



## **Keeping Goliath on His Toes:**

# **A Case Discussion Method for Increasing Engagement and Individual Accountability in Large Classes**

**Lora Mitchell Harding**

Belmont University

Full article forthcoming in *Marketing Education Review*

**FROM HERE TO ANYWHERE**



# The challenge

- Application-based assignments are often forgone in large marketing classes due to the daunting implementation and assessment challenges they present.
- One solution is to divide large classes into groups, but groups present their own challenges—of note, the potential for students to free-ride on the efforts of others.



# The solution

- The 4Ps method of case discussion was developed to address these issues. Specifically:
  - The 4Ps method is designed to hold students in large classes accountable for case preparation while maintaining a high level of engagement during case discussions.
  - Further, the 4Ps method minimizes grading requirements for instructors while developing students' writing and presentation skills.



# Process Overview of 4Ps Case Method

## Prep

### Before class

Students prepare individually by reading the case and submitting answers to the case prep questions before class begins.

## Ponder

### Beginning of class

Nine standing teams of 4-5 students convene at the beginning of class to discuss their collective impression of the case, using the case preparation questions as fodder.

### Remainder of class

Three central questions are posed, in turn, by the instructor. After students have discussed each question with their teams, a representative from each of three teams is called upon to present. Thus, all nine teams present each class (3 questions x 3 team representatives = 9 teams). Teams and team representatives for each central question are selected at random.

## Pivot

After responses to each central question are presented and the next central question is posed, teams have the opportunity to discuss and pivot based on new information and insights gleaned from the previous discussion.

## Present

Teams are assessed on the quality of their representative's presented response to the central question and a follow-up question posed by the instructor. At the conclusion of each representative's response, teammates are invited to contribute anything they feel will bolster their team's performance.

FROM HERE TO ANYWHERE



# Before class: Case prep questions (individual)

## Calyx Flowers Case Preparation Questions

---

MKT 4020

Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Please answer each case preparation question using **100-130 words** (indicate word count below each question). To use your word limit effectively, (a) consider which points are most important to make, and (b) make them clearly and concisely. The grading rubric for this assignment is posted to Blackboard.

- 1. Why isn't Calyx Flowers reaching its full potential? Use facts and figures in the case to support your answer.**

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Word count: [Click here to enter text.](#)

- 2. What do you recommend that Calyx Flowers do, and why? Although it is fine to select one of the solutions proposed in the case, you are not required to do so (i.e., you may propose your own solution).**

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Word count: [Click here to enter text.](#)



# Grading (individual case prep)

	Very Good 8-7	Good 6-5	Fair 4-3	Poor 2-1	Very Poor 0	Score
<b>Completeness</b>  <i>Questions are addressed thoroughly and completely</i>	All parts of the question(s) are addressed	Almost all parts of the question(s) are addressed	Most parts of the question(s) are addressed	Several parts of the question(s) are <u>not</u> addressed	Most parts of the question(s) are <u>not</u> addressed	/8
<b>Clarity and Organization</b>  <i>Viewpoints are well-organized and clearly-articulated</i>	All points are articulated in a clear and orderly way	Almost all points are articulated in a clear and orderly way	Most points are articulated in a clear and orderly way	Several points are not articulated in a clear and orderly way	Most points are not articulated in a clear and orderly way	/8
<b>Rationale</b>  <i>Reasons given to support viewpoints</i>	All key points are justified with a logical, strategy-based explanation that reflects deep consideration of the case	Almost all key points are justified with a logical, strategy-based explanation that reflects deep consideration of the case	Most key points are justified with a logical, strategy-based explanation that reflects deep consideration of the case	Several key points are not justified with a logical, strategy-based explanation that reflects deep consideration of the case	Most key points are not justified with a logical, strategy-based explanation that reflects deep consideration of the case	/8
<b>Support</b>  <i>Relevant facts from case that support rationale</i>	Abundant support for rationale behind key points, as appropriate	Substantial support for rationale behind key points, as appropriate	Sufficient support for rationale behind key points, as appropriate	Little support for rationale behind key points, as appropriate	No support for rationale behind key points, as appropriate	/8
<b>Mechanics</b>	No grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	Almost no grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	A few grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	Several grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors	Many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors	/8
<b>Total Score</b>						<b>/40</b>



## During class: Central questions (team)

1. What is the key problem Calyx Flowers is facing?
2. How should Calyx Flowers segment the market, and why?  
To which segment can Calyx deliver superior value relative to the competition?
3. How should Calyx Flowers position itself? (Be sure to address the target, frame of reference and reason for choice.)



