



Special Topic Session Case Study Teaching Method: Bringing Concepts to Life

Panel Moderator: **Dr. Leslie Davis Burns**, President, Responsible Global Fashion LLC, USA. Dr. Burns is Editor-in-Chief, *Bloomsbury Fashion Business Cases*.

Panel Members:

Dr. Lorynn Divita, Associate Professor, Baylor University, USA, Fashion Merchandising, Fashion Forecasting. Dr. Divita has published case studies and is Subject Editor, *Bloomsbury Fashion Business Cases*.

Dr. Sheng Lu, Associate Professor, University of Delaware, USA, Global Sourcing, International Trade, Sustainability. Dr. Lu has published case studies and has been using the Harvard Business School case teaching method in his global sourcing and fashion merchandising courses.

Dr. Jessica Ridgway Clayton, Assistant Professor, Florida State University, USA, Product Development, Creative Design. Dr. Ridgway has held several industry case study competitions in her courses to give students the opportunity to apply their knowledge to real-life situations.

The case study method (or case method) of teaching is a popular and effective way for students to learn and apply concepts to real-life situations, strategies, and dilemmas. The typical case study provides an overview and background information associated with an issue that an individual in the fashion industry or a fashion brand company or organization is facing. Issues and/or dilemmas can be associated with any aspect of design, production, sourcing, supply chain, marketing, and/or retailing as well as social and cultural aspects of fashion that affect consumer/user behavior. Students are asked to evaluate the situation, analyze alternative options or solutions, and recommend and justify a course of action. The faculty members on this panel, coming from diverse subject matter backgrounds, have effectively incorporated the case study method of teaching into their courses. Using a Question and Answer format led by the panel moderator, panel members shared their experiences in designing and implementing assignments and class sessions that include case studies (see topics below). Dr. Lu then demonstrated a mock case study class discussion that involved the audience. Topics addressed by panel members included the following:

Choosing the right case study for your course. Panel members shared resources regarding where to find published case studies and strategies for writing your own case study that are appropriate for various levels of courses and course formats. Copies of examples of case studies were distributed.

Integrating case studies into a variety of course formats and subjects. Panel members shared how the case study method of teaching can be effectively integrated into a variety of course formats (e.g., lecture, studio, laboratory, hybrid, and/or online courses) and across subject matter content (e.g., product development, sourcing, merchandising, marketing).

Determining learning objectives and course assignments. Panel members shared strategies for developing a variety of course assignments that result in the desired learning objectives for the course and assignment. These included:

- **Written/out-of-class assignments:** Students may be assigned study questions, role-playing assignments, and/or creative work as an out-of-class activity response to case studies. For these responses, students would be expected to research and respond to each of the questions or the role-playing assignment in writing and/or produce a creative work along with a written narrative.
- **Class discussions and/or debates:** Case studies can be used as prompts for short in-class individual writing activities and/or small group/full class discussion. If the case study lends itself to debates, students can be divided into groups and asked to debate opposing viewpoints regarding optimal solutions to a problem or dilemma. Panel members shared experiences and advice in planning class discussions (including creating effective opening questions as prompts for students) and leading effective and dynamic class discussions and/or debates.

Evaluating students' performance. Panel members shared strategies in developing and implementing grading rubrics for both written assignments of case study analyses and oral discussions (large group and small group) of case study analyses.