

**Project #2:**  
**Higher Ed Case Studies**

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## **Case Study #1**

### **Clear Communication:**

#### **Compensation Strategies for When Students Just Don't Understand**

##### **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?**

The students of Liu Shen and Jim Lowry are both having issues understanding what the TAs are saying. Liu's students try to engage through asking questions whereas Jim's students do not ask questions. In both cases it seems as if the students are not able to grasp the material through lecture.

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

Language and cultural barriers may be the source of miscommunication between Liu and her students. It is possible that Liu is unfamiliar with idioms or the learning styles of American students. Furthermore, she lacks confidence in her English communication skills, which is further exacerbated by vocabulary specific to Biology.

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

Lin can ameliorate the students' concerns expressed in the evaluations through a few actions. It seems that Liu has not varied her instructional practices from lectures and should adjust her approach. Visual representations could help students grasp vocabulary while higher levels on Bloom's taxonomy could spark cognitive development and synthesis of the materials. She can learn to incorporate a variety of active learning techniques more appropriate for this context if she follows through and seeks advice from the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Additionally, Liu might explain to the students that she is still in the process of learning English; this will help students understand why she asks them to repeat their questions.

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

Jim's main miscommunication with the students is a lack of incorporating learner characteristics in his instructional design, which is an essential element (Bates, 2016). Jim assumes they are not doing the reading, and he does not consider that they need assistance with skills or other supports.

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

Jim can take action to address the students' concerns. First, addressing pacing and lesson flow will help. One student writes that Jim just starts talking and does not seem organized; communicating the lesson's objective would add organization and direction. Jim would improve communication by seeking assistance with public speaking since another student writes Jim speaks quietly while facing the board. Finally, Jim should and seek advice from the Center for Teaching and Learning, and, like Liu, incorporate other instructional activities particularly to address vocabulary.

**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.**

While I often use active learning techniques, I have noticed that I do not always communicate the objective. Often, I start class with a linking, thinking activity to engage prior knowledge. When the class becomes engaged in discussion, the discussion often flows into the material of the day, and I forget to state what we are doing and why.

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

Active learning can be challenging. One challenge of active learning is student resistance; students perceive they are teaching themselves rather than being taught. Another is architectural resistance in which higher education classrooms are large lecture halls encouraging lecture style instruction with the professor at the front and seated students taking notes (Lambert, 2012). Aside from learner engagement, active learning is more effective than passive learning and moves information from working memory into long-term memory (Lambert, 2012).

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

Unfortunately, Jim's attitude will negatively impact his students. Some may be overwhelmed and subsequently disengage from the course or the institution. Others may simply do the best they can and learn very little while earning an arbitrary grade. The students believe Jim is knowledgeable and seem open to learning from him, Jim needs to find a way to incorporate student needs into his instructional design and delivery before he becomes irrelevant as an instructor.

## Case Study #2

### Paul Seymour, Assistant Professor: A Dilemma Case in Teaching

<p>Overview</p>	<p>Paul Seymour is an assistant professor of Molecular Evolution at the State University of Chicago, three years after achieving his Ph.D. The class is comprised of 40 mostly pre-med juniors who were preparing for the MCATS.</p> <p>Current situation: At Johns Hopkins, Paul was fascinated by his postdoc mentor's use of collaborative learning. Observing her classes when time permitted, Paul determined to try collaborative learning in his own classes.</p> <p>Paul administered a survey in this Molecular Evolution course where he was implementing collaborative learning. The students were resistant, The students were displeased; they were not familiar with collaborative group work, or group papers, or group tests, nor did they want discussion or case studies.</p>
<p>Needs Analysis</p>	<p>Brown and Green state a needs analysis provides useful data that helps the instructional designer reach the desired outcome. Through the use of various tools, the data gathered clarify the type of instruction to be developed by determining the root of the problem and the areas in need of change (2020).</p> <p>Currently, according to the evaluations, the students are resistant to Paul's new teaching method. While he is requesting them to change their approach to learning, the students want Paul to change his approach to teaching.</p> <p>To determine if the method is working despite the evaluations, Paul can use the following for collecting data in a needs assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct observation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are the students discussing more? Are they working collaboratively?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• consultation with Dr. Mary Craxton, his mentor from Johns Hopkins who successfully uses collaborative instruction</li> <li>• review of literature on collaborative learning techniques in higher education</li> <li>• administer a more detailed questionnaire to his students to gain more insight about their resistance</li> <li>• review student work samples</li> </ul> <p>Possible solutions include training on collaborative work for the students, training on collaborative work for the instructor, and</p>

	redistributing the amount of collaborative work – starting low and increasing as the semester ends.
Task Analysis	<p>Task analysis is essential to instructional design as it defines the content and tasks the learners need to learn (Brown &amp; Green, 2020). The students in Paul’s course need to learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Molecular evolution</li> <li>• Communicating within a group</li> <li>• Self-regulation</li> <li>• Higher-level thinking</li> <li>• Leadership skills</li> <li>• Oral/discussion skills</li> </ul>
Learner Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pauls’s audience is both the students and his colleagues who do not seem well versed in collaborative techniques.</li> <li>• The stakeholders are the students, those who pay tuition, Paul’s colleagues, and Paul.</li> <li>• In this case, detailed evaluations, one-on-one interviews, and observations would be the most accurate way to gauge levels.</li> </ul>
Goals/Objectives	<p>Dick, Carey, and Carey, (as cited in Brown &amp; Green, 2020), state the instructional designer can begin setting the goal by asking what the specific actions of the learner would be if they were already able to perform the task. Success to Paul would be students engaged in active learning demonstrated by engaged discussion of molecular evolution.</p> <p>Using that backwards planning, one goal and objectives for the course follows.</p> <p><b>Goal:</b> At the end of this course, students will be able to work collaboratively and engage in meaningful, authentic discussion of molecular evolution.</p> <p><b>Objective 1:</b> Students will maintain active communication with group members and the instructor, participating in group discussions and meetings by due dates.</p> <p><b>Objective 2:</b> Students will complete all the assignments, individual and group, by the due dates to participate knowledgeably in discussions.</p> <p><b>Objective 3:</b> Students will participate in discussion during each class meeting, either in their group or in whole class discussion.</p> <p><b>Objective 4:</b> Students will be competent members of the group actively problem-solving, thinking critically, and self-regulating.</p>

## References

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