

Higher Education Case Studies
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Case Study #1: NATIONAL CENTER FOR CASE STUDY TEACHING IN SCIENCE Clear Communication: Compensation Strategies for When Students Just Don't Understand. Brian J. Rybarczyk, The Graduate School. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

1. What issues are students having with Liu Shen? What issues are students having with Jim Lowry? How are they similar? How are they different?

Students are having a difficult time understanding Ms. Shen's lecture and presentation. Ms. Shen asked to repeat her questions twice. Since the student are unclear what she is asking or perhaps need a better clarification due to the wording of the questions. She attributes to her lack of adequately communicating with her students due to her recently immigration status to the United States five year ago. Students frustrated and become disengaged from her lecture from the broken down communication.

However, Mr. Lowry is also having a communication issue with his students and feels his students are having a difficult engaging in the classroom. Students do not come to prepare beforehand to his class, expecting the teacher to give steps by steps instruction whereas he is expecting his students to be self-motivated and to develop independent learning skills.

Both instructors are having difficulty getting through to the students. Ms. Shen lacks confidence in herself, causing her to doubt whether she is lecturing correctly. Mr. Lowry is transferring the issue to his students and feels that they are not ready to have a productive discussion. Ms. Liu wants to make the strive to make the improvement, where Mr. Lowry is happy with the way he instructs his class.

2. What are some possible sources of miscommunication between Liu and her students?

The language barrier is an issue when Ms. Liu communicates with her students. Ms. Liu may be translating from her first language to English in the way she words or write her

questions. She is not used to the American-style teaching where asking questions are the norm, and students interrupt the lecture throughout the presentation respectfully. Students speak a different dialect or jargon where there are misunderstanding or misinterpretation of what her students are trying to ask.

3. Propose ways that Liu can ameliorate the students' concerns expressed in the evaluations.

Ms. Liu is trying to improve her communication with her students by attending a workshop on active learning strategies. She can develop an open dialogue with her students to see where the broken communication link is and how she can try to correct it. Or have another teaching assistant who takes a glance at her questions and provides feedback.

4. What are possible sources of miscommunication between Jim and his students?

Mr. Lowry is firm with his decision that he is not the cause of the miscommunication. He goes into his lecture and goes over what he needed to be done for the class. Also, Jim does not break between topics to offer a reflection over discussed materials. Whether there is a need for clarification or if the students understand what he is trying to convey. Mr. Lowry feels students are not engaged because they don't have questions for him. Maybe he is not approachable for students to challenge him. Besides, he is going through too many materials for the students to handle in the allocated time slot.

5. Propose ways that Jim can ameliorate the students' concerns expressed in the evaluations.

Jim needs to take a second look at how he approaches the lecture. He needs to do a self-evaluation whether he is the actual cause of the failed communication. Have a better understanding of the different learning styles and approaches out there (Brown & Green, 2016)

perhaps he needs to lecture in a different way to get through this particular group of students. Are the evaluations and issues brought up consistent with his teaching career? If so, may need to adjust his lecturing style or is there other external factors to consider. His syllabus is not clear with the objectives and goals for the course, essential elements to include in the design of the curriculum (Brown & Green, 2016).

6. From the lists you generated for questions 3 and 5 above, identify which approaches you can use to increase your communication effectiveness in the classroom.

One approach is to over-communicate what the instructor is trying to convey across. Repetition and reminders are some ways to get the message across. Some students tend to be forgetful and is useful to use technology to set up reminders. I use Slack to have an open dialogue with my students; no questions are trivial. The group discussion answered by either the instructor or even one among the students who may have the answer.

7. What are some benefits and challenges of using active learning techniques in teaching?

A few benefits of active learning include increased engagement among the students and the teacher. Students are willing to explore beyond their comfort zone, and come up with ideas that may be far-fetched, encourages students to share and to speak out. The learning environment becomes more collaborative, and students feel there is a support system in place when someone is struggling or need a little push to overcome the challenge. The challenge with active learning is multiple distractions happening since students are always try to contribute. If there isn't an orderly method in place, a little chaos can occur when every student wants to chime in or contribute to the open discussion.

8. What are the possible consequences of Jim's attitude and lack of action to improve his teaching?

Prospective students for his future class will continue to struggle the same issue. Jim finds no reason to make any improvements since he feels his teaching method is perfect. Jim doesn't care whether his students are learning the materials, which in turn, we lead students to become more frustrated and disengaged with the course. The worst part is that he is going to head in the direction where he lacks the motivation to keep up-date within his field. He is just going to reuse the same material over and over.

Case Study #2: NATIONAL CENTER FOR CASE STUDY TEACHING IN SCIENCE Paul Seymour, Assistant Professor: A Dilemma Case in Teaching Clyde Freeman Herreid, Department of Biological Sciences, University at Buffalo

Section	Criteria
Overview	<p>Institution: The State University at Chicago</p> <p>People Involved: Paul Seymour, Assistant Professor Pre-med students Departmental staff Chairman, Professor David Montague</p> <p>Skills, knowledge, & Abilities: Published ten papers and a research scholar. Worked under a postdoc mentor who is known for collaborative learning.</p> <p>Organizational Skills & Goals: Enhance collaborative learning and focus on grant writing.</p> <p>Internal constraints: Lack of support from faculty and administration.</p> <p>External constraints: Pressure from school to multitask including grant writing and have published works.</p>
Needs Analysis	<p>Issue: Students are not happy with his collaborative teaching method. Dr. Seymour has to achieve multiple goals simultaneously including: a renowned publisher, excellent grant writer, scholarly researches, and positive feedback from his students.</p> <p>Desired Outcome: To have buy-ins for the collaborative teaching concept.</p> <p>The following methods needed to perform the needs assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observation of Dr. Seymour's class and to interview his students. ● Have focus group to promote the importance of the collaborative teaching methods. What objectives and goals are expected to come from this teaching method? <p>Possible solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Go over expectations for the class and what achievements is the course looking to attain?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide a rubric for the grading structure. ● Provide various feedbacks throughout the course. ● Have a meeting with other departmental staff to promote for buy in including evidenced based research.
Task Analysis	<p>What is the task that individuals need to accomplish?</p> <p>Learners needs to find out what they are expected to do (Brown & Green, 2016).</p> <p>Students: Continue to monitor their grades and look over the feedback and comments provided by the instructor.</p> <p>Department: Have staff attend professional development and training courses for the new method. Also, form a working group to collect data on the new rollout. Providing additional resources to assist students with the new</p>
Learner Analysis	<p>Who is the audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paul Seymour ● Students ● Departmental Chair and Faculty Members <p>Who are the stakeholders?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students ● The State University at Chicago ● Departmental chair and faculty members ● External evaluators <p>How would you gauge their current level?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students are not happy with the new teaching method. ● Chairman of the Department is more focused on other priorities. ● No support from his colleagues.
Goals & Objectives	<p>Goals: Positive feedback and comments from the students in regard to the new collaborative teaching method.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collect data on the new teaching methodology. ● Articulate and discuss the importance of the reasons behind the switch to the new teaching methodology.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Have other faculty embrace and talk positively of the new teaching methodology. <p>What changes in behavior or performance are expected?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Students need to give this new teaching methodology a try.● Students have to articulate the positive and negative aspects of the new changes. <p>What are the expected economic costs and benefits of any proposed solutions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Eliminate or reduce Dr. Seymour's depression symptom.● Increase current enrollment because of the positive outcome coming from the new pedagogy.● Increase funding to cover teacher's training that was not part of the original budget.
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References

Brown, A. H., & Green, T. D. (2016). *The essentials of instructional design: Connecting fundamental principles with process and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.