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ABSTRACT

Problem-based learning and teaching with case studies are instructional approaches that are increasingly being applied in a variety of disciplines, such as business, law, medicine, and education. Although there are texts available that offer examples of what works and what to avoid when teaching with cases, instructors exposed to traditional teaching methods often struggle with visualizing how to apply these constructivist approaches to their own teaching. This paper discusses how one professor created a professional development videotape that attempts to model some of these pedagogical techniques for faculty and their students. (Author/SLD)

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CREATING AND PRODUCING A VIDEOTAPE ON FACILITATING CASE DISCUSSIONS

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CREATING AND PRODUCING A VIDEOTAPE ON FACILITATING CASE DISCUSSIONS

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Abstract

Problem-based learning and teaching with case studies are instructional approaches that are increasingly being applied in a variety of disciplines, such as business, law, medicine, and education. Although there are texts available, including my own [Sudzina, 1999], that offer examples of what works and what to avoid when teaching with cases, instructors exposed to traditional teaching methods often struggle with visualizing how to apply these constructivist approaches to their own teaching. This session will discuss how one professor created a professional development videotape that attempts to model some of these pedagogical techniques for faculty and their students.

KEYWORDS: videotape, professional development, facilitating case discussions

INTRODUCTION

The number of disciplines that are including problem-based learning (PBL) and case studies in their professional preparation is becoming increasingly widespread. Additionally, case studies are now being included on standardized tests to assess competencies for professional certification, accreditation, and/or licensure, such as the *Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching* (PLT) exam in teacher education.

By definition, PBL presents a rich problem that affords free inquiry by students. The learning is student-centered, active, collaborative, and often incorporates case studies. Case studies are "slices of life" that present real life dilemmas with multilayered issues and perspectives. Cases, which may be one page or 100 pages, are applicable to a variety of content areas, and offer no one "right" answer. However, effective responses are practical, rooted in the literature or research, and take into consideration all aspects of the problem. Hence, responses are synergetic in nature. Traditional instruction, by contrast, is teacher-centered and directed. The instructor selects and delivers the content, (usually in a lecture format), and evaluates students on their ability to reproduce that content on an exam. There usually is one particular answer that is required.

Instructional leaders, trained in the traditional lecture method, often struggle with how to incorporate PBL and cases into their curricula, facilitate case discussions, and assess student outcomes with cases. Another related issue is how to successfully prepare students in the use of case studies when being assessed for professional competencies by accrediting agencies.

In my discipline, teacher education, there are a number of books available to guide instructors in applying the case study method. However, moving from a teacher-centered to a student-centered curriculum is easier said than done. A preferred way to make this transition is

through hands-on experiences with PBL and case studies, preferably in an interactive workshop led by a facilitator trained in the case study method. However, in lieu of attending such a session, this video attempts to address some basic questions about teaching with cases through the example of a case study application to a class of undergraduate preservice teachers. The instructor will discuss a five-step process for case analysis and model case study facilitation techniques. To the best of my knowledge, no such professional development video is currently available for teacher educators.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Initial use of PBL started in the medical community in the late 1960's to interject active and collaborative learning, relevance, and student motivation into the medical curricula for students disenchanted with their passive role in memorizing the required material. Although PBL was not initially a popular idea, it has since been adopted by medical schools around the world and has spread beyond the confines of medicine to learning in many different disciplines and professions [see, Evensen & Hmelo, 2000].

Similarly, the case method, or teaching with case studies, had its contemporary roots in the Harvard Business School in the 1980's, where Roland Christensen taught and wrote eloquently about interactive teaching and "the case method:"

Reading about problems or memorizing principles does little to prepare the practitioner—architect, doctor, or manager—to apply concepts and knowledge to the complexity of real-life problems. Discussion teaching achieves these objectives better than alternative pedagogies. It puts the students in an active learning mode, challenges them to accept substantial responsibility for their own education, and gives them substantial appreciation of, and experience with, the application of knowledge to practice [1987, p. 3].

My introduction to teaching with case studies came at an educational psychology conference at Indiana University in the fall of 1988. Although I had been exposed to cases informally in my graduate and doctoral work, this was the first formal suggestion that case-based teaching, under the overriding framework of PBL, was a superior method to lecture in promoting students' long-term conceptual understandings and retention of information through the applications of theory to practice. Additionally, students exposed to the case study method appeared to develop superior skills in analytical reasoning and written and oral expressional compared to students exposed only to traditional instruction.

