Communication Skills during Online Learning among Business Students: Does it Match with Business Case Method?

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Abstract

Students majoring in business rarely get the Business Case Analysis learning method. Many Business students never know the real case of domestic and global companies. On the one hand, students' presentation and communication skills in online classes are far from expectations. This research is an experimental study conducted in the Special Class Business Strategy and Policies course with a total of 57 students. The purpose of this class experimental research is to identify can the implementation of the Business Case learning method increase student participation in formulating Business Strategies and Policies. The purpose of this study is also to identify the implementation of the Case learning method combined with Table Topics and Prepared Speech to improve the experience of delivering analysis results related to Business Strategy and Policy. This research was conducted experimentally for 5 months with 14 meetings with students in online classes. as well as pre-test and post-test. The students who participated in the experiment were students majoring in Business Administration at Telkom University, Indonesia. Based on the results this research can concluded that overall, the method using the Case Analysis method and coupled with adopting the Toastmasters presentation learning style, is effective for the Strategy and Business Policy because it can increase students' critical thinking skills by 43.6% compared to before the lecture and this method was applied. In addition, students are also more confident and able to present ideas and solutions provided with an increase in ability of 40.5% compared to before the implementation of this Toastmasters case analysis and presentation method. Meanwhile, the individual's ability to deliver impromptu was 38.8% compared to the previous one without any impromptu speech session.

Keywords
Business Case Method, Toastmasters Speaking Method, Business Learning, Online

I. INTRODUCTION

There is a course name Business Strategies and Policies in Business Administration department. This course is an advanced course for students in because new students can take this course after completing several course requirements including Finance courses, Human Resources courses, Business Operations courses and courses Marketing course. Therefore, this course not only aims to make students understand the elements that make up a company's business strategy, but also aims to train students to provide strategic recommendations based on logical considerations of examples of conditions as well as managerial experience through reflection faced by a company or Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

According to Mintberg and Gosling (2002), there is generally one method that is applied is the application of the case method (Rippin et al., 2010). The case method differs substantially from traditional teaching and learning approaches such as lectures. Lecture-oriented classes provide students with a wide range of information on theory, concepts, techniques and practice (Böcker, 1987). While the case method uses various descriptions of specific business situations, providing opportunities to implement theories, concepts, techniques, and practices. Lecturers do not give lectures but lead discussions on the application of the material that has been learned in these various business situations (Esteban & Pe, 2004).

Unfortunately, after this lecture started a few weeks ago, with the case analysis method, student participation is still low even though the lecturer who is in charge has given instructions for working on the case. Student analysis of cases is still lacking, even though this course includes teaching the "art" of formulating business strategies. The presentation of students on the results of their analysis is also still lacking, it seems that they only convey the "skin" of their analysis without being able to share deeper understanding. The following is an example of survey:
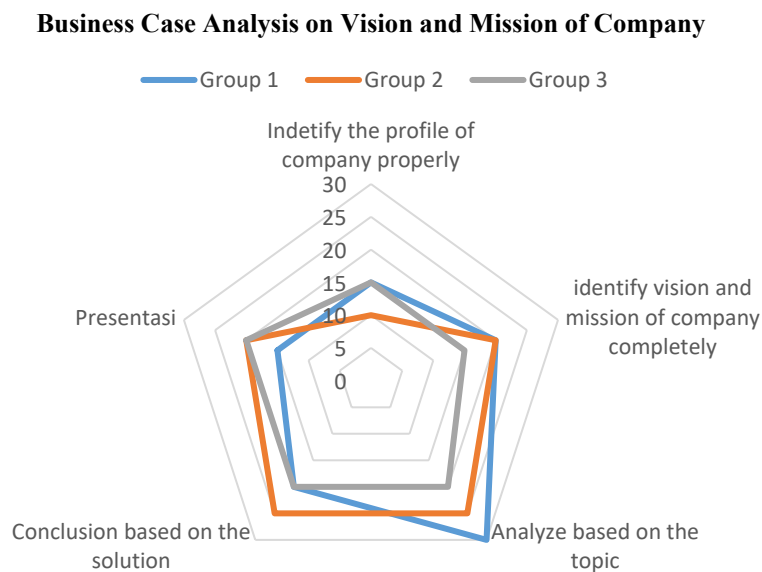
Business Case Analysis on Vision and Mission of Company

