**The Case for Assessment: Developing a Case to use for Assessment Purposes**

**Abstract.** Does intermingling case studies and assessment sound like a challenge? It isn’t as big of a challenge as you think! We are increasingly asked to develop and execute assessments in our classrooms, with consequences for both students and faculty. While we are often encouraged to use simple multiple-choice exams as a basis for assessment, it isn’t always the best way to evaluate student learning. Meanwhile, case study analysis is a classic technique for helping students apply management theory to practice. What better way to assess student learning than through the case study process? In this session we will discuss and develop a plan for developing our own case for assessment purposes. We will practice moving from specific learning outcomes (SLOs) to case development. Participants will leave the session with a solid idea of how to link SLOs to cases to facilitate the assessment process.

**Keywords:** Assessment, Case Analysis, Student Learning Outcomes

**Introduction.** This session proposes to create an active learning environment in which participants will be provided with an example, then begin to develop their own case for assessment purposes using an existing set of student learning outcomes. This session is targeted at anyone who is looking for more innovative ways to do student assessment, beyond the traditional multiple choice or short answer technique. Participants should leave this session with the backbone for using his or her own SLOs can be used to develop a case-based assessment tool that could be used inside of a management course.

**Theoretical Foundation:**

The concept of authentic assessment has plagued higher ed for many years, with a pronounced discrepancy between the content and learning that takes place in a course, and the assessment intended to measure that learning (Fook & Sidhu, 2010). It does not only measure the learning level also helps to preserve academic integrity and promote skill development and employability (Sotiriadou, et al., 2020), developing authentic leadership identity and competencies (Wiewiora & Kowalkiewicz, 2019). Additionally, it helps instructors to design effective and attractive courses (Villarroel, et al., 2018). Therefore, case analysis has been used for many years as a way to develop student knowledge and provide opportunities for students to apply their learning to real-world problems or situations (Herreid & Schiller, 2013). Interestingly, Harvard Business School graduate program first began the use of case study method in 1920, intending to prepare with the intention of preparing students to make decisions in the real world. At the time, the intent was to enhance student learning through the application; that purpose remains the same today (Breslin & Buchanan, 2008).

Pedagogically, the case method is often used to improve engagement and critical thinking skills among students, with the idea that applying theoretical learning to a problem or situation will promote and encourage student discovery (McDade, 2000). There are several formats in which students can receive case study materials, from traditional written cases through newer tools such as video podcasts (Fernandez, et al., 2009) and audio. Whatever the format, case study is known as a strong instrument for improving student learning—particularly for management education. It is well-known that case studies are intended to live in the space between theory and practice (Breslin & Buchanan, 2008), offering students a way to bridge learning between textbook descriptions of theory and the real world.

According to Cliff and Wright (1996), several key components help to make a case more effective, successfully inspiring student learning, including: a) a set of well-defined learning objectives, b) a well-designed and informative scenario, c) a set of uncomplicated and direct questions, and d) an emphasis on the connection between the scenario and the learning. A case study allows students to develop their thinking around themes and issues of greater complexity and using multiple streams (Mikoski, et al., 2009). In this session, we will work through the process of identifying key SLOs, identifying the learning indicators for those SLOs, and finally writing cases to assess students’ knowledge of those.

**Learning Objectives.** After attending this session, participants will be able to:

1. Take previously identified student learning outcomes (SLO) for a given course and link them to learning indicators.
2. Define learning indicators that would suggest that a student understands or is knowledgeable about a specific concept or theory.
3. Develop a short case study that can be used to assess specified SLOs and learning indicators.

**Exercise Overview and Session Description.** In our 60-minute session, we will complete the work in four phases.

1. Description and examples (10 min): First, we will describe the cases that we currently use for assessment purposes in multiple courses. We will provide participants with one in-depth, current example of a case we have implemented from our Organizational Behavior course assessment process (this phase will be presenter-driven).
2. Concept/topic Planning (10 min): Next, we will provide participants with a set of concepts that are likely targets for assessment. We will develop SLOs related to on or more of those concepts/theory, then identify key learning indicators that would signify whether a student understands that concept/theory (this phase will be highly participant driven).
3. Case Mapping (15 min): Next, we will map key components from the SLOs and learning indicators in step 2 (above) to portions of a hypothetical case. During the session we will facilitate participants’ development of an SLO-to-indicator-to-case map which will provide the backbone for case study (this component will be highly participant driven).
4. Case Building (15 min): Fourth, we will begin the development of our own case idea/s, using the map created in 3) above. The outcome of this phase is that participants should leave the session experiencing how to frame a case to assess key SLOs that they believe are most important (this component will be highly participant driven).
5. Conclusion and wrap-up (10 min): Finally, we will reconvene into the large group to discuss the cases that were created in small groups. We will talk through other possible case examples. Finally, we will discuss the pros and cons of using a case for assessment purposes and investigate other potential uses.

Throughout this session, participants will be active, working in small and large groups, sharing ideas, and creating the design for their own cases, whether fictional or based on a real-life organization. Our session will allow participants to create a framework from which they can construct their own cases for assessment. Although we will not complete a full case, which is often many pages in length, we hope this session can be a springboard that encourages participants to think about how to develop cases for their own assessment purposes.

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