The Flipped Classroom: How to use Case Studies to Increase Active Learning

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The concept of the flipped classroom was first popularized in the early 2000s as a technique to dedicate class time to student-centered, active learning (Avery, Huggan, & Preston, 2000). By requiring students to read or watch content before attending class, the traditional passive lecture format is replaced by the active construction of knowledge by solving problems, answering questions, or debating issues inside the classroom (Wallace, Walker, Braseby, & Sweet, 2014). This style of learning is especially favored by the current generation of Millennial students (Prensky, 2010).

Despite this recent trend, the case method of teaching developed at Harvard Business School a century ago was in some ways the “original” flipped classroom (Corey, 1998). The case study method requires preparation from students before class time and active engagement with the case subject matter through discussion, role play, and/or debate. These real or simulated business situations faced by managers have been promoted as an effective form of sport management education for over a half century (Zeigler, 1959). Benefits of this type of engaged learning include solving problems dynamically, practicing critical thinking, and modeling managerial decisions.

Cases can sometimes offer messy, complicated situations without perfectly correct answers that help students practice managerial decision making and oral communication. Yet, these same features of cases can be intimidating for those who are developing their teaching and andragogical skill sets (e.g., newly minted PhDs and doctoral students with teaching responsibilities). Furthermore, because of their association with management, instructors in other disciplines (e.g., economics, finance, statistics) may feel that the case study method does not naturally lend itself to their teaching approaches (Lumpkin & Achen, 2015).

Thus, the ultimate intent of this symposium is to improve teaching quality through enhanced student learning. To do so, we will acquaint instructors of any level of teaching skills with proven procedures, classroom methods, and promising practices for using case studies in a flipped environment. In addition, by the end of the symposium, participants will understand how case studies can be implemented in courses in any discipline.

Specifically, we will discuss the following topics and/or themes:

• how to select a case study for class;
• aligning case learning outcomes with theory and literature;
• creating assignments around the case;
• preparing students for the classroom discussion or activity;
• the best use of teaching notes and instructor manuals;
• how to prepare for and lead the case discussion, and;
• how to assess student performance and learning.

Time will be allocated for audience members to share their experiences and/or ask questions of the panel members in resolving issues that they have or may experience with employing the case method.