Case Based Learning

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Case-Based Method - Staple approach used at Harvard University

▶ Quick Poll

▶ https://www.hbs.edu/mba/academic-experience/Pages/the-hbs-case-method.aspx

Quick Poll As you watch, try to capture & jot down some principles, i.e., collaboration, critical thinking, experience, culture, diversity

CASE STUDY

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What is Case Based Learning

- The basic principle of case-based learning is to contextualize knowledge through the use of real cases that offer students a way to analyze the given situation and apply the best approach to solutions (Kantar, 2013).

- An approach that encourages students to apply their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter to a real case.

- Active learning strategy used across disciplines – medicine, business, law, social work, psychology, and other courses

- Case studies are typically done in groups or as a class, but educators may occasionally allow students to choose case studies individually.

CW

The Study

▶ Grounded in constructivism & feminist pedagogy

▶ - Constructivist learning theory rooted in 1) *cognitive constructivism* developed by Swiss Psychologist Jean Piaget who felt that individuals construct knowledge based on their experiences (assimilation); 2) *social constructivism-* developed by Lev Vygotsky who felt that knowledge construction is based on social interaction; allows for broadening of knowledge by integrating new information learned from each other (accommodation).

▶ Feminist pedagogy –students are empowered with the direction of the learning

The Study Aim

- Purpose: The purpose of the study was to assess the use of real macro cases, on students' learning outcomes, in an <u>online </u>macro practice course.

- Learning outcomes were operationalized as:

  - 1) self-reported knowledge of macro content,

  - 2) learning interest,

  - 3) degree of engagement,

  - 4) use of critical thinking skills.

The Study cont.

▶ The instructor in a first year macro practice course assigned 4 cases related to social problems and the macro Social Worker role in organizations and communities to students in teams of two or three, based on class size, with a specific week for presentation. Cases addressed: community organization, immigration, mental health/illness, and opioid addiction.

▶ Research question: Does engaging students in collaborative case-based studies in an online environment, using real cases in macro practice:

▶ 1) increase their knowledge of macro content?

▶ 2) increase their interest in macro content?

▶ 3) increase their degree of engagement in the class?

▶ 4) increase their assessment of the use of critical thinking skills?

▶ Hypothesis: It is hypothesized that case-based learning used in teams will increase students' interest in macro practice, their knowledge of the content, their level of engagement

Methods

- **Participants**: Twenty students participated in the study.

- **Procedure**

  - teams of two or three based on the number in the class

  - Students were expected to collaborate on the case, to prepare a summary for discussion and to present the case in terms of a macro practice conceptual framework on 1) problem, 2) population, and 3) arena (Netting, Kerry, McMurtry & Thomas 2012).

  - At the end of the course, students from two sections of a graduate macro practice course, were sent an email with a link to a survey through Qualtrics

  - Questions guided by the Active Learning in Health Professions Scale (ALHPS: Kammer, Schreiner, Kim & Denial, 2015) measured student engagement based on didactic reasoning; and self-reported knowledge, learning interest, and use of critical thinking skills were measured by learning scales adapted by Alavi (1994). Some qualitative data gathered as well.

Findings

	Agree/Strongly Agree	Neutral/Disagree
With the use of case studies: I became more interested in subject	70% (40% SA)	20%N 10%D
With the use of case studies: I increased my skill in critical thinking	100% evenly split	0%
With the use of case studies: I learned a great deal of factual material	90% (30%SA)	5%N; 5%D
With the use of case studies: I was forced to think about how information and concepts connect (synthesis)	95%;	5%N; 0%D
With the use of case studies: I gained a good understanding of basic concepts	90% (35%SA)	10%N; 0%D
With the use of case studies: my ability to integrate facts and develop generalizations improved	90% evenly split	10%N; 0%D

▶ Correlational analyses supported the hypotheses that case-based learning as an independent variable enhanced learning outcomes on the 4 dependent variables.

▶ **Strengths and limitations**: small, self-reported sample; Being online increased instructors ability to assess students' participation, collaboration, integration of literature

Lessons Learned in the Online Course

- Case method offers a deliberative active learning strategy to increase excitement among students, particularly in an asynchronous online environment where a community is not easily developed

- Teams are best when created by instructor for representation of diversity

- Discussion Question is a great Online Collaborative process (using the LMS groups) to enhance students' engagement.

- Instructor presence in DQ is valued, but should be limited to guidance at beginning & summary at the end, incorporating their work; engaging will drive students to your thread, missing out on peer2peer learning. However, a nod here and there, shows that you are involved.

- Providing a student evaluation process once the project is completed

Breakout Session

▶ In your college, frame out a case-based learning project using the University as the case.

▶ Institution factors to consider

1. Financial challenges

2. Declining enrollments

3. Student achievement gaps

4. Industry needs

5. Institutional culture

▶ How can you develop a case-based project that is tailored to your discipline? You will have 10 mins to discuss in your groups.

▶ When we return, each group will share their project idea.

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Implications From Study

▶ Students must be actively involved in their learning, going beyond lectures and reading, to acting upon information, whether it is through experiential exercises in their communities or immersing themselves in real complex cases that force engagement, research, and critical thinking.

▶ This is particularly important ins courses such as macro practice where there's decreased interest, and the need to fire-up students!

Questions are the path to learning

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