Conducting business case discussions online

Kevin Knight

Abstract

Knight (2019) explores how business case discussions were conducted with his undergraduate students in Japan in classes held on campus in university classrooms. The COVID-19 pandemic led to the necessity to teach these same classes online using synchronous and asynchronous approaches, and this paper investigates how his teaching of business case discussions changed. Harvard Business School (HBS), which is widely recognized as a leader in using cases to teach business, provides materials to support instructors (inside and outside of HBS). In order to evaluate the changes made to Knight's classes in 2020, HBS advice for teaching case discussions online is used as a checklist of items to interrogate the development and implementation of Knight's curriculum and related teaching activities.

神田外語大学紀要第33号
The Journal of Kanda University of International Studies Vol. 33 (2021)

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1. Introduction/Background

Knight (2019) explores how I conducted business case discussions with my undergraduate students in Japan in classes held on campus in university classrooms. The COVID-19 pandemic led to the necessity to teach these same classes online, and this paper investigates how my teaching of business case discussions changed. Harvard Business School (HBS), which is widely recognized as a leader in using cases to teach business, provides materials to support instructors in teaching business cases in their own classes. In order to evaluate the changes made to my classes in 2020, HBS advice for teaching case discussions online is made into a checklist of items that can be used to interrogate the creation and the implementation of my curriculum and related teaching activities.

English for specific purposes (ESP) practitioners may define their ESP activities as meeting the needs of learners to communicate in English for specific purposes in their training or in their workplaces (Knight, Lomperis, van Naerssen, & Westerfield, 2010). In my roles as an official blogger for TESOL International Association in the field of ESP and later as (co-)editor of ESP News (the newsletter of the TESOL ESP Interest Section), I interviewed and collected the narratives of 53 leaders who described their projects on six continents (from May 5, 2015 to March 6, 2020).[1] In order to create these profiles, Knight's (2013) conceptualization of leadership was used; i.e., communicating to create and to achieve visions. An investigation of the profiles showed how the leaders were using discursive resources to communicate and to achieve their ESP program development visions/goals. These programs were co-constructed by the various stakeholders, including

[1] Two profiles are published annually. The next profile is scheduled to be published in November 2020.

students, teachers, and administrators. The aim was to meet the needs, goals, and expectations of these stakeholders in the program creation and implementation. Knight (2015) viewed and explored such program development as Scollon's (2001) nexus of practice and concluded that a nexus analysis provided insights into the various factors that had affected the creation of the leadership seminars and the online leadership forums under investigation.

Taking again the stance of Schön's (1983) reflective practitioner, I consider in this paper my action as a leader in teaching business cases. When leadership is defined as collaborating with others to make a vision into reality (Knight, 2015, Knight & Candlin, 2015), the instructor can be framed as a leader where the vision is to create an interesting class in which the students are able to learn. The decision making of the instructor becomes an important aspect of such leadership, and this paper explores the decisions that I made, my intentions, and the results of my actions. Through this process of experiential learning and reflection, the aim is to improve how business discussions are conducted and to create a better learning environment, online or onsite.

The next three sections of the paper describe business case teaching on campus before COVID-19 (section 2), business case teaching online after COVID-19 (section 3), and an evaluation of my business case teaching using a list of criterion from sections 2 and 3 (section 4). The paper concludes with a discussion of what was learned during the spring semester of 2020. When the leadership vision is to create the strongest program possible, there is a necessity for continuous and never-ending improvement. In the light of such ongoing improvement, this paper may be seen as one step in the creative process, and the leadership discourses of action and change are relevant.

2. Business case teaching before COVID-19

Before the pandemic, Shapiro (2014, pp. 1-6) shared his expertise as a Harvard Business School professor with 28 tips for business case teaching, which are used in this paper to illuminate my case teaching before COVID-19. After COVID-19, my business case teaching was done online in Zoom Meetings, and I was sitting in a chair facing a computer screen. Shapiro's tips in Table 1 were also applicable to my teaching of business cases online with the exception of the tips related to a board and body language (8, 17, and 22).

