

## Case Discussions in the Classroom

A classroom case discussion is usually guided by the instructor. Students are expected to participate in the discussion and present their views. In some cases, the instructor may adopt a particular view, and challenge the students to respond. During the discussion, while a student presents his point of view, others may question or challenge him. Case instructors usually encourage innovative ways of looking at and analyzing problems, and arriving at possible alternatives.

The interaction among students, and between the students and the instructor, must take place in a constructive and positive manner. Such interactions help to improve the analytical, communication, and interpersonal skills of the students.

Students must be careful that the contributions they make to the discussion are relevant, and based on a sound analysis of the information presented in the case. Students can also refer to the notes they have prepared during the course of their preparation for the case discussion.

The instructor may ask questions to the class at random about the case study itself or about the views put forward by an individual student. If a student has some new insights about the issues at hand, she is usually encouraged to share them with the class.

Students must respond when the instructor asks some pertinent questions. The importance of preparing beforehand cannot be emphasized enough – a student will be able to participate meaningfully in the case discussion only if he is knowledgeable about the facts of the case, and has done a systematic case analysis. A case discussion may end with the instructor (or a student) summarizing the key learning points (or 'takeaways') of the session.

Student performance in case discussions is usually evaluated, and is a significant factor in assessing overall performance in the course. The extent of participation is never the sole criterion in the evaluation – the quality of the participation is an equally (or more) important criterion.