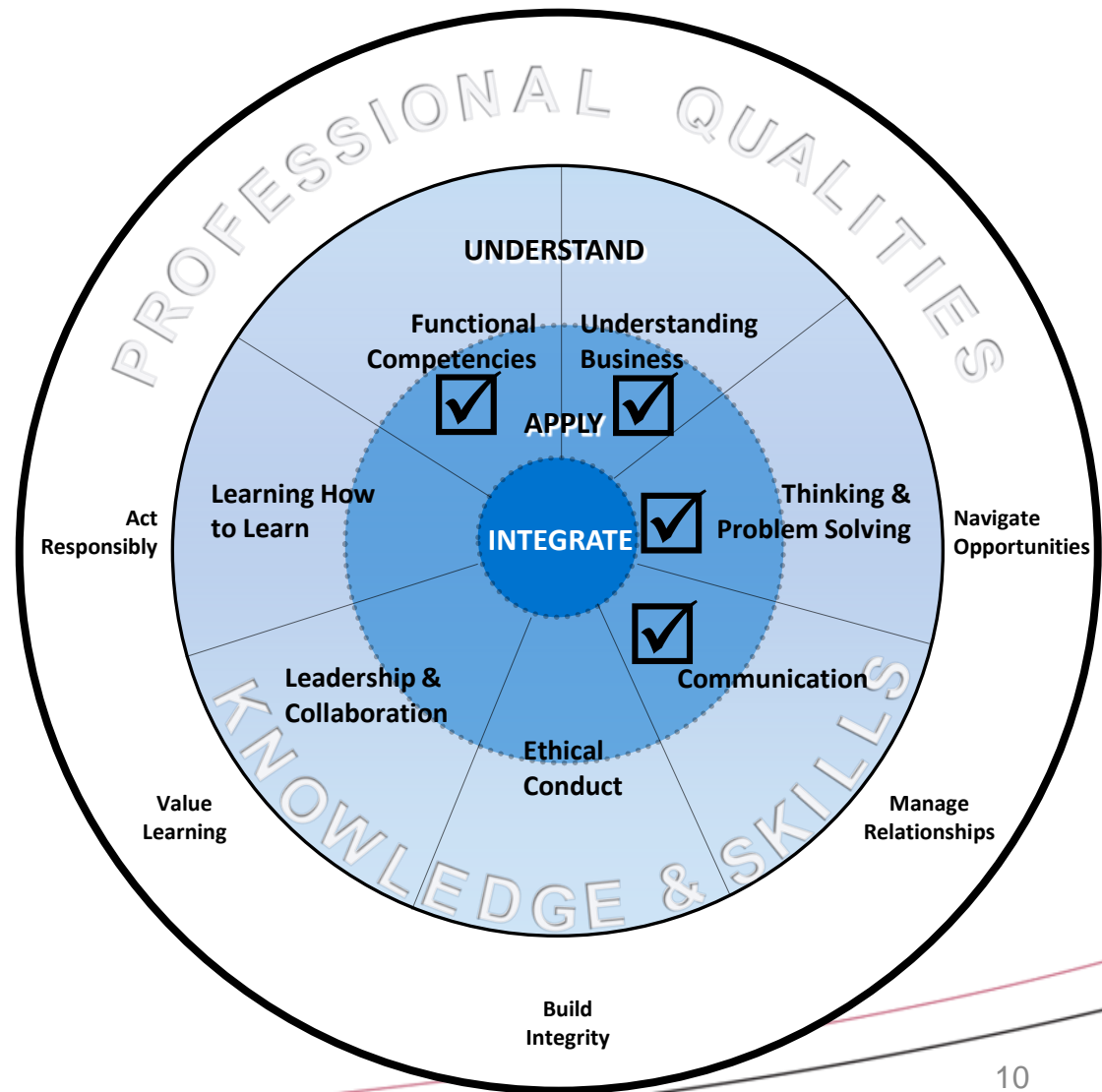
1. Each take a subset of the 5 sections
2. Each take a subset of the 24 classes

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Second decision required

How do we structure the learning outcomes for the course and ultimately the assessment methods?



Options – how to structure?

By proficiency level:

- To know...
- To apply...
- To integrate...
with think and
communicate to
make decision

By decision outcome:

- Decide to change
strategy (yes/no)?
- Decide how to
change strategy?
- Decide how to
implement change?

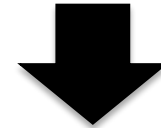
Considerations

- Feedback from 4th-year and MAcc profs – students struggle to “find the requirement”
- uWaterloo workshop by Ian McKillop – the idea of using a one-page diagnostic
- Professional accounting accreditation exams use cases to assess “competence”

**“Competence is about being able to
“do it” (whatever “it” may be) in the
real environment, when it counts.”**

Dr. Peter Jensen,
Ignite the Third Factor,
Thomas Allen Publishers, 2008, p. 145.