Table 1. Tips for business case teaching (replicated from Shapiro, 2014)

1. "Case teaching is very much a mixture of art and skill."
2. "Do not strive or expect to simulate another teacher's style or approach."
3. "Have reasonable expectations for each class, and understand that some will be better than others."
4. "The best advice is to use case discussions to accomplish what they can do better than other pedagogical methods."
5. "Establish an explicit contract with the students by showing your expectations about their performance and yours early in the course."
6. "Stress very early in the course the importance of student preparation, presence, promptness, and participation."
7. "Show your commitment to the case discussion process by complete preparation of material and concern for student development."
8. "Have a complete set of teaching objectives and a copious collection of likely board structures and questions."
9. "Have the students accept and maintain ownership of the discussion."
10. "Avoid making a choice about the case decision, but force each student to do so."
11. "All students should be expected to have a plan of action for the protagonist in the case."
12. "Understand that in the discussion process, action drives analysis."
13. "Use themes to manage the discussion. Themes include topics, areas of analysis, and decisions."

14. "Use questions to manage the trade-off between depth and breadth, and to heighten conflict."
15. "Clarify and heighten conflicts."
16. "Use questions of various types for various purposes."
17. "Use the board to clarify conflicts and issues."
18. "Listen."
19. "Provide respect and protection to students and their comments."
20. "Use humor carefully and constructively."
21. "Only do that which is personally comfortable in class."
22. "Body language can be used to help pace the class and manage the discussion."
23. "Help students talk to one another."
24. "Make the class an enjoyable experience."
25. "Use summary and 'offline' lectures to deliver general comments or important related material."
26. "Nurture the discussion process even if that means trading off some coverage of a case."
27. "Put particular emphasis on the development of a good discussion process in early classes, especially the first two."
28. "Strive for excellence."

In Table 1, one tip seems to be especially relevant to my business case teaching: "Make the class an enjoyable experience" (Tip 24). I was aware of the Harvard Business School video (HBS, 2007) titled "Inside the HBS case method" in which Associate Professor Jan Rivkin comments:

> I think fun is one of the most underrated aspects of the case method. Learning shouldn't always be difficult. Learning shouldn't always be painful. There's a certain element of joy that comes with learning.

In agreement with Rivkin, my aim was to create a classroom environment in which my students could experience the joy of learning. The students' learning experience was modeled after that in the HBS video, which was similar to what I had experienced at the Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (IR/PS) at the University of California, San Diego.[2] At IR/PS, I participated in learning teams (outside of class) and in case discussions (in class). The cases were often HBS cases, and IR/PS professors were globally recognized experts (e.g., Peter Cowhey, Roger Bohn, Alex Kane, Chalmers Johnson). My learning experiences at IR/PS gave me firsthand knowledge of the kinds of experiences that I wanted to provide to my students.

One obstacle to replicating the learning experiences in the HBS video was my students' English language level, which was not high enough on average for me to use HBS case studies. I considered this a drawback for the following reason. HBS cases are a collection of different types of information that students need to understand and analyze in order to make sense of situation(s) faced by the protagonist in the case. The students are often asked to take the role of the protagonist and to ask themselves what they would do in such management and leadership roles. The cases can be confusing because they are not written as a business report or academic paper with which many students would be familiar. They do not put forth an argument and defend it. The cases give you different types of quantitative and qualitative data, but they do not analyze that data for you and tell you the solution to the problem. The burden of proof is placed on each student, who has to persuade the other students and the professor that their interpretation of the situation and recommendation for action are correct. More than one correct answer is possible according to HBS Professor Jan Hammond (HBS, 2007):

> The answer to most questions is, "It depends." If one can leave here [HBS] understanding under what circumstances you would go left and under what

[2] IR/PS was renamed as the School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS).

> circumstances you would go right, then you've got a depth of knowledge, and you've got it in your gut as well as in your head.

From this perspective, the case method prepares students to make decisions with limited information and time, which replicates the kinds of challenges that they will face as business leaders in the future. It was unfortunate therefore that HBS cases could not be used.

