# **Characteristics of Effective Case Teaching**

## C. Roland Christensen Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard Business School

## **Outcomes**

- 1. In-class learning substantially exceeds pre-class learning and further stimulates learning after class.
- 2. Learning extends beyond the individual class, yielding deeper insights through linkages across classes, modules, and courses.
- 3. Students are engaged in, energized by, and challenged by class discussions.
- 4. Students discover, articulate and develop most critical insights, with the instructor leading the process.

## **Preconditions**

- 1. There is mutual respect between instructor and students, and among the students.
- 2. Instructor and students come to class well-prepared.
- 3. Instructor and students apply rigorous standards and are willing to take risks and consider different points of view.
- 4. The case, supporting materials, assignment questions, and teaching plan are well-designed and are part of an effective module and course structure.

## **Behaviors**

- 1. Class starts and ends on time.
- 2. The instructor:
  - a. prepares both content and process, including a clear set of teaching/learning objectives, a call list, a board plan, an opening question, discussion probes, transitions, follow-up questions, and closing comments.
  - b. listens thoughtfully throughout the class discussion.
  - c. actively manages class flow and structure, while responding flexibly to student comments.
  - d. poses challenging questions, cold/warm calls, and follow-ups to promote high quality class discussion.
  - e. stimulates thoughtful student-to-student discussion and encourages participation from a broad range of students.
  - f. draws on student background information in guiding the class discussion.
  - g. provides appropriate closure to discussion segments, class sessions, and course modules.

#### 3. Students:

- a. participate and listen actively throughout class discussions.
- b. contribute ideas, analysis, and personal experiences instead of simply presenting case facts.
- c. build on each other's comments and critique and debate different points of view.