# Grading (team presentations)

	Very Good 8-7	Good 6-5	Fair 4-3	Poor 2-1	Very Poor 0	Score
<b>Completeness</b>  <i>Questions are addressed thoroughly and completely</i>	All parts of the question(s) are addressed	Almost all parts of the question(s) are addressed	Most parts of the question(s) are addressed	Several parts of the question(s) are <u>not</u> addressed	Most parts of the question(s) are <u>not</u> addressed	/8
<b>Clarity and Organization</b>  <i>Viewpoints are well-organized and clearly-articulated</i>	All points are articulated in a clear and orderly way	Almost all points are articulated in a clear and orderly way	Most points are articulated in a clear and orderly way	Several points are not articulated in a clear and orderly way	Most points are not articulated in a clear and orderly way	/8
<b>Rationale</b>  <i>Reasons given to support viewpoints</i>	All key points are justified with a logical, strategy-based explanation that reflects deep consideration of the case	Almost all key points are justified with a logical, strategy-based explanation that reflects deep consideration of the case	Most key points are justified with a logical, strategy-based explanation that reflects deep consideration of the case	Several key points are not justified with a logical, strategy-based explanation that reflects deep consideration of the case	Most key points are not justified with a logical, strategy-based explanation that reflects deep consideration of the case	/8
<b>Support</b>  <i>Relevant facts from case that support rationale</i>	Abundant support for rationale behind key points, as appropriate	Substantial support for rationale behind key points, as appropriate	Sufficient support for rationale behind key points, as appropriate	Little support for rationale behind key points, as appropriate	No support for rationale behind key points, as appropriate	/8
<b>Response</b>	Very good response to questions from professor and class	Good response to questions from professor and class	Fair response to questions from professor and class	Poor response to questions from professor and class	Very poor response to questions from professor and class	/8
<b>Total Score</b>						<b>/40</b>





# Effectiveness of the 4Ps case method

## 1. Perceived and actual student learning outcomes

- 3 Qs to gauge comfort level with material (perceived)
  - e.g., “I am confident in my ability to write a strategically-sound positioning statement.”  
(1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree)
- 4 Qs to gauge mastery of the material (actual)
  - Multiple choice questions with correct/incorrect answers

## 2. Student opinions

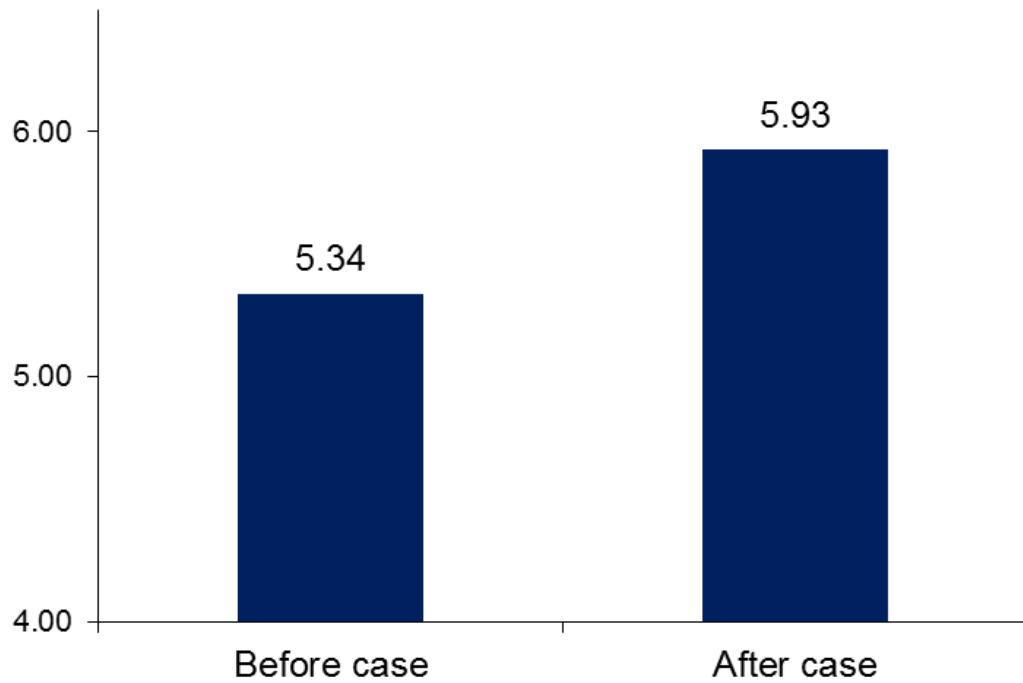
- Open-ended comments in end-of-course evaluations