Figure 1. Map of skills before the class, 2021

From the data from Figure 1. above, it can be seen that the student scores for the second week's assignment, which is about analyzing the vision and mission of the company which is considered a failure so that the company goes bankrupt, is still far from the highest score. Likewise, at the time of presentation, where student analysis was not in-depth and did not achieve the learning objectives in the second week, with a score of only 15 for group 1, 20 for group 2 and 20 for group 3 of the three parallel classes. Even though it is carried out online, experience in providing case analysis can still be realized with a better degree of student understanding. Therefore, a learning method is needed to complete case analysis so that students are more active, participative and gain overall experience through assignments as speakers. It aims to provide experience in conveying ideas and analysis results in making decisions related to the case being worked on, both based on individual decisions and the results of group discussions. Lecturers and researchers of learning methods propose learning methods inspired by International Toastmasters in providing practice-based public speaking training, namely: (1) Table Topics, and (2) Prepared Speech.

The aims of this research are to find out the effectiveness and success of the implementation of the Case learning method combined with Table Topics and Prepared Speech can increase student participation in developing Business Strategies and Policies. The results of this study aim to improve the managerial experience of students in conveying the results of the analysis of Business Strategy and Policy through the Table Topics and Prepared Speech methods. Based on the background described above, the formulation of the problem in this study is:
1. How can the implementation of the Business Case learning method increase student participation in formulating Business Strategies and Policies?
2. How can the implementation of the Case learning method combined with Table Topics and Prepared Speech improve the experience of delivering analysis results related to Business Strategy and Policy?

1.1 Objectives

1. To identify can the implementation of the Business Case learning method increase student participation in formulating Business Strategies and Policies?
2. To identify the implementation of the Case learning method combined with Table Topics and Prepared Speech improve the experience of delivering analysis results related to Business Strategy and Policy

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

A.   *Learning process*

Learning is a complex process that happens to everyone and lasts a lifetime, since he was a baby to the grave later (Ellinger et al., 2003). Learning can occur at home, at school, at work, in places of worship, and in the community, and takes place in any way, from anything, and by anyone. Even the ability of people to learn is one of the important characteristics that distinguish humans from other creatures. The learning process is individual and contextual, meaning that the learning process occurs within students according to their development and environment (Jackson, 2003). Students should not only learn from teachers or educators but can also learn from various learning resources available in their environment. The concept of learning according to UNESCO requires every educational unit to be able to develop four pillars of education both for now and in the future, namely:
1. Learning to know
2. Learning to do (learning to do something) in this case we are required to be skilled in doing something
3. Learning to be (learning to be someone) and
4. Learning to live together

The development of analytical skills to solve problems appropriately requires a process that is not short. In the learning process, one of the things that educational institutions can do is use the case method to bring real problems faced by business into the classroom to be discussed and reflected so that it becomes an accumulation of knowledge and wisdom (Argyris, 1980). Since being used by Harvard Business School in the 1980s, this method has become increasingly popular in business schools, including in Indonesia. However, the use of textbooks in universities that refer to western country settings is still insufficient to foster contextual sense for business problems in Indonesia which are influenced by differences in industrial characteristics, environment, as well as cultural and social structures (Forman, 2015).

The case method differs substantially from traditional teaching approaches such as lectures. Lecture-oriented classes provide students with various information related to concepts, theories, techniques and practices. Meanwhile, the case method uses various descriptions of specific business situations, providing opportunities to apply theories, concepts, techniques and practices (Wynn-williams et al., 2016). Lecturers do not give lectures but lead discussions on the application of the material that has been learned in these various business situations. The case method is a teaching method in which students and instructors participate in a direct discussion of various business cases or problems (Rippin et al., 2010).

