Using Case Studies to Promote Social Justice and Global Citizenship in the Classroom

Lindsay Babb, M.A. Student, Department of Professional Counseling  
Hasmik Chakaryan, PhD, Assistant Professor & Director of Clinical Programs, Department of Professional Counseling

ABSTRACT

This presentation demonstrates how using case studies, engaging guest speakers, and connecting class material to real world events can facilitate instruction and learning in the classroom. The presenters give an example of how a class built around case studies involves students in active participation, critical thinking, analysis, assessment, and treatment planning (for clinical courses) that benefit student learning, engagement, and ownership of class material. The presenters illustrate that engaging students can increase motivation and leadership in social justice advocacy as well as encourage students to become informed and responsible world citizens.

CASE-BASED INSTRUCTION

The courses referenced in this study are: COUN 5450: Trauma, Crisis, and Emergency Relief Counseling & COUN 5800: Professional Orientation to Ethics (4 hrs./week)

Use of case-based instruction encourages students to:

• Explore their preconceived ideas in a safe space
• Better understand the struggles of real people
• Make more ethical and informed decisions
• Actively collaborate with one another
• Develop problem-solving skills
• Develop a multicultural perspective
• Engage in professional leadership and advocacy
• Better understand and apply theories and concepts

TABLE 1: CASE-BASED TEACHING AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>constructivist learning environments</th>
<th>case-based teaching</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>provide experience in the knowledge construction process</td>
<td>Learners must actively seek information in the case, organize it, analyze it, interpret it, and draw conclusions based on this process.</td>
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<td>embed learning in realistic and relevant contexts</td>
<td>This is the main purpose of cases in teaching — albeit the contexts may be real or fictional.</td>
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<td>encourage students to have ownership and voice in the learning process</td>
<td>Learners working with cases must reach and defend positions of their own.</td>
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<td>encourage students to use multiple modes of representation</td>
<td>Case-based methods often include an oral presentation, which may be structured to allow for varying modes.</td>
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<td>Encourages student self-awareness in the knowledge construction process</td>
<td>This is not a required element of case-based methods, but it may often be a fortuitous outcome.</td>
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GUEST SPEAKERS

Guest speakers can engage students in community awareness, outreach, and activities, including advocacy that class lecture alone cannot achieve.

Marva Robinson PSY.D  
Clinical Psychologist  
Veterans Administration  
Preston & Associates Psychology Firm LLC  
St. Louis Association of Black Psychologists

Dr. Robinson, PSY.D, is a clinical psychologist in Saint Louis, MO and has been practicing for 9 years. She was actively involved in outreach during Ferguson events.

Carmen R. Guynn MBA, EBC  
Coalition Against Trafficking & Exploitation (CATE)  
http://supportvictims.com/cate  
(314) 289-5656

Carmen R. Guynn is the Artistic Director and owner of Almas Del Ritmo Dance Company LLC and organizes the annual St Louis Salsa Congress to benefit CATE.

PERSONAL STORIES

In addition to case studies and guest speakers, the instructor also shared personal stories of trauma in the wake of the 1988 Armenian Earthquake. This method of instruction represents the professor as a witness to events and a victim/survivor to consequences which helps students relate to the experience on a more personal, empathetic level, bringing the content to students on a deeper level.

STUDENT FEEDBACK ON THE COURSE

• “I learned so much from the personal experiences alone that were shared by the professor and I'll never forget discussions from this class!”
• “I realized how important the cultural and historical context is when providing crisis intervention and disaster mental health services!”

REFERENCES


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STUDENT FEEDBACK ON THE COURSE

• “The professor sharing personal stories related to the class material helped me become a better person: more humble and respectful towards the idea of counseling clients who are culturally different than me.”
• “I liked hearing the first-hand accounts of crisis and trauma. It made it real and it helped me to empathize.”
• “The case studies, documentaries and personal account-based instruction made the material more real. The personal stories related to the class made everything more real and it helped inspire me”
• “The case studies, documentaries and personal account-based instruction helped me understand that trauma is different for everyone and it looks different in different cultures”
• “I learned so much from the personal experiences alone that were shared by the professor and I’ll never forget discussions from this class!”
• “I realized how important the cultural and historical context is when providing crisis intervention and disaster mental health services!”

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