

C-More Detailed Considerations

SECTION 1

THE CASE NOTE

Don't stop when you have finished preparing your case. More will be got out of your case, by more facilitators, if you go on to prepare an instructor's guide (which may be referred to also as a teaching note, trainer's note, case guide, etc., etc.).

The teaching note can help

- a) in the selection of cases when they are being reviewed for possible use, by giving the purpose and range of the case;
- b) in using a case, particularly if it is being used by someone other than the case originator. Suggested uses, possible questions (either to or from the trainer) and analyses may appear.
- c) in showing how a case relates to other cases should they be in a group with an overall purpose.
- d) in helping ensure uniform coverage if several facilitators have to operate on a shared teaching basis.

Any case which is prepared for use as training or teaching material will benefit from additional notes. These can be much more of a chore than doing the case itself, but are vital to the effective use of your case. It has been suggested that some think the term (teaching note) should be used solely in its strictest sense of teaching emphasis and contain information on possible teaching approaches only. It may be historical in form: 'we tried this, and the case was a great success'...It may be suggestive, directive or predictive. It could propose assignment questions. A further requirement might be suggesting where to use the case in a particular course with a specific audience.

Essentially, though, the training or teaching note is a guide. There is no set way of laying it out - format, style, content or degree of detail are all aspects for you

to decide on. As a guide, it should help you when you run the case, and also help anybody else who might make use of your case: its purpose is not necessarily to provide a solution, nor necessarily to give a detailed analysis of issues which might come out of a case study.

The case training note can include a wide range of topics in addition to the analytical process and the answer or range of possible answers. It may deal with the optimum amount of experience and competence the participant should have to get the maximum benefit from the case; the ideal group size; how much time it takes; the inter-relationship of the case with other cases; and similar matters of assistance to the facilitator.

The more complex the case you have prepared, the more valuable it is to have as full a set of notes as possible to go with it - even to the extent of the notes being longer than the case. Your case may offer the chance for it to be used in a range of different ways - role playing, negotiations, games, computer analysis, etc: good notes will give suggestions on using these different ways, with perhaps some comment on any actual experience you may have of using them in these ways.

Merging various suggestions as to what exactly is appropriate to go in the note gives the following composite recommendations:

Its objectives and place - the objectives of the case: how it fits in with other cases before it and after it in a particular topic and its relationship with the overall training course.

The participants - the level at which they should be in order to get the maximum from the case; what they should learn from the case.

Ways of using it - suggestions as to the way to use the case, with alternatives, and critical evaluations of the ways in which it has been used - when it worked well, when it didn't, and suggestions as to what helped towards the success/failure.

Questions - issues, teaching questions, study questions; facts relevant to those questions; useful sequencing of questions; probable responses; analysis and commentary on the questions.

Other useful information - background; difficulties with presentation, concepts, analysis, which are anticipated or have been found; particular theoretical bases, or analytical techniques, of use or significance; useful calculations; technical notes for students to study.

At the end - a model answer (there is disagreement over this, particularly as there may well in many cases be several appropriate answers, or none); the outcomes, or sequel, or what happened next; any final comments.

When to write the case note?

When should you write your training note? Thoughts on this vary; for example, Rotch notes that 'one experienced case writer has said that the time to write a case's outline is in the company car park as you leave.....if possible the outline should be started even earlier and the analysis should be outlined at the same time. That analysis forms the heart of the teaching notes that will continue to evolve as the case is completed and taught several times.'

Arguments for preparing the notes after the case discussion are given by Simmons, who claims that "the note could be prepared either before or after the case discussion. But to meaningfully provide helpful information it would be more useful to prepare the note after the event. The preparation of the note after the class discussion is advantageous on several grounds.

"In the first place, as the case and note are written from the viewpoint of the case writer, and hence to suit the writer's own pedagogical objectives, there may be other educational perspectives which may not be highlighted when the teaching note is prepared.

"Secondly, subjection of the case to classroom discussion has the tendency to reveal a range and variety of insights which, perhaps, the case writer would not have thought of and which, once included in the note, would be extremely beneficial to subsequent users of the case.

