

SYNTHESIS for Module 10. WRITE A NEW DRAFT CASE STUDY

LEARNING GOAL: To add to the portfolio of case studies available to our collaborative learning community, write a draft of your own case study in a format consistent with others in the portfolio.

INTRODUCTION/ BACKGROUND

Case study learning is appropriate for collaborative learning workshops, where the overall goal is to expand participants awareness of the experiences and perspectives of other stakeholders. The approach is suitable for stimulating discussion because participants are encouraged to draw on their own experiences and to learn from the experiences of others.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this module, participants will:

Have chosen one case study about communities and conservation; for further discussion in the next part of this course (the workshop)

Be prepared to list the ecoregional networks of conservation professionals, and explain which is most relevant to their own personal priorities

Be aware of the resources available to support case-based learning about cross-cultural communication

FOR LEADERS IN COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Preparation for Discussing this Module

If you have never encountered case studies in the context of collaborative learning, I encourage you to explore the materials available at the National Center for Case Study Teaching. It is an approach widely used in the legal and medical professions. Through funding from the National Science Foundation, this website encourages educators to expand use of case studies to stimulate critical thinking skills in inquiry based learning and teaching in all sciences.

Before discussion, leaders should access and read the three North American case studies for the Big Thicket region (see link to [cases] on the top menu. These are the most relevant for current workshop materials because they explicitly identify the diverse perspectives of four stakeholder networks. The other links to case studies provided on the North American webpage provide a broader exposure to the various styles for presenting case studies, as useful in a variety of professional development venues.

A Note about the Portfolio of Case Studies

As explained in the presentation, the concept of a "portfolio" has multiple shades of meaning. For artists and architects, a portfolio is a physical binder that holds drawings and paintings. For a conservation organization, the staff may speak about a portfolio of projects. The allusion invokes meanings also associated with a stock portfolio, such as investments that mature over time or the value of diversity in investments that respond differently to a fluctuating economic climate. Cross Cultural Communication: Communities and Conservation

Cross Cultural Communication: Communities and Conservation

The webpages providing links to case studies in this curriculum are designed to expand as participants writeup and contribute additional cases in part 3 of the course i.e. follow-up to the workshop. On the page for each regional section are suggestions for interesting topics, to help stimulate the ideas of participants who are inspired to contribute from their own experiences, or to analyze the experiences of others.

Discussion

Implicit in the concept of "ecoregion" is the idea that conservation principles may be applied in very different ways in the different social/political/economic contexts of regions spread across the globe. If the group of participants in the workshop have limited experience outside the North American region, then the first question about "favorite ecoregion" may not stimulate much discussion. However, the discussion that occurs will provide clues as to which participants have experienced or are open to experiences outside their own backyards.

The second question of which topic, or "conservation challenge" is of greatest personal interest may be associated with some confusion if participants have not examined the materials on the website prior to the discussion.

Closure

The final discussion question is designed to help achieve a sense of closure not only on this module, but also on the first part of the course. Each of the modules in Part 1 introduces concepts that will be used in the workshop. As this may not be immediately apparent to participants, it would be valuable to reaffirm the value of mastering these concepts so they are not totally new when used at the workshop.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

For more information about the historical series of events that culminated in the establishment of the Big Thicket Preserve, I recommend Cozine (2004). The diverse perspectives of several stakeholders networks in the region are described in more detail by Weeks and Packard (2009).

REFERENCES

- National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science (accessed 2/24/2010) <http://www.sciencecases.org>
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