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Fostering Engaged Learning: A Simple Case Approach

Prof. Christian Gilde

University of Montana Western, USA

Abstract

The case method places students in the role of decision-makers, confronting real-world challenges. In this respect, cases create a student-centered learning environment—an environment that is essential to successful, engaged learning and high-impact teaching. In this context, compared to a traditional case, a simple case has an accessible case scenario, should be between 1,000 and 1,500 words, focuses on one major theme, and can be read in 15 minutes. The goal was to make the case more accessible, readable, and engaging for students. The method chosen to examine this teaching approach was qualitative in nature and consisted of in-depth interviews with students. Preliminary pedagogical findings of this exploratory project indicated that simple cases were a high-impact practice that encouraged engaged learning. For instance, students prepared the cases on their own, which drew on students' prior knowledge and experiences. Furthermore, they discussed their case ideas in learning teams, which facilitated relationships and provided feedback. In addition, cases were debated in class under the direction of a faculty member which connected the theory to real-world applications. This allowed for the integration of knowledge and time for reflection. The significance of this exploratory work stemmed from using simple cases as a key tool to foster experiential learning, make learning more meaningful, and scale up access to high-impact practices.

Keywords: Case Method; High-Impact; Real-World Challenges; Short Case-Scenarios; Socratic Discussions