The English language level of my students was an important factor in choosing the cases because of the necessity of the students to be able to discuss the content of a case. Ellet (2007, p. 12) describes this important role of the students in case teaching:

> Students provide most of the content of a case discussion. They are indispensable to the creation of knowledge. In fact, if they don't come to class well prepared, the case method will fail because the people responsible for making meaning from the case are not equipped to do it. In a lecture-, or expert-based, teaching method, facts tend to be configured in a way that yields a single interpretation, the "truth." Case discussions are replete with facts and information, but they aren't shaped into a single truth.

Ellet is writing about HBS cases, which in my view are inherently interesting because of the multiple ways in which they may be addressed by the students. If I wanted to make my classes interesting, I needed to choose interesting cases that my students would be able to understand and discuss in a way that knowledge could be created. However, I could not use HBS cases.

Before COVID-19, I used two primary sources of cases. Both were accessible in digital formats. The first was an international business textbook, which provided cases at the beginning and end of each chapter (Daniels, Radebaugh, & Sullivan, 2004). These cases were based on actual companies, and questions were included at the end of the chapter. The cases included the concepts about international business that were the focus of the chapter. The second was a website that provided free access to cases about companies in the U.K. The purpose of these cases was to teach concepts related to the different functions of business such as marketing. For example, in the case of marketing, these concepts included the marketing mix (the 4 P's): product, price, place, and promotion/distribution. The case would explain how the featured company had actually used the marketing mix to achieve a specific objective. Questions about the content of the case were included at the end. In contrast to HBS cases, the two types of cases that I was using were not problems that student teams needed to solve. They were business examples that students needed to learn to understand.

In order to help my students to understand these examples, I adapted frameworks used to respond to behavioral questions in interviews. These frameworks had been labeled with the acronym of S.T.A.R. (situation, task, action, results) or C.A.R. (challenge, action, results). I chose to use the C.A.R. framework and explained to my students that the business case could be divided into these three parts. The students needed to work in teams to write a C.A.R. story describing the content of the case that answered the following questions:

1. What was the *challenge* faced by the company?
2. What *action* did the company take?
3. What was the *result* of the company's actions?

In this way, I was teaching the students how to write success stories about companies. I was also teaching them to tell success stories about themselves when answering a question such as, "Tell me about a time that you acted as a leader to solve a problem."

The class discussions became a test of how well the students understood the content of a case. The details of the case would be elicited, and the meaning of those details would be discussed. I was leading the discussion, and the students would be asked questions such as, “What can we learn from this example?” My objective was to give the students a lesson that they might be able to apply in their business careers. However, they were not always given the opportunity to apply such lessons in the classroom. For example, one case was about the car brand, Skoda, which had been established in Eastern Europe and was acquired by the Volkswagen Auto Group (V.A.G.) based in Germany.[3] The case discussed how a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis had been used in the positioning and promotion of the brand. During the class discussion, the students provided the details of the case using the C.A.R. framework. I had found certain points in the case to be very interesting, and I made sure that the students noticed those points as well. One main point was that an Eastern European car had won numerous awards for its technology and its owners were extremely happy, but the car did not have a good impression in the West due to its country of origin. Although the image of the brand was changed with its acquisition by the VAG, the brand still needed to be differentiated from the competition. The creation of Skoda’s USP (unique selling proposition) was an important lesson in the case. I wanted the students to be involved in problem solving discussions, not just in the repetition of facts, and would seek to extend the lesson to focus on something that the students could discuss. Lessons in the Skoda case could be applied to British Hills (BH), which was a part of the Kanda Gaigo Group and a language training facility in Fukushima, Japan with which my KUIS students were all familiar. I had taught a year-long business internship program in the KUIS Career Education Center for several years in which my students acted as business consultants for BH (Knight, 2012a). Due to my familiarity with BH, I could ask my students in a class discussion to talk about the strengths, weaknesses,

[3] See https://businesscasestudies.co.uk/skoda/

opportunities, and threats of BH and subsequently to compete in teams to come up with the best USP.