An added benefit, from an instructor's perspective, was thinking about teaching creatively as a *facilitator* of knowledge rather than simply as a provider of information. Teaching with cases also allows the instructor to probe and/or correct students' misunderstandings or gaps in information that reveal themselves in case analysis.

At that time, only Greenwood and Parkay's book of cases [1989], detailing typical classroom dilemmas, was available to guide my teaching with cases in educational psychology in my CORE and Honors/Scholars classes. Teaching with cases was then considered "out there" and not widely accepted in the teacher education community. Typically, it was assumed that teachers were acquiescing their roles as instructional leaders and letting their students come to their own conclusions. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

In 1991, Kay Merseth at Harvard published *The Case for Cases in Teacher Education* and made a compelling argument for including cases in teacher preparation. A score of casebooks, case commissions, national case competitions, and books on how to apply cases and PBL quickly followed. Interest was high, but adoption was slow in coming. International forums, like the WACRA meetings, encouraged the continued development of case writing and case method teaching across disciplines and cultures.

One of the difficulties, from my point of view, was that much of the literature published on case method teaching tended to be generic and dispense general advice. I saw a need in the

teacher education literature for examples of specific applications of the case study method in the content areas – with advice about what to do, and what *not* to do, when using cases. I invited a dozen experts in the field who were using case methods to contribute to the text, *Case Study Applications for Teacher: Cases of Teaching and Learning in the Content Areas* [Sudzina, 1999]. A companion website was developed so that chapter authors could be contacted directly about questions or concerns at www.abacon.com/~sudzina.

Recently, the Educational Testing Service has started to use case studies of classroom dilemmas to assess preservice teachers' competency in teaching strategies and pedagogy on the *Praxis PLT* exams [2000], leading to teacher certification. This action has rejuvenated interest in the case study method. There currently appears to be wide-spread interest in being trained in PBL and adopting the use of the case study method across the curriculum in teacher education.

CREATING A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT VIDEOTAPE

That being said, there still seemed to be an unmet need to “see” what teaching with cases could look like. After giving a presentation on the use case studies at professional meetings, it was not unusual to be asked to give a quick summary on how to teach with cases by busy professionals. I couldn't do it - there was just too much to say! Additionally, many faculty members are not able to avail themselves of case workshops or case conferences. A video seemed to be a viable alternative to meet these needs.

With a sabbatical in the wings, I submitted a proposal to university-wide *Fund for Educational Development*. I proposed making a 15-20 minute video titled, *An Overview of Problem-based Learning and Teaching with Case Studies: Strategies for Success*. Content would include an overview of PBL, clips of a video case, a 5-step process based on John Dewey to analyze cases, and a demonstration of how to debrief a case and facilitate a case discussion.

The proposal was accepted. My role would be to design the video, write the script, select and edit the video case used as the focus for case dilemma and discussion, prepare my class to engage in case discussions, stage a dress rehearsal for the taping with a different but similar video case, facilitate the case discussion on the video, help edit the final product, and record voiceovers.

The resulting video has gone through several changes. It runs approximately 30 minutes and has been retitled, *Teaching and Learning with Case Studies: Facilitating Case Discussions and Engaging Students* [Sudzina, 2002]. It includes all the original categories, with the exception of information about PBL, which made the video run too long and seemed not to fit well with the flow of the content presented. The video now identifies what a case study is, and concludes with advantages to using the case study method.

My thought was that instructors could benefit from this video by seeing how to use this constructivist pedagogy in a real class situation. Students could benefit from this video by viewing how to approach a case study dilemma and how to prepare appropriate responses.

IMPLEMENTATION

Specific Procedures

This video production was done in partnership with Educational Video Publishing, a professional video production company based in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Two hours of video classroom footage was shot with two cameramen and two cameras in April, 2002, in Dr. Sudzina's undergraduate *Adolescent Growth and Development* class. The content of the video contained footage of a class discussion led by Dr. Sudzina who was demonstrating and modeling a five step approach to case analysis over a two hour class period.

