

Report on the International Management Teachers Academy (IMTA) held in Bled, June 15–21, 2025

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Between June 15–21, 2025, the renowned IMTA (International Management Teachers Academy) program took place in Bled, Slovenia, organized by CEEMAN (Central and East European Management Development Association). The program's objective was to prepare participants for the application of modern, student-centered, and experience-based teaching methods, with particular emphasis on case study-based instruction, which plays a defining role in international business and management education.

The History and Role of CEEMAN in Management Education

CEEMAN was founded in 1993 with the aim of fostering the development of management and business education in the Central and Eastern European region. Its founders recognized that the economic transformations following the political changes in Central and Eastern Europe required a new type of management approach and innovative teaching methods. Over the past three decades, CEEMAN has grown into a global network, bringing together more than 200 institutions from 50 countries. The organization's primary mission is to bring management education closer to real business practice and to support pedagogical approaches that help students strengthen their theoretical knowledge with business-relevant, applicable competencies. CEEMAN's activities rest on three main pillars:

- ▶ organizing international training programs (such as IMTA),
- ▶ providing platforms for research and knowledge sharing,
- ▶ supporting accreditation and quality assurance initiatives.

The flagship program of the organization is IMTA, which aims to improve the quality of education, particularly for higher education institutions operating in emerging economies.

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The Specific Features of the IMTA Program and the Presence of Corvinus University

IMTA was launched in 2000 with the mission of providing young and mid-career faculty members teaching management and economics subjects with internationally recognized methodological and pedagogical training. Over the years, more than 550 educators from 45 different countries have participated in the program, underscoring its global recognition. The program is delivered as an intensive, one-week training consisting of three main elements:

- ▶ Theoretical and methodological foundation: introducing student-centered teaching, the case study method, and blended learning approaches.
- ▶ Teaching practice: participants deliver their own class based on a pre-assigned case study, which is then evaluated by peers and international experts.
- ▶ Reflective learning and feedback: participants receive detailed, constructive feedback on their teaching style, communication, and use of pedagogical tools.

Participants emphasized that the program contributed to strengthening their teaching identity and introduced them to innovative methodological approaches that enrich both the student learning experience and the overall learning outcomes.

Teaching with Case Studies

The case study method is one of the most widespread and inspiring forms of business education, made famous by Harvard Business School. Its essence lies in the fact that students do not learn predetermined, textbook solutions, but are confronted with a concrete, real or realistic business situation for which there is no single “right answer.” This uncertainty is a deliberately embedded pedagogical element, designed to develop students’ critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and ability to collaborate. Through their analyses, debates, and collective reflection, students build a shared knowledge base that goes beyond the assertion of any single perspective.

The pedagogical value of the method lies in the redefinition of the roles of both teacher and student. The instructor acts as a facilitator, guiding students with questions, structured discussions, and feedback to help them arrive at their own insights. Students, on the other hand, are not passive recipients of knowledge but active participants who bear responsibility for making the discourse meaningful and valuable. This approach is particularly effective in cooperative learning, as students build on one another’s ideas and new insights emerge from the confrontation of diverse viewpoints.

There are numerous advantages to using case studies:

- ▶ First, they develop critical thinking, as students must weigh the advantages and risks of different decision options.
- ▶ Second, they strengthen communication skills, since formulating, articulating, and defending a standpoint is an essential part of the method.
- ▶ Third, they model real-life decision-making situations that are directly connected to preparation for the labor market.

In the business world, case studies taught at Harvard or other leading institutions are often referred to as the “training ground” of future leaders. For example, the classic *Coca-Cola vs. Pepsi* case highlights the complex interrelationships of brand building, global market entry, and changing consumer preferences. Another iconic example is the case of *Southwest Airlines*, through which students can understand how cost efficiency, human resource management, and corporate culture can create a synergy that provides long-term competitive advantage. Such cases demonstrate that business decisions are not solely determined by numbers but also shaped by human factors, value choices, and social consequences.

Nevertheless, the case study method has its limitations. It is not equally effective in all disciplines or subject areas. For example, in accounting education, it is essential first to master factual knowledge, precise rules, standards, and technical skills. A student cannot credibly analyze a company’s financial statements without understanding the logic of double-entry bookkeeping or the basics of international accounting standards. Therefore, the case study method cannot replace systematic knowledge transfer, but rather complements it. Once solid foundations have been established, however, it becomes a highly effective tool for demonstrating practical applications.

The significance of the case study method goes beyond specific business situations. From a pedagogical perspective, it represents a new learning culture. Education shifts away from frontal teaching toward experiential learning, in which students learn through their own experiences and even their mistakes. This is consistent with the principles of constructivist pedagogy, which holds that knowledge cannot simply be transmitted but must be constructed by the learner based on prior experience.

In teaching economics and management, the case study method thus serves both professional preparation and intellectual development. Students learn how to work together, how to articulate their own viewpoints, and how to build trust in discussions. These skills – critical thinking, argumentation, cooperation, and responsibility in decision-making – are just as important as professional knowledge and often determine success in later careers. ■