3. Business case teaching after COVID-19

My case teaching online went through two phases. The first phase involved the following activities that replicated my onsite approach to teaching business cases:

1. Introduction of the cases
2. Learning teams
3. Discussion forum in Google Classroom
4. Case reports
5. Class discussions

The cases were introduced to the students in class. In the university classroom, I would have used a whiteboard or chalkboard to outline the content of the case. In a Zoom Meeting online, I would use a PowerPoint presentation. The students were required to work in learning teams online. My selection of the learning teams involved using the Zoom Breakout Room function that would automatically place the students into groups. The students were given time in class to meet the members of their teams and to exchange contact information. The students made their own arrangements for collaborating outside of the classroom. The student teams created and submitted online their team reports for the cases. During the time before the team report was submitted, the students posted comments about the case in a Google Classroom discussion forum. In this way, all of the students from all of the teams had a chance to see the ideas of others and to share their own ideas online before they did so onsite.

It was my understanding that participation in a case discussion at HBS counted for 50 percent of a student's grade in the class, and as a result, the HBS students were highly motivated to participate in class discussions. In contrast, not all of my students were highly motivated for the following reasons. The business case classes were required courses (not electives) for my students, and the English content of the cases was relatively challenging for many of the students, who were learning English as a foreign language. In onsite discussions, my students with a relatively higher English language level had been able to able to participate actively. I expected that the situation would be the same online. The challenge for me was to find a way for all of my students to participate in case discussions in an enjoyable way. The first way in which I conducted discussions was with a very controlled process. I had planned in advance who would be called upon to answer specific questions. I used PowerPoint slides to display the question and the name of the student who would answer the question. This approach was effective to an extent because everyone in the class had the opportunity to speak. If a question could not be answered by the student whose name was on the slide, another student could volunteer to answer the question. For each question answered the students earned points, and these points were reported to me at the end of the class. I found this process to be uninspiring because no new knowledge was being created.

The use of videos became one way to make my classes more interesting. For example, in connection with one case study about the Grameen Bank for the poor and Danone, I was able to find many interesting videos online. In addition, I was also able to access TED Talks related to social business and entrepreneurship. As one example, Professor Michael Porter of HBS argues that business is the solution to social problems (Porter, 2013). In another video, the Harvard Business Press interviews John Elkington (2008) about his book in which he identifies the key traits of highly successful social entrepreneurs. These traits were defined as follows:

I think these entrepreneurs, if they have one single shared characteristic, it is that they

> simply don't take the world as it currently is as a given. They are trying to—in effect they are game changers. They are not simply trying to tweak the system at the edges. They are trying to change the system.

Game-changer[4] was a familiar concept to me because eight years before COVID-19, I had accepted an offer by the U.S. Embassy to have their sponsored speaker address my students at KUIS in Japan. As an official blogger in the field of ESP (English for specific purposes) for TESOL International Association, I was in the position to write about the experience. Two extracts from my blog posts appear in Table 2.

Table 2. Adnan Mahmud's visit to KUIS recorded in Knight (2012b,c)

May 28, 2012 (Before the event): At Kanda University of International Studies, my university in Japan, we will have the privilege of hearing Mr. Adnan Mahmud talk about leadership and entrepreneurship to undergraduates and unemployed adults preparing to enter or re-enter the workforce. Mr. Mahmud is the co-founder and CEO of Jolkona, an organization that connects donors with global philanthropic opportunities and shows the impact of their donations. He is also a full-time program manager at Microsoft. It was decided that the event will be held in English only and time will be allotted for discussion with Mr. Mahmud, so I will help my students prepare for the event by giving them some ESP training. Seeing Mr. Mahmud's presentation in a TED recording has made me think of the importance of ESPers in the English language training of young entrepreneurs worldwide. From my leadership communication research in particular, I have come to recognize that leaders need to be effective in obtaining stakeholder agreement in a variety of situations, and given the importance of English as a language of global business, ESPers would be in an ideal position to help the new generation of entrepreneurs worldwide in their English communication efforts.
June 30, 2012 (After the event): Some of the questions I recognized from class sessions and some were completely new. There was not only an exchange of questions and answers, but students expressed their opinions and told their own stories as well. I

[4] I would later give a presentation at an international conference about changing Japanese students into change-makers (Knight, 2016).

thought that the questions were not only impressive but also a challenge to answer; e.g., "I want to become a change maker. How do you become a change maker?" In fact, we did not have time to answer all of the questions, and I should add that the students did not read aloud their questions or look at notes. After the discussion part of the event, some students came to the front of the room and spoke with Mr. Mahmud and also with the representatives of the U.S. Embassy who had made it possible for Mr. Mahmud to be a speaker. It was a very successful event!

