

## The Case of Dr. Mary Evans

Dr. Mary Evans, a former professional administrator and policy analyst turned faculty member in Public Administration, was looking forward to her “Introduction to Policy Analysis” course on Monday. She had designed a series of challenging questions that would require students to apply concepts from the course to real-world situations such as those that she had faced in her work. For this class she had assigned two articles for homework and asked students to watch, before class, three short videos she had created to clarify key ideas she wanted them to use.

In class she started off with a short quiz to test students on their understanding of the basic concepts from the reading and videos. Most students did well, indicating that they had done the homework. The flipped classroom format worked. Students were ready for the application exercises. She handed out a mini-case drawn from her own experience in studying the effect of economic policy on poverty rates in urban communities. Students were asked to read a short case about the economic situation in a specific community, analyze a list of possible solutions, and predict which solution had been successfully implemented.

After students read the case, they moved into small groups and delved quickly into very animated discussions. Dr. Evans walked around the room listening. Students were clearly struggling to figure out how the concepts they had studied before class were related to the situation the case presented, and Dr. Evans could see that they were almost uniformly headed toward answers that were far off-target. It was going to be impossible to have the discussion she was planning for. In near panic she cut off discussion, and said to the whole class, “So, here is the policy solution that was implemented. Why do you think that was?”

There was silence.

Dr. Evans waited several seconds. Then she blurted, “Come on, guys! I know you have answers—you were all talking about this before!”