B.   *Case Method Learning Method*

The development of analytical skills (analytical skills) to solve problems (problem solving) appropriately requires a process that is not short. In the learning process, one of the things that educational institutions can do is use the case method to bring real problems faced by business into the classroom to be discussed and reflected so that it becomes an accumulation of knowledge and wisdom (Booth et al., n.d.). Since being used by Harvard Business School in the 1980s, this method has become increasingly popular in business schools, including in Indonesia. However, the use of textbooks in universities that refer to western country settings is still insufficient to foster contextual sense for business problems in Indonesia which are influenced by differences in industrial characteristics, environment, as well as cultural and social structures (Mccarthy & Mccarthy, 2010).
The case method differs substantially from traditional teaching approaches such as lectures. Lecture-oriented classes provide students with various information related to concepts, theories, techniques and practices (Mccarthy & Mccarthy, 2010). Meanwhile, the case method uses various descriptions of specific business situations, providing opportunities to apply theories, concepts, techniques and practices. Lecturers do not give lectures but lead discussions on the application of the material that has been learned in these various business situations (Booth et al., n.d.). The case method is a teaching method in which students and instructors participate in a direct discussion of various business cases or problems. There are 4 approaches to the case method (Adler et al., 2004), namely:
1.   Lecturing a case, with this approach the lecturer leads the class in case analysis, following the order he deems appropriate, and emphasizing certain parts of the analysis that he feels are most useful.
2.   Theorizing a case, which is essentially the application of this approach means that the lecturer uses the case to convey conceptual or theoretical knowledge.
3.   Illustrating a case, this approach is a technique that is often used by consultants and speakers in popular business seminar tours. The aim is to use cases as war stories to illustrate certain important management concepts or ideas (Koob & Funk, 2002).
4.   Choreographing a case, namely the lecturer who applies this method leads the class by revealing and emphasizing various conceptual issues and key decisions in the case without judging the correctness of student contributions beforehand (Weil et al., 2001).

The case method requires students to participate maximally individually in class discussions. Participation is not just talking but also contributing (Boyce et al., 2001). Effective participation requires preparation. In active participation, students are encouraged to be able to ask the right questions for each case submitted. According to (Ellinger et al., 2003), relevant case questions include: Who is the protagonist? What goals do you want to achieve explicitly and implicitly? What decisions must be made? What are the problems, opportunities and risks faced? What facts do you have to assist in decision making? What was learned in this case? What are the criteria for evaluating alternatives? (Weil et al., 2001)

C.   Communication Skills on Toastmasters International

Toasmasters International develops two curriculum paths in providing training to its members, namely communication and leadership. On the communication line, someone will go through the process of doing public speaking at least 40 times, not including several small workshops (15 minutes duration) to large ones (minimum 60 minutes duration). Each member of Toasmasters International can speak and evaluate the speech of others. What is quite interesting is that every member who successfully runs these modules will be rewarded with a certain title behind his name. In order are CC (Competent Communicator), ACB (Advanced Communicator Bronze). ACS (Advanced Communicator Silver), and ACG (Advanced Communicator Gold). If the person has completed the communication module and completed the leadership module through the HPL (High Performance Leadership) Project, then the member will receive the highest status award at the International Toasmasters level, namely DTM (Distinguished Toasmasters).

The basic curriculum of each Toasmasters International will carry out ten public speaking modules which are designed in stages for each member to go through, the ten modules are: First, Ice Breaker, to learn to feel comfortable speaking in public. Second, Organize Your Speech, learn to arrange the agenda (opener, content, and closing) and the purpose of the speech. Third, get to the Point, learn to formulate general intentions in speeches (to inform, to persuade, to entertain, to inspire) and specific intentions (what meaning will be brought home by the audience). Fourth, How to Say It, learn to make the right choice of words so that the essence of the message can be conveyed effectively. Fifth, Your Body Speaks, learn to use body language (gestures, body movements, facial expressions, and eye gaze). Sixth, Vocal Variety, learn to use/maximize vocal variety (volume, pitch, rate/paca, pause). Seventh, Research Your Topic, learn to compose speeches based on data. Eighth, Get Comfortable with Visual Aids, learn to coordinate presentations with visual support. Ninth, Persuade with Power, learn to use logical support in order to influence others effectively. Tenth, Inspire Your Audience, learn to inspire the audience to be better in personality, emotion, profession, spirituality, and others.

Meanwhile, to increase the capacity in the field of public speaking, a number of modules have been prepared which are freely chosen to strengthen the competence of the members, including: the entertaining speaker, speaking to inform, public relations, the discussion leader, specialty speeches, speeches by management, the professional speakers, technical presentations, persuasive speaking, communicating on television, storytelling, interpretive reading, interpersonal communication, special occasion speeches, and humorously speaking.