Mahmud's presentation pointed to the Ashoka website (https://www.ashoka.org/en-us), which highlights young leaders and their social entrepreneurship success stories. Although I had been using texts and teaching the specific content of the cases, I realized that it could be more effective and more interesting to use websites and videos to introduce business concepts to the students and subsequently have them work in teams to engage with a problem during class time, rather than outside of the class. This new approach could be successful if I framed the materials that I was introducing to the students in the correct way.

Framing was a concept with which I was familiar because of my research and course development. Fairhurst (2011) talks about framing in terms of reality construction. I recognized the opportunity to frame my students as leaders faced with a business challenge. For example, after the class had watched videos and read materials about various social businesses, I divided the students into teams, and their challenge was to compete to create (outside of class) the best proposal for an original social business. The students gave their PowerPoint presentations in a Zoom Meeting, and in responding to the questions and comments of the other students, they defended their social business ideas.

It seemed to me that this process of creating a business idea could be done within one class meeting, so I adopted the following procedure. First, I asked students to become familiar with a case before class. Second, during class, I framed the case material in such a way that it became a challenge that the students needed to complete during the class time. This challenge often required students to work in teams to create a business idea. For example, there was one case about a company that had been acquired by Pitney Bowes. This company empowered retailers of luxury brands in the U.S. to sell their products online. The challenge that I presented to the students in class was to transform that company into a social business. One of the solutions proposed was for the company to work with not only luxury brand retailers but also with used-goods retailers such as the Salvation Army.

During these team activities, the students were needing to fill the roles of leaders, entrepreneurs, and business consultants. In these roles, the students were applying the following conceptualizations of leadership:

- Leadership [is] a communication process consisting of two parts: 1) communicating to create a vision and 2) communicating to achieve a vision (Knight, 2013).
- Leadership is making real a vision in collaboration with others (Knight and Candlin, 2015, p. 36).

Specifically, the students were creating “visions” of the solutions to the business challenges with which they were engaged and persuading their classmates and the instructor that their ideas were the best. In this way, the students were learning the language of leadership. In delivering their C.A.R. framework presentations online, they were preparing themselves for the boundary-spanning leadership challenges that they would face in their future careers in which they would be required to negotiate solutions in online meetings in English with stakeholders worldwide.

In hindsight, I had created a process that replaced individual competition with team competition. What I had not done at the time (but will do in the future) is to have the students as a class try to agree on one solution after the teams have presented their various ideas. Giving time to the students to work in the online breakout rooms in the Zoom Meetings seemed like a good idea to me, given the lack of social interaction caused by the pandemic. The team members could be changed with a click of a button, and this gave the students the opportunity to interact with many of their classmates. The teamwork was facilitated by the fact that the students had studied together for one or two years and already knew each other. It seems to me now that having students work together in teams created a better class atmosphere.

4. HBS guidelines for case teaching online

Harvard Business School was active in providing resources to teachers who were faced with the challenge of teaching business cases online. Before COVID-19, a resource that had been very helpful for reflecting on my teaching was Shapiro (2014). As many institutions of higher education began conducting their classes online, HBS was making available free webinars and online publications for instructors. Some of the tips that I gained from HBS include the top ten tips for teaching cases online in Table 3.

