

Case Teaching & Simulations: Keeping It Real?

At Friday's CSUN Symposium focusing on student learning, many of you heard Dr. Lou Rubino (Health Sciences) discuss the simulation exercises he creates for his courses in Health Administration. We find many forms of "experiential" learning practiced on our campus, including role play, case-study teaching, simulation, and service learning. These pedagogies can be highly engaging for students, enhancing not only the meaning of course principles but also the emotional connections. And we recognize the power of emotion to increase retention of ideas.

Do you want to create experiential classroom-learning opportunities for your courses? Some of the resources below might assist you.

1. Simulation Exercises by Lou Rubino

This article describes Lou's simulations and components for creating a simulation, CELT Letter, p.3: <http://www.csun.edu/~celtact/celts01.pdf>.

2. Case Teaching by Cynthia Desrochers

What is a case? A case is a clear, compelling, realistic story that presents students with the uncertainties that confronted the original participants in the case. Students identify alternative outcomes and analyze results.

What formats do cases take? Many cases are formally written; other formats include a picture, piece of art, newspaper article, movie clip, or mathematical word problem.

Why use cases? Cases are real, interesting, active, social, problem-centered application experiences, where students "inhabit" a decision-making situation. Hypothetical solutions to the problems draw on the best thinking of the group. Cases are used as supplemental teaching vehicles to illustrate disciplinary concerns, assumptions, and insights.

Steps:

1. Getting started – Select a short case that encourages the affective and cognitive skills you want your students to practice. Read it several times and consider how it fits with your student-learning objectives for the class. Know why you are teaching *this* case at *this* time.
2. Arranging the classroom – If possible, create a circular arrangement so students can talk face-to-face.
3. "Running" the case – Prepare a set of questions for students to write out as homework before running the case in class. For class, prepare another set of questions to move students through the stages of case analysis. Record the class conversation for everyone to see.
 - * Who are the people in the case?
 - * What is the situation (problem)?
 - * What possibilities for action are there?
 - * What are the consequences of each action?
 - * What action should be taken?
 - * What general principles follow from this analysis?
4. Debriefing the case – Conduct a teacher-led summary and conclusion discussion, assessing if students have reached your desired learnings.

Resources:

- <http://www.hallway.org/> [School of Public Affairs, University of Washington]
- <http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/projects/cases/> [National Center for Case Teaching in Science, SUNY Buffalo]

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