Agenda carried out at each meeting. First, is the welcome speech that will be delivered by the club chairman or commonly referred to as the club president. Then enter the first session, namely Table Topics, where in this session one member will bring a topic as well as mediate other members and guests who come to the meeting (guest) to provide comments on the topic presented. Then the Prepared Speech session, in this session only officially registered members can bring their speeches to the fore which are usually prepared in advance. Followed by the Evaluation session, which will be evaluated by members who are considered more senior and competent to evaluate the speeches delivered in the previous session, submission of some comments from several guests who attended and closed again by the president. Each session that takes place there will be several officers, namely a timer as a timekeeper, an "ah" counter which will record the words "ah, eh, o" or unnecessary words, and a grammarian who will provide an evaluation of the use of more precise sentences, and all officers will submit their reports at the end of the event.

III.   METHODS

The research method used in this research is experimental research methods. This research focused on case analysis for lecture assignments that provide managerial experience, such as case analysis related to lecture topics. This research will not be carried out on assignments related to the preparation of resumes and reviews on a paper taken from any Business Journal because it is one-way in nature. In addition, this research was conducted only in 1 class with the lowest participation rate. Rationale (argument) method to be used in the Case Method combined with method inspired by International Toastmasters, were:

1.   This course is very important to invite students to think critically in formulating business strategies and policies, so the case method is very appropriate to use because it gives students managerial experience
2.   Students will get used to reading and prepare themselves before entering online lectures

3.   Students after analyzing should convey the results of their analysis and learning to all other students, this shows students' understanding of the cases being solved. Methods that are inspired by Toastmaster practical learning, namely Table Topics and Prepared Speech will be very appropriate to be combined

4.   Because lectures are conducted online, the combination of the two is very feasible, because Lecturers can adjust Zoom and students can enter the breakout room to prepare the results of their analysis and discussion with their team/group.

5.   This combination of methods will give all students the opportunity to appear and get a practice turn until the 14th meeting so that all will have valuable experience during the Business Strategy and Policy course.

The research hypothesis that will be obtained is that a combination of case methods and learning methods inspired by International Toastmasters (Table Topics and Prepared Speech) can increase active participation and understanding of students in the business strategy and policy course.

According to Geoffrey (Sudarmanto, 2009), checking the validity of data in action research can be done using four validity checking techniques, namely: Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability.

1.   Credibility, to check the degree of trustworthiness of the data collected.

2.   Transferability, a technique used by researchers to report the results of their research as accurately and as accurately as possible which describes the context in which the research is conducted.

3.   Dependability and Confirmability, to check the dependability and certainty of the data. This is done both to the process and to the results or outputs.

The indicators that can be used as a measure of the success of the implementation of class actions to be carried out include:

1.   Students' understanding of business and management cases analyzed both individually and in groups

2.   The ability of students to convey ideas and analysis results as they have been prepared properly

3.   The ability of students to convey things related to the topic being analyzed spontaneously, because of preparation and having read the material first.

IV.   DATA COLLECTION

V.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the action intervention that are expected from each method or learning cycle, namely the case method combined with Table Topics and Prepared Speech are:

1.   Students' readiness to learn about business strategies and policies, which students read more and more, especially cases before the lecture begins.

2.   In addition, students are also getting used to conveying the results of their analysis to others, so that students' understanding of a topic will be better and recorded so that it can provide inspiration for future strategy formulation in the industrial world.

Table 1. Indicators of Experiment Research on Case Method and Toastmasters Speaking Method

No	Aspects Observed	Indicator	%	Form of evidence
1.	**Student activities in groups**	Discuss solving problems in groups Cooperate in working on group worksheets Presenting analysis and contributions to cases for group presentations	100	Students provide screen shot evidence of group activities. Students provide a description of the tasks performed by each member
2.	**Student Participation**	Asking questions Express opinions or answer questions Follow all stages of learning Give the best presentation Participate both as timer and ballot counter	90	Students from other teams ask questions, represented by 1 question Students complement each other's answers to the lecturer's questions
3.	**Motivation and enthusiasm**	Enthusiasm in participating in learning activities. Participate in voting and record the results of the analysis of lecturers	95	Lecturers provide surveys

