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Amy Leh TSSA Summer 2006

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I received a TSSA award to attend the International Conference of the World Association of Case Research and Application (WACRA) held July 2-5, 2006 in Brisbane, Australia. Using cases in teaching began at Harvard University several decades ago. Since then, professionals in medical, law, and business schools have been using cases in their teaching to enhance student learning. Most of the participants at the conference were faculty members in business, and many of them have been using case methods in their teaching for years.

One of the presentations I attended was about non-traditional students at an urban university that contained 70% non-traditional students. The presenter reported five cases that illustrated the life of such students, for example, a Hispanic house-husband or a black female single parent. Non-traditional students were around 30 years old or older and had responsibilities other than school, for example, family and career. They attended university with specific expectations and a clear time frame for completing their degrees. To help them succeed, the professors at the university provided considerable assistance and flexibility to the students, for example, by being flexible about assignment submission deadlines and even privately providing financial support when students encountered financial crises. I did not completely agree with the support some professors of that university offered to the students. However, the presentation helped me to better understand non-traditional students and their challenges.

Another presentation was about case writing in education. We participants were asked to identify dilemmas encountered in our teaching and share it with our group members. The dilemma of one of our group members was double standards of teaching writing to international students. Based on her example, we experienced case writing and case discussion. I can see case writing and case discussion being beneficial for my students. However, it is a time-consuming process, and I would need to be creative if I would implement them in my courses.