Table 3. Top ten tips for teaching cases online (replicated from Harvard Business Publishing, 2020, p. 16)

1. Understand the pros and cons of synchronous and asynchronous teaching and plan your course around the two methods.
2. Calibrate your materials and online approach to the kinds of students that will attend your class.
3. Select cases that energize your students before you start class discussion.
4. Introduce cases with some context to motivate students to prepare; be transparent about why you’re using them.
5. Familiarize yourself with the pros and cons of the different whiteboard technologies to optimize their use in a synchronous discussion.

6. Engage students with cases by sharing your enthusiasm for them and by creating tension and drama in classroom discussion.
7. Consider the potential linguistic and cultural challenges facing students who are nonnative speakers in a particular classroom.
8. Use clear and straightforward language when posting questions in an asynchronous context.
9. Debrief cases using many approaches and avoid suggesting there was only one right answer.
10. Embrace the advantages of online tools such as quantitative tracking of participation and online breakout rooms.

These top ten tips reflect what I had been doing online with my students. In what follows in this section, I consider how each tip was applied (or not applied) in my classes.

First, I understood the pros and cons of synchronous and asynchronous teaching and planned my course around the two methods. I used Google Classroom as a forum for the students to discuss online via threaded discussions the various cases. Zoom Meetings were used to discuss the cases in real time. I considered this to be an effective balance.

Second, I calibrated my materials and online approaches to the kinds of students that would attend my class. My tendency was to choose materials that were text-based and relatively difficult for most students. Selecting videos that had Japanese language subtitles made the materials more accessible for the students. I also provided time for students to meet in breakout rooms to help each other to understand various points, because some students were quicker than others to understand the content of a case.

Third, I selected cases that energized my students before I started class discussions. My choice of cases was based primarily on whether I was energized by the content. I was also asking myself whether I would be interested in the case if I were the student. I noticed that the first students to read the cases and to post about them in Google Classroom were in effect framing and promoting the discussion of the content.

Fourth, I introduced cases with some context to motivate students to prepare, and I was transparent about why I was using them. For example, there was one case about Nokero Lighting. I had worked in the international division of the Japan Patent Office for over seven years (on a part-time basis), and therefore, the intellectual property aspect of the case was of interest to me. At the same time, it was a social business case that showed how the students themselves could do “good” in the world. I used the case to talk about my own experience with the JPO and showed a video about how Nokero Lighting was being used to change lives.

Fifth, I did not familiarize myself with the pros and cons of the different whiteboard technologies to optimize their use in a synchronous discussion. I had access to a shared whiteboard in a Zoom Meeting. Instead, I enabled students to share their screens and to use PowerPoint and videos during their presentations. In addition, I asked students to create videos outside of class to show in a Zoom Meeting.

Sixth, I engaged students with cases by sharing my enthusiasm for them and by creating tension and drama in classroom discussion. One way to create the tension was by making the discussions competitive. The students either competed against each other or other teams. I would also use “cold calling” in class (i.e., I would call a student’s name and then ask that student a question). The videos also helped to add drama to the discussion. For example, one use of Nokero lights in tent cities in Haiti was to deter attacks on women at night in the dark. In the classroom, I could add drama by recording team points on the whiteboard, which is something I will try to do in future classes.

Seventh, my students were primarily Japanese L2 learners so I considered the potential linguistic and cultural challenges facing students who were nonnative speakers. Fortunately, my institution provided training for students so they understood how to conduct themselves in online classes. In addition, the students were adept at using the technology in Zoom Meetings and Google Classroom. The students were also able to interact with each other through LINE and email while the class was in progress. In this way, the students were in the position to quickly inform me of any problems that they were having. As a long-time resident of Japan, I was also sensitive to the linguistic and cultural aspects of the lessons.

Eighth, my experience working with my L2 learners over the years facilitated my use of clear and straightforward language when posting questions in an asynchronous context. In my doctoral research in 2014, I had created online forums in which my seminar students discussed leadership. In addition, I had been an official blogger for TESOL International Association in the field of English for specific purposes (ESP) and had written 143 posts/articles from March 2012 to December 2018. These online communication experiences helped me to use clear and straightforward language in Google Classroom forums and in Zoom Meeting chats.