Second decision – use “it”



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By decision outcome:

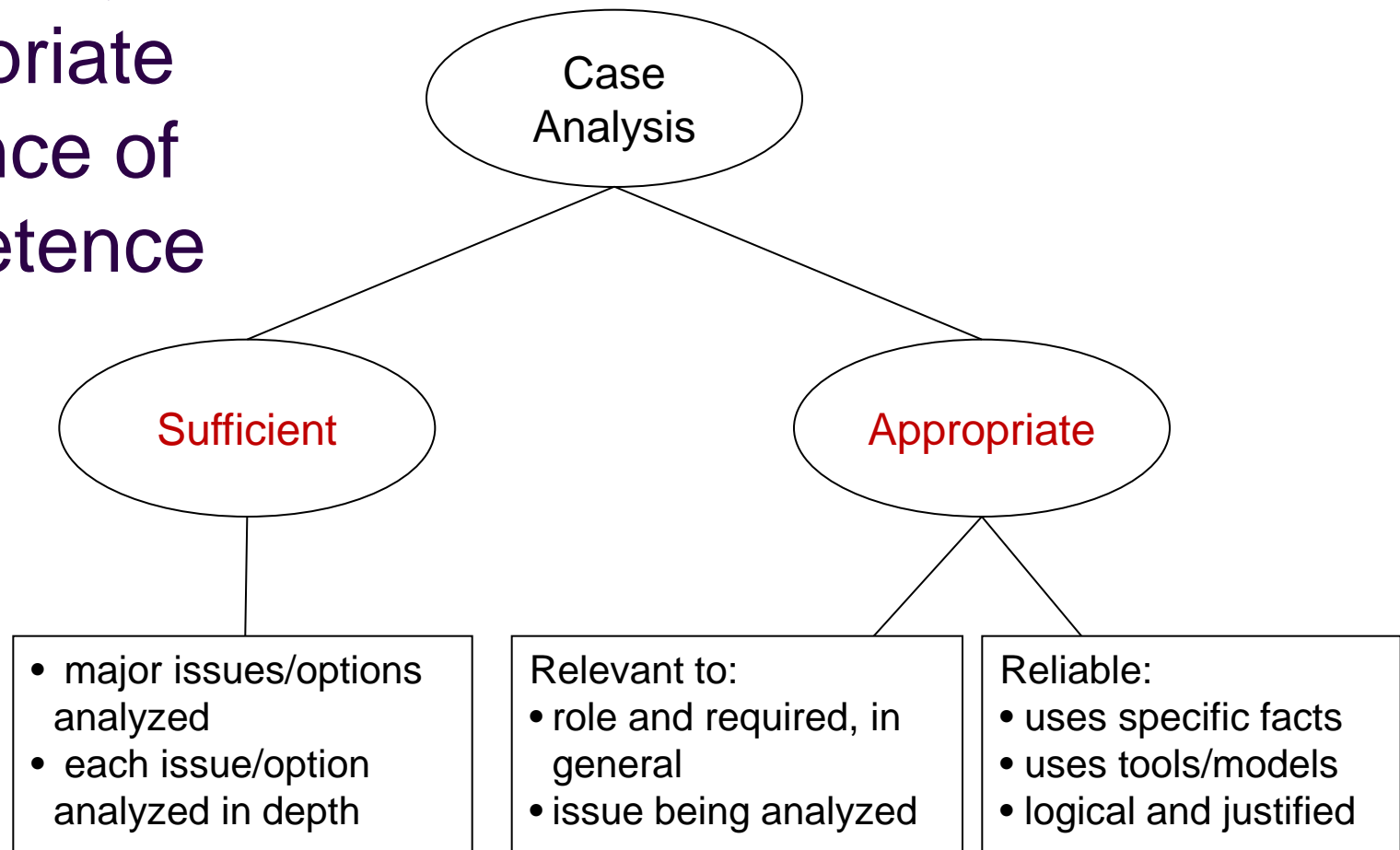
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Overall assessment objective