4.	**Public speaking to the results of the case method**	Provide analysis results according to group discussions Successfully presented the analysis Became winner	100	Fluently it is still limited, but it has given opinions and presentations

Source: Survey, 2021

From the Tabel 1 above, it explained that group activity is the main activity in completing the Business Case and is very important for the teaching and learning process. Discussions carried out by students online from their respective places and sending screen shots are evidence that becomes an assessment for the Lecturer. Students must also explain the role of each group member in completing the Business Case. Students must appoint a representative to present the results of the Business Case analysis. All these points have been achieved so that the indicator value is 100. For student participation during lectures, it is still dominated by stimuli from the lecturer by giving questions to students presenting. However, it still provides opportunities for other students to ask questions. The value of this indicator becomes less than optimal because apparently the Business Case Analysis method does not encourage students to ask deeper questions for other cases and only think on the surface. That is why the value of this indicator is only 90.

However, it turns out that students who previously rarely experienced the Business Case method in previous lessons, this time were very enthusiastic and motivated. This is evident from participation in voting and providing feedback to each presenter. The voting system provided assists students in assessing and choosing who is the Best Speaker and the Best Business Case Solutions by prioritizing the results presented. Finally, the main objective of this experimental research is to assess how students' courage in expressing their opinions and presentation skills are better than before. In this experiment, cases are given regularly, so there is an increase in the ability of public speaking, and it is proven that the winner of each session is a student who can express opinions fluently. The following is a list of company cases and the results of a survey regarding the cases most favored by students.
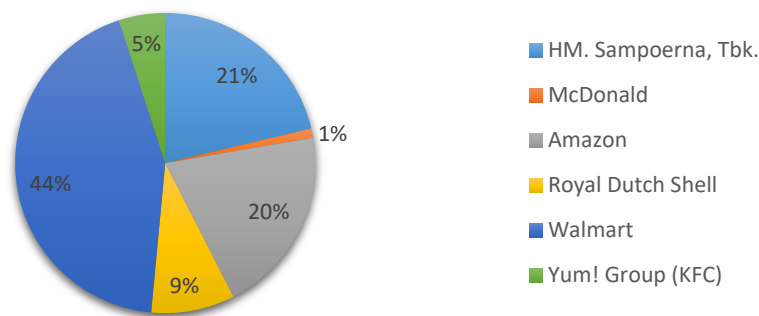

Figure 2. Business Cases Lists, 2021

From the Figure 2 above, actually this is related to the case analysis task given, and greatly affects the student work process. From the diagram, it can be seen from the Figure 2, the Walmart case (at the 5th Sunday meeting) became the most popular case by students. In addition, this also shows the readiness of students in learning about business strategies and policies, where students are increasingly reading, especially cases before the lecture begins.

The cases given are cases from domestic and global companies. For companies in the domestic area is PT. HM Sampoerna, which is the largest cigarette company in Indonesia, has a dilemma to carry out corporate social responsibility, especially in conflict with the interests of the community and the government. The other five cases come from well-known global companies and international franchises such as McDoland. What is also interesting is the case of KFC wanting to enter the Chinese market by implementing a localization strategy. These cases have been selected to hone and test the critical thinking skills of students with different levels of difficulty.
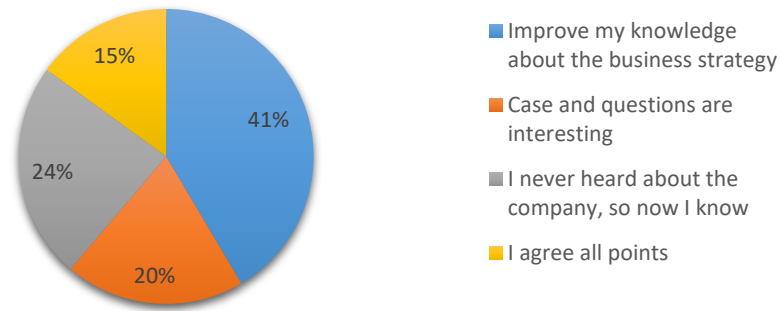
Figure 3. Benefits of Business Case Method survey by Author

