AACE “Best Practices” Proposal
Using Case Studies for Online Learning

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Abstract: The key to success in using case studies online includes the following elements: creating norms for learning teams, an appropriate case study, a structured format for analyzing cases, and a scoring rubric. Attention must also be paid to learning styles by using differentiated methodology. Norms include expectations for effective online learning. It should also be made clear to students the structure for cases analysis and the case analyses evaluation. Scoring rubrics should be thorough and presented to students at the beginning of the case analysis so that the scoring criteria is understood. Appropriate case studies provide a variety of issues from different perspectives which require students to use current course information and critical thinking. Session participants will be given case examples, an analysis process, and a rubric for the case analysis. We will discuss using the technology to present instruction in a variety of formats to address a variety of learning styles.

Using case studies for online learning can result in high levels of interaction among learners. The key to success in using cases online includes the following elements: creating norms for online learning teams, an appropriate case study, and a structured format for analyzing the case. In order to promote active participation, particular attention must be paid to different learning styles by using the capabilities of technology for differentiating the teaching methodology.

Creating norms for instructors and students for case study analysis in online learning environments is an often overlooked process. Norms include making it be very clear to students what the expectations are for participation in online learning with case studies so that lagging behind is not an acceptable option. Further, in order to facilitate courses using cases study analyses, instructors or facilitators must be prompt with their specific responses to student postings and analyses. One of the most critical aspects of teaching with cases is making it clear to both faculty and students how the case analysis will be evaluated. The scoring rubric should be very thorough and presented to students at the beginning of the case analysis so that the criteria for scoring is very public.

Appropriate case studies provide a variety of issues, from a variety of perspectives that call on students to use current course information. A good case gives students enough information to analyze the issues from a variety of perspectives while allowing them to dig into the case to suggest actions for resolving issues and for evaluating the consequences of those actions. In this presentation, participants will be given case examples, a case analysis process, and a rubric for scoring the case analysis and online participation. We will also discuss using the technology to offer the instruction in a variety of formats to address a wide variety of learning styles.