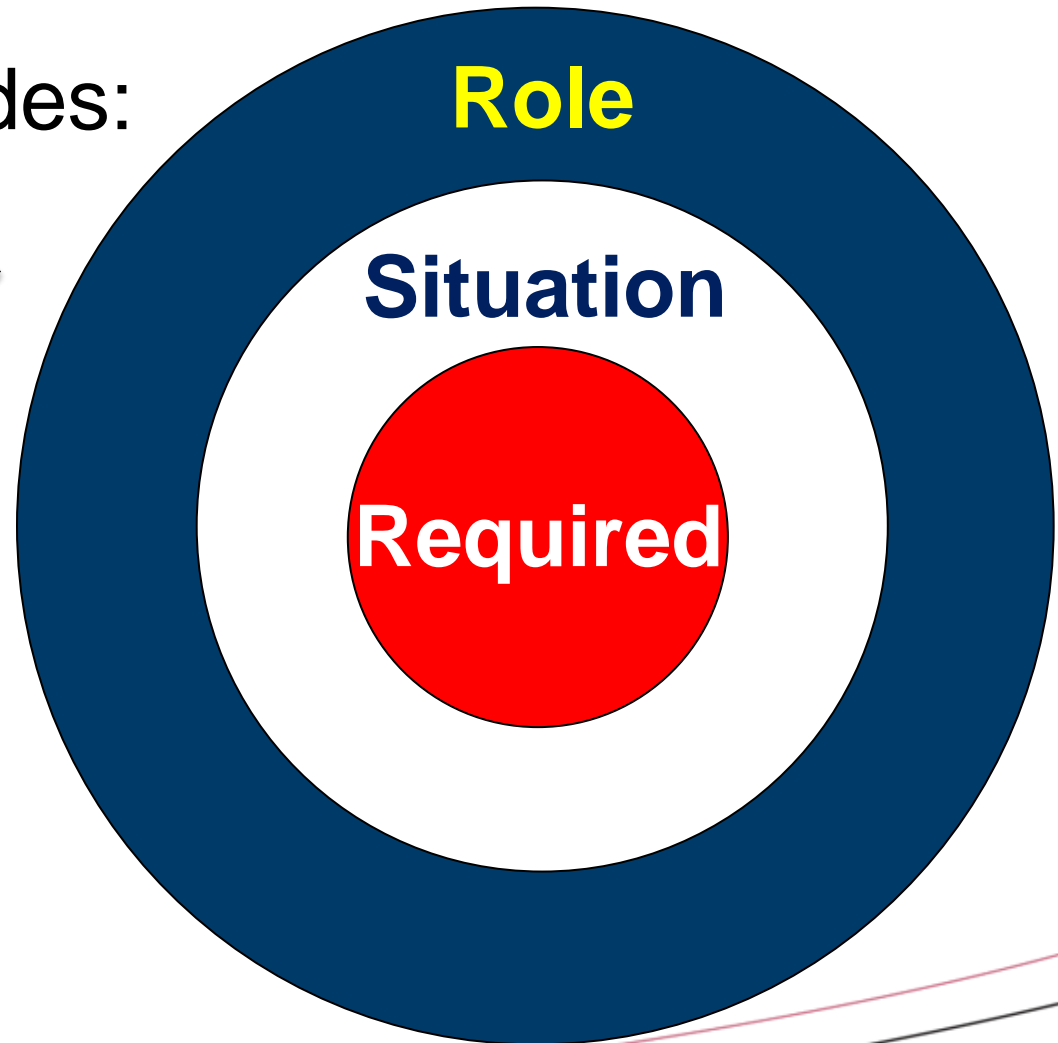
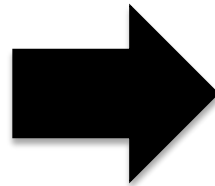
Sufficient,
appropriate
evidence of
competence



Scope of assessment

Competence includes:

- Diagnostic
- Analysis, and
- Decision



Third decision – scaffolding?

1. Guided Assessment
 - Case with decision to make clearly identified
 - Assess performance: analysis/decision
2. Sink or Swim Assessment
 - Case with unclear decision to make
 - Assess performance: all three stages
3. Staged Assessments
 - Case with unclear decision to make
 - Assess diagnostic. Assess analysis/decision

Third decision - combination

- Staged Assessments with One-Page Diagnostic
 - First diagnostic - class contribution grade
 - Two more diagnostics - individual assignments
 - Diagnostic - midterm exam
- Sink or Swim Assessments
 - Team case presentation/competition
 - Final exam

Samples

- One-page Diagnostic
 - Role
 - Current Situation (2 Attachments)
 - Requirement
- Rubrics for
 - Diagnostic
 - Complete Case Analysis

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Connections to classes

- Completed diagnostics prior to first class: forced students to prepare for cases
- Used class time to demo and practice analysis
- Added events from companies in the news: RIM, Target, WestJet
- Provided range of resources for students

Resources for Students

- Webcast A Guide to Competent Case Analysis (LEARN & Vimeo)
- Webcast Communicating Persuasive Recommendations
- Example Team Case Competition – Two top teams presented in class

Communication skills

- Team Case Competition (teams of 4-5)
- All teams presented only to a Prof and TA
- Each Prof/TA chose semi-finalist for section
- Two semi-finalists presented during class
- Peers rated semi-finalists (on-line survey) to select winning team for each section

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Answer depended on timing

- Late July - briefed 4th year course professors:
 - Approach
 - Resources/webcast
 - Assessment methods and rubrics
- October – SAF Teaching and Learning Green Bag:
 - Shared with additional profs and CTE
 - Received feedback from 4th year course profs

Assessment at program level

- Add individual case assignment to assess written communication
- Record case presentations to assess oral communication
- Use sample of exams to assess critical thinking, some functional competencies, and business understanding

Any questions*

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