From the Figure 3. above, it can be seen that students feel an increase in knowledge of business processes and cases experienced by large companies. So far, students have different experiences when studying business, so this method is 40% successful in increasing student knowledge with real cases experienced by companies and being involved in providing solutions. 25% are they just found out it's a global company that so far only thinks as a brand. They are also interested in the questions that must be answered as much as 20% and 15% feel all points. The following are the results of a survey of the improvements felt by students when presenting the results of case analysis in class online.
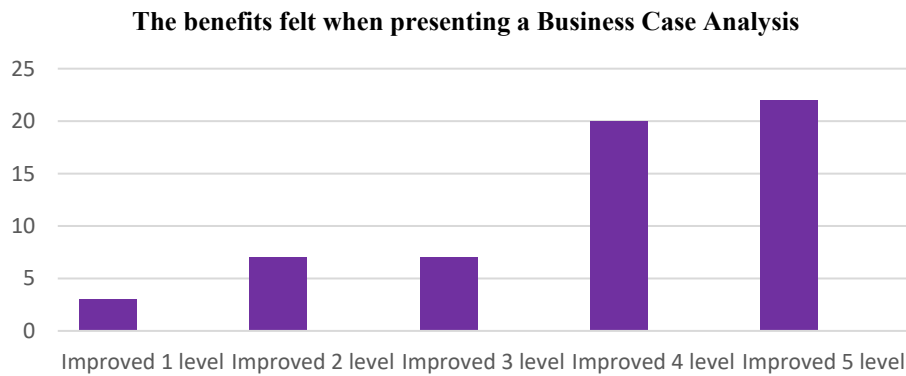

Figure 4. Level Improvement of Speaking Skills

It can be seen from the Figure 4. above that those who feel the benefits of an increase in presentation skills are. It can be seen that not only students' increased analysis can work on business cases, but also students' presentation skills. Students prepare good presentations, and there is a Spoken person who represents the team for presentations. Based on the graph, as many as 20 students felt an increase in presentation skills 4 levels from before when they had not started lectures. A total of 22 students experienced a significant increase in 5 levels at once when the Business Case Method and Toastmasters Speaking Method were combined. The 5 levels increase include: the ability to express opinions in groups, the ability to argue in front of an online class, the ability to ask questions, the ability to explain topics impromptu, and the ability to answer questions from lecturers and classmates.
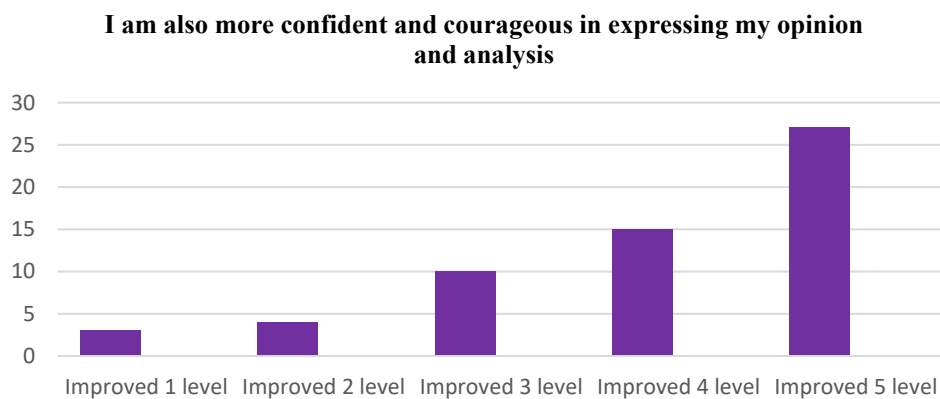

Figure 5. Level Improvement of Confident

Based on the survey presented on Figure 5. Above conducted to find out the increase in self-confidence and the ability to express the results of the analysis can be seen in the table above. A total of 27 students felt an increase in self-confidence by 5 levels compared to before. This occurs when group and individual assignments in class are online. This is the success of this method because it turns out that Toastmasters Speaking Method can increase students' confidence in public speaking in the academic world.
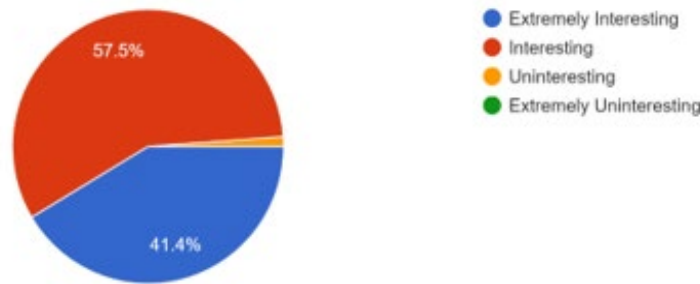