Ninth, I debriefed cases using many approaches and avoided suggesting there was only one right answer. The students themselves decided which team (other than their own) had the best solution to the problem. I would also ask the students to consider solutions that had not been presented. For example, in one case competition about the international expansion of Disney theme parks, the students proposed different country locations for the next Disney theme park and needed to see that several factors were involved in choosing which proposal was best: social/cultural, legal, economic, educational, environmental, political, and technological. The student teams actively defended their own proposals against the attacks of other teams.

Tenth, I certainly embraced the advantages of online tools such as quantitative tracking of participation and online breakout rooms. I used Chat in taking attendance and recording student participation because a script was automatically sent to me after each Zoom Meeting. The breakout rooms in Zoom Meetings could be used for multiple purposes, one of which was giving the students the opportunity to interact directly in small groups with as many of their classmates as possible. The breakout rooms gave the students the privacy needed to work together with their team members to solve business problems under time pressure and to create the means for communicating the solution to the other teams.

5. Discussion and conclusions

What did I learn during the first semester of online case teaching necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic? To some extent, my learning experiences reflected the advice given by Yael Grushka-Cockayne, visiting Associate Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School. (See Table 4.)

Table 4. The Dos and Don’ts for Designing a Curriculum for Hybrid Classes (Grushka-Cockayne, 2020)

The Dos

1. Focus on preparation.
2. Keep classes varied.
3. Allow time to form connections.

The Don’ts

1. Assign too much reading.
2. Get caught up on the tech.
3. Try to cover too much.

I agree with the advice in Table 4 because I learned from experience that I should have followed it (and did not always do so). In addition, I am currently teaching a hybrid class now in which the students (both in the classroom and online) engage in case discussions. Table 4 is therefore especially relevant.

I have found that one activity may be sufficient to meet multiple student needs implied in the tips in Table 4. For example, I agree that my own preparation has been crucial, and

I appreciate Grushka-Cockayne's question that instructors should ask themselves, "What are my students doing to prepare for class?" The means of student preparation can be the way in which students make stronger social connections. In a symposium that I attended recently[5], one of the presenters reported success in using an online forum (as a means for students to introduce themselves in writing) to decrease student anxiety when engaging in face-to-face discussions in a Zoom Meeting (Yuyama, 2020). Ellet (2007, p. 97) at HBS recognizes the importance of the social factor when he writes:

> I have been around business school students for better than sixteen years and have always been impressed by their ability to party. I admit my attitude was negative; I thought a lot of students were too serious about partying and not serious enough about learning. It never occurred to me that building a social network is important to case discussion until Agam Sharma, a business school student, pointed it out….Classmates who get to know each other outside the classroom can change the atmosphere inside it. A group of strangers competing for grades can become a group of acquaintances and friends who recognize that they're competing but also understand they're collaborating for the benefit of everyone who takes part.

I had been using Google Classroom forums as a means for students to share their opinions about cases but not as a way for students to get to know each other. In the majority of the classes in which I teach cases, the students already know each other.

When I showed to my students four TED Talks recommended by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (2020) for any "aspiring social entrepreneur," it was Kamkwamba (2009) that shaped how I see myself as a teacher in the new normal of COVID-19.

> When William Kamkwamba was 14, he built his own windmill to provide electricity to his family. Piece by piece, while suffering from extreme poverty and famine in the

[5] 2020 CELESE Language Teaching Symposium, Waseda University, Faculty of Science and Engineering. See also Knight (2020).

> Southeast African country of Malawi — and in the face of others saying he was "crazy" to attempt such a feat — he handcrafted the rudimentary yet transformative device from a tractor fan, PVC pipes, a bike frame and other found parts. The ambitious young engineer and inventor went on to create many more unique and marketable inventions, most all designed with the overarching social mission of helping people in need. Some of the social entrepreneur's subsequent inventions have assisted people in accessing clean water, preventing the spread of malaria and much more.

As I watched Kamkwamba overcome such obstacles to achieve his goals, I realized that we all have to choose to act to change the current situation into a better one. For me, this has meant reaching out and learning from HBS and using the current and ongoing technological advances to create better learning experiences for my students.

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