

Implementing the PovertyCure DVD Series
in the Graduate Business Curriculum at
Mount Vernon Nazarene University

Paper presentation by

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In my role as Associate Dean in the Jetter School of Business at Mount Vernon Nazarene University, I have general oversight of the curriculum in our graduate business programs (MBA,MSM, MBA-HCA). As a professor of management with a specialization in international business I have the specific responsibility to manage the curriculum we use in all of our graduate level Global Business courses. Outside of work, I also enjoy traveling and working overseas. I spend about two weeks every year in developing countries working alongside some amazing people who need some assistance in building schools, training centers, churches and community centers.

I first became aware of the PovertyCure DVD Series when I received a copy from Hillsdale College to view in preparation for the 2013 Free Market Forum in San Diego. Then I had the privilege to meet Michael Matheson Miller and hear his presentation at the 2013 Free Market Forum. The message of the PovertyCure Organization and this DVD series resonated with me. I have worked in many of the countries depicted in the series. I count it a rare privilege to come along side these hard working people all around the globe, who are praying for a hand up and not a hand out. I count it an incredible blessing to have a front row seat to see what can happen when people practice the God ordained principles presented in this series to unleash the transformational benefits of true “charity, justice, and human flourishing” (Miller, 2012). I was convinced that my students needed to learn these principles too.

So, I incorporated the PovertyCure DVD Series into our graduate level Global Business curriculum. This course is a required for all our graduate business students and all instructors of the course are required to use the curriculum I developed, so now all of our graduate business students are exposed to the PovertyCure DVD Series

before they graduate. The Global Business course, is offered in both a face to face and online format. Either way, it is delivered across a six week period, and since there are six episodes in the PovertyCure DVD Series, I have imbedded one episode in each course week. I require students to watch the weekly episode and then react to it in a graded discussion forum. In the forum they discuss the implications of what they see and hear in PovertyCure as it relates to our other course material and as it relates to current international business and economic events.

Since we require a faith integration component in all our business courses I challenge students to discuss PovertyCure through the lens of faith. They ponder how a responsible person of faith working in an international organization can best work towards a true cure for poverty. I appreciate how PovertyCure rationally and methodically makes the case for achieving human flourishing through a healthy integration of faith and free market capitalism.

My students range in age from the mid 20's to mid 50's. I love watching the light bulbs come on for students of all ages as they watch each episode. MVNU conducts end of course surveys in all our courses and I love reading the comments from students as they say what a life changing and paradigm altering experience PovertyCure has been for them. I think I have had at least one student in every section I teach express a desire to purchase a copy of the PovertyCure DVD series to share with friends and family.

Thanks to the assistance and support of Anielka Munkel and Marc Vander Maas we now have the PovertyCure DVD Series imbedded in our Moodle course template so we can seamlessly use the series in all face to face and online sections of the course.

Even students in our face to face sections, where they watch the videos in class, appreciate that the episodes are imbedded in Moodle so they can go back and review the episodes outside of class to refresh and reinforce their memories as they do their course assignments.

Here are a few emailed comments about PovertyCure from my MBA students over this past year.

Dr. Hughes,

I really enjoyed watching and learning about poverty in a different light. Before these video segments I was always led to believe that the more we gave the better it would help those in poverty. Well, after watching these videos my eyes were opened and I know that more is not always better. I learned that the developing countries would like the chance to develop and not just be given handouts. (personal email from Eric Yorksi)

Hello Dr. Hughes,

I wanted to drop you a note regarding the Poverty Cure video series. I think this is a wonderful addition to the course, especially used in conjunction with the Faith Integration. It was enlightening to see this perspective on poverty and charity and come out with an understanding, that while well ...(intended), we may not be really helping; in fact we may be hurting. I enjoyed it so much I am purchasing it so my family and friends can watch it too. Thank you for making this part of the class. I hope it will help people make smarter decisions when it comes to working with people in developing countries...(personal email from Cheryl Smith)

Here are a few comments from students on end of course surveys.

“Overall, very great video segments that led to a great learning environment...”

“...absolutely loved the Poverty Cure video series which provided a perspective that I had not really thought about before.”

“The Poverty Cure videos complemented what we are learning in the both textbooks...The textbook(s) alone, would not have provided the depth to coursework. Please keep the Poverty Cure Video series in the class material. It truly is a great 'take away'.”

“Poverty Cure video series each week was an excellent way to help me to begin to think globally and to think from a much different perspective. Each segment was thought provoking and spiritually challenging.”

“Povert(y) Cure was fantastic(!)”(MVNU EOCS’s, 2013 - 2014)

I can honestly say I believe the addition of this DVD series to our Global Business course template is the single best curricular move I have made in my 15 years of curriculum development and teaching. It is current, it is cogent, it is succinct and it resonates with my graduate students. It has put a spark in my course no book or research assignment ever has.

I have been on 13 overseas construction projects so far and I can attest to the accuracy and validity of the PovertyCure message. Based on my observations and student feedback, the PovertyCure DVD series expresses this message of human flourishing so much more effectively than my trip videos and slideshows ever have. I encourage all business faculty to visit PovertyCure.org to learn more about this “international network of organizations and individuals” and this DVD series (PovertyCure.org, 2014). I would challenge professors and curriculum developers to watch the DVD series through the eyes of your students and then consider if adding the PovertyCure DVD Series to your curriculum might not be one of the best decisions you could ever make for preparing your students to be global contributors to and champions for human flourishing.

References

Miller, M.M. (Director/Producer/Host). (2012). *PovertyCure DVD Series*. [Video].

Available from Acton Institute at http://shop.acton.org/povertycure-dvd-series.html?utm_source=povertycure&utm_medium=button&utm_campaign=dvd-seriesbutton and Amazon at http://www.amazon.com/PovertyCure-DVD-Michael-Matheson-Miller/dp/1938948289/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1412093428&sr=8-1&keywords=povertycure

MVNU EOCS's (2014). End of course survey results: MAN6093 Global Business. Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Mount Vernon, OH: Author.

PovertyCure.org (2014). *About PovertyCure*. Retrieved from <http://www.povertycure.org/>