Figure 6. The results of the survey for the presentation method delivered by each group representative

From the results of a survey on Figure 6. above, how the presentations from other groups, it turned out that all participants rated Interesting because it was accompanied by Posters, Videos, and reading references. The posters displayed are very relevant to the cases that each group must discuss. This method is proven to increase students' attention in the learning process for a topic that is actually difficult.
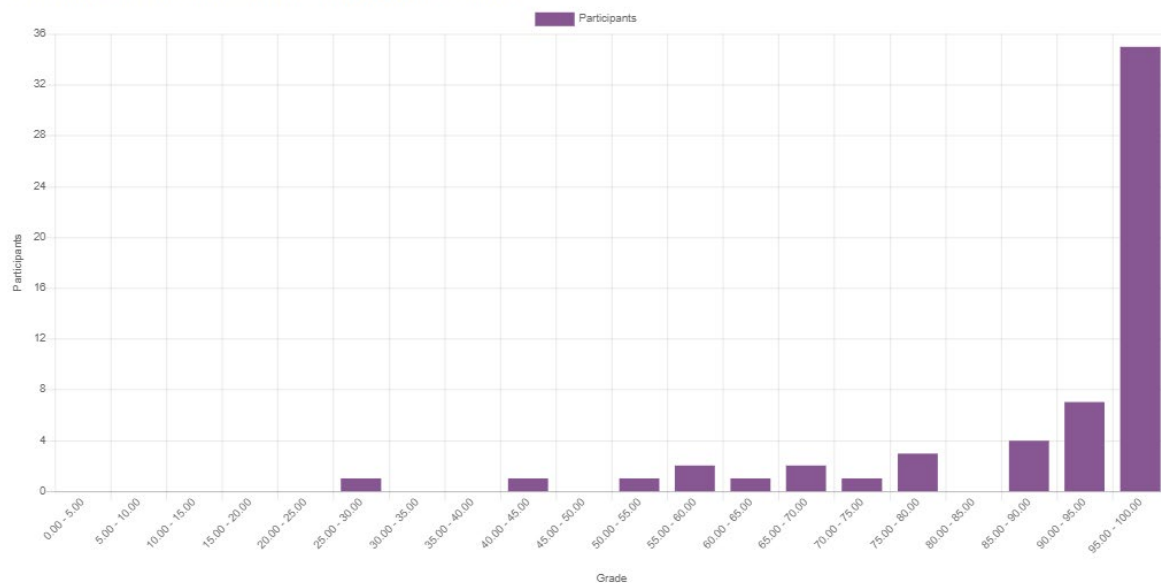

Figure 7. Overall Final Score gained by Students

From the results on Figure 7. all student assessments, the maximum A score is obtained which is very dominant, because all students can solve cases well and present, both representatively and impromptu topics given suddenly in online classes. This is the success of the method applied between the Business Case Method and the Toastmasters Speaking Method. Student success is also supported by the assessment of fellow members of the group while working in teamwork. There are very few students who score below B.

5.2 Proposed Improvements

In the future, lectures can be held by applying the same method, namely Case Analysis and a combination of Toastmasters for presentation and speaking sessions. However, it is recommended that case analysis is more complex with the longitudinal observation method so that the observation time is 1 semester. Students will see, observe and analyze every change in a company, then present everything that happens in the company periodically, for example in the form of podcasts.

VI.   CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the results this research can concluded that overall, the method using the Case Analysis method and coupled with adopting the Toastmasters presentation learning style, is effective for the Strategy and Business Policy because it can increase students' critical thinking skills by 43.6% compared to before the lecture and this method was applied. In addition, students are also more confident and able to present ideas and solutions provided with an increase in ability of 40.5% compared to before the implementation of this Toastmasters case analysis and presentation method. Meanwhile, the individual's ability to deliver impromptu was 38.8% compared to the previous one without any impromptu speech session.

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BIOGRAPHY

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