In addition to explaining case analysis, a second focus of the program was to illuminate case discussion facilitation techniques. The class discussed the video case “What to Do about Raymond” [Rowley & Hart, 1995]. We received permission from the authors to show this video. This video case was chosen for case discussion because it presented a rich case of a class room behavior management problem that many beginning teachers could identify with.

Staff from Educational Video Publishing and I selected highlights from the "Raymond" video that we could intercut in our video to further engage the viewer in the process. We thought that these excerpts would add interest to the video and help to reinforce the points made in the case discussion. In this way the viewer could get a sense of what the participants experienced in this video case and better follow the case discussion.

Educational Video Publishing edited the original two hours of video down to one hour. We then met on several occasions to view the video and to decide what we wanted to take out and what we wanted to leave in. We originally cut the video to 20 minutes but found that it didn't adequately illustrate all five steps in the case analysis process. We also wanted to include three minutes of video highlights from the "Raymond" case. Thus, the final cut runs about 30 minutes.

Briefly, the video opens with Dr. Sudzina giving the class a short synopsis of the case and setting the agenda for the case discussion. Excerpts from the "Raymond" case are shown. Dr. Sudzina then facilitates the case discussion using a 5-step process based on the work of John Dewey. As she draws out the issues, perspectives, knowledge, actions, and consequences of the case, notations appear in the left hand corner of the video screen identifying the strategies used in the case discussion. Strategies such as probing, redirecting, role playing, and Devil's Advocate questioning are illustrated. The video concludes with a short summary of the benefits of using case studies. Resources and references are listed at the end of the tape.

Time and Financial Considerations

The idea for making a video about teaching with case studies had been percolating for a long while. The time and opportunity to write such a proposal, secure funding, orchestrate a case discussion session with students for taping, set up a taping schedule, and participate in multiple editing sessions to shape the direction of the video, and delivery of the final product occurred over a 12-month period.

In addition to the time, effort, and planning involved in creating a professional quality videotape, financial constraints need to be considered. Professional video production expenses can range from \$5,000 to \$10,000. The video services that I used included two crew people on the day of the shoot and two full and two half days of editing, including adding titles and taping voiceovers. One extra set of revisions was needed after the final cut to revise references and titles. The total cost of the video production was reduced by the utilization of two professional digital video cameras owned by the School of Education, as well as School of Education contributions of the video stock and final video reproduction expenses.

It is important to have all funding lined up before undertaking a project of this kind. The funding for the video production expenses came from three different sources: the *Dean's Educational Initiative Fund*, the *Fund for Educational Development*, and the *Institute for Technology-Enhanced Learning*. I am grateful to all parties for their support of this project.

NEXT STEPS

There are a variety of possibilities to assess the effectiveness of this video as a professional development tool. One avenue would be to assess faculty feedback; another would be to gather student feedback.

For faculty feedback, a possibility could be to present an in-service or faculty development seminar using the videotape as a training device. At the conclusion of the tape, hold several focus groups to evaluate the clarity and usefulness of the information for faculty interested in applying cases to their classes. Faculty could also give anonymous feedback via a questionnaire on the effectiveness of the tape as a training tool. A third method of assessment would involve showing the tape and then having faculty brainstorm ways to implement cases in their classes, based on that information. Compare results with a similar group who has not seen the video. Findings could be presented at the department, school, university, or professional meeting levels.

For student feedback, show the tape as a preliminary to using cases in the classroom to one of two groups of students taking the same class, such as an educational psychology class. Point out to students what to expect in case analysis and how to participate in a case discussion. Compare with a similar group who has not seen the tape on the quality of analysis and class

discussion on the first assigned case study. Elicit feedback from students as to the helpfulness of the tape for preparing them for using cases. Use the tape a training tool for how to analyze a case for the *Praxis II* exams. Again, findings could be presented at the department, school, university, or professional meeting levels.

This has been a very exciting project to work with from inception to the final product. I have learned a great deal more about teaching with cases in the process of analyzing my own teaching in leading case discussions. By breaking down the case process, and modeling strategies that I have found to be effective, I've had the opportunity to reflect on my teaching and strive to become more effective myself. Thus, an unexpected outcome of the process of creating and producing this video has been the opportunity to improve my own teaching using the case study method.

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