## 3. Time spent grading



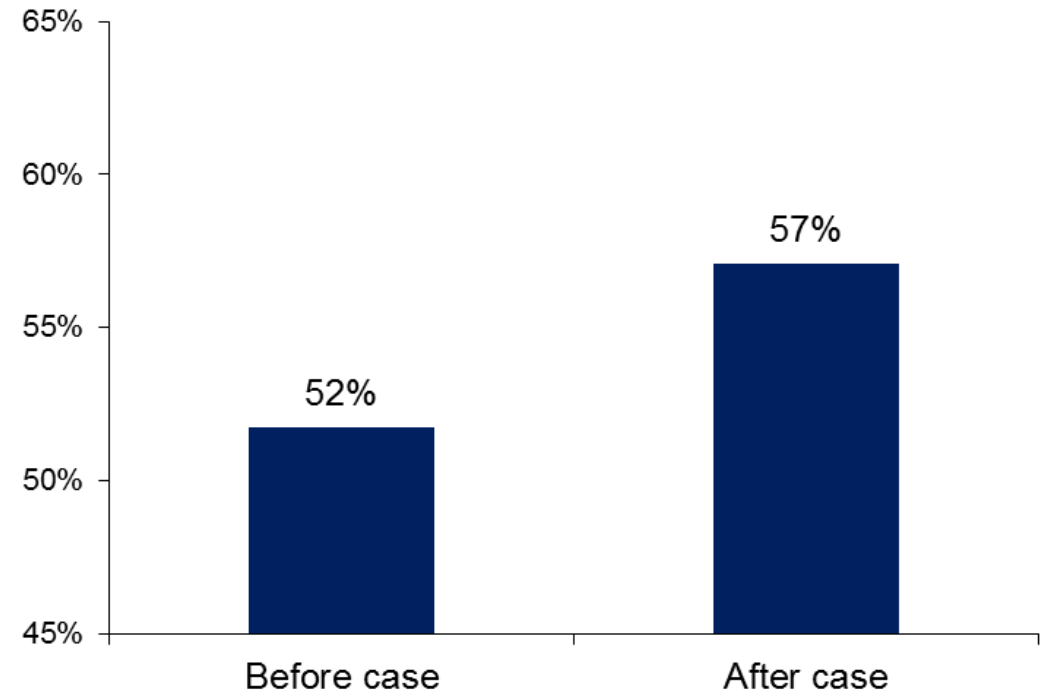
# Perceived and actual learning outcomes

## Perceived learning



$F(1, 30) = 24.73, p < .001$

## Actual learning



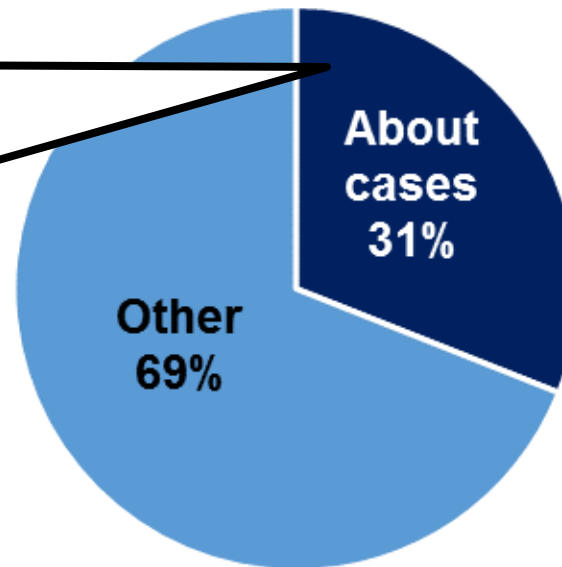
$F(1, 30) = 3.47, p = .07$



# Student opinions

## End-of-course comments

“the class involved lots of group work and even speaking in front of my peers; very beneficial class”



“thoroughly enjoyed the cases”

“the cases were a great way to apply what we learned”



# Time spent grading





# Conclusion

- The 4Ps case method was developed to keep students in large classes engaged and accountable while minimizing the grading burden on instructors
- Indeed, the 4Ps method:
  - Enables students to apply course concepts through stimulating case-based discussions
  - Develops students' writing and presentation skills
  - Improves perceived and actual learning outcomes
  - Is cited by students as one of the most enjoyable and valuable aspects of the course