



Writing a “Teaching” Case Study

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Health

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Types of cases

- Retrospective (research)
- Secondary sources
- Point-of-view
- * **Decision-forcing** *
 - A case describes a situation, it does not prescribe a solution
 - A case tells a story, it does not explain a theory

Choosing a case topic

- “Fishing in the pond”
- Protagonist (individual, organization) faces dilemma; reasonable people can differ on solution
- Access

Case topic vs incident

- Topic: public policy on elderly, ill prisoners
 - *Case: A CA prison tests limits of “medical parole”*
- Topic: environmental illness in the developing world
 - *Doctors running a clinical arsenicosis trial in Bangladesh face local press attacks*
- Topic: managing information in a global health crisis
 - *Case: WHO-Beijing director balances internal vs external information needs in midst of SARS outbreak*

Choose your focus

- For whom is this case intended?
 - purpose, audience
- What might be the dramatic juncture?
 - decision point
 - plausible tension/conflict
 - chicken/egg problem

Frame your case

- Who is the protagonist?
 - other key actors?
- What is the journey?
 - chronology
- What are the roadblocks?
 - Constraints/context: political, economic, personal

Case Structure

- Introduction
- Background
- Development
- Action
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- Wrap-up (e.g. epilogue)

Stay inside the case

- ◉ Write as if it were happening now
- ◉ Include background information only if available to protagonist
- ◉ Accelerate/decelerate
- ◉ Details: in shoes of protagonist

A CASE IS A STORY, NOT AN ESSAY!

Case “voice”

- Non-judgmental
- Objective; no analysis
- Factual
 - detail oriented
 - informational
- Engaging
 - clear, lively language

AVOID JARGON!

Contact info

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