"Thirdly, and following from the second consideration, from the various perspectives resulting from classroom

discussion, the teacher would be in a better position to establish the areas of learning in which the case could be most effectively utilised.

"Fourthly, it provides the teacher with the opportunity to gauge the competence and capability of the participants in the learning session and thus determine what inclusions should be made in the teaching note."

Thus it is perhaps best to regard the preparation as a continuous process, which starts while the case is in preparation, and never really stops - training thoughts, perspectives, ideas and values change with time, with the result that some of the thoughts, suggestions and considerations which are in the note may become outdated or irrelevant. The contents of the note should never be regarded as being unchanging, nor as unchangeable or unchallengeable.

At all times, you as the facilitator involved with running a particular case must regard yourself as being at liberty to allow the class discussion to go in the directions which you think will be of most benefit to the participants. Don't restrict discussion to predetermined lines, merely because the way in which the case seems to be going is not in accordance with the training note, or because you seem to be moving towards a proposed solution to the case problem which is not among the possibilities which may have been mentioned in the note.

To repeat, then, the training note or teaching note is only a guide: you are the person running the case, and while the guide may be extremely helpful, don't let it control you and the way you operate.

SOURCE REFERENCES

Those with reference numbers marked with an asterisk, e.g. 032*, have abstracts given in the 'Abstracts' part of this booklet.

032* Bennett, J.B.(1976). **Writing a Case and its Teaching Note.** In, Selected Notes on the Case Method of Teaching. The Case Clearing House of Great Britain and Ireland, Cranfield, England.

033* Berridge, J.(1987). **The value of outcomes in the case**

method. In, Winterburn, N.R. (Ed). Proc. 4th Int. Conf. on Case Method Research and Application. Centre for Continuing Education, The City University, London, England.

011 Leenders, M.R. & Erskine, J.A. (1978). Case Writing: The Case Writing Process. University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada.

034* Rotch, W. (1985). **Case Teaching Notes**. In, Winterburn, N.R. (Ed). Proc. 3rd Int. Conf. on Case Method Research and Case Method Application, Centre for Continuing Education, The City University, London, England.

030* Simmons, C.M. (1981), The Case Method: A Guide for Caribbean Trainers. Caribbean Centre for Development Administration, Garrison, Barbados.

MORE DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS - SECTION 2

SPECIFIC WRITING PROBLEMS

The need for local cases

The most effective cases are those to which audiences relate most closely - with the likelihood that 'good' cases correlate well with the indigeneity of their content.

Case study applications may well not evolve until good cases are researched and written locally. Types of problems, legislation, culture, etc., tend to be very specific to particular regions, with the consequence that cases incorporating them are not readily transferrable to other countries or cultures.

Advocates of the case method in smaller countries experience greater difficulty in promoting cases as a medium for learning than their counterparts in larger nations where native case material is more readily available. Where cases have not been used, factors such as the format and style of the educational/training system may not be aligned to the possibility of using cases, by being knowledge acquisition oriented, or by there not being time in the centrally fixed curriculum for the necessary analysis.

Further difficulties arise because, though e.g. companies may be very willing to provide speakers for courses, they are often far more reluctant to have situations written down in case form.

So, the problem feeds on itself, and though new material is likely to be welcomed by the small group of trainers specialising in that particular aspect, the low demand in volume terms due to the small size of the market makes potential suppliers think twice before venturing into extensive casewriting commitments.

Most case producers write cases for use in their own organisations and so have definite objectives and target audiences in mind. In the absence of either a suitable indigenous case, or the time in which to write one, users

may be tempted to adopt a case which was created in another country, for another culture.

Most case writers are exposed at an early stage of their training to the comment by more experienced colleagues that the cases they write are not neutral. As a result of this requirement, they attempt at all times to avoid the inclusion of any opinions, impressions, prejudices and value judgements, unless specifically expressed by a person in the case. The ultimate goal which is held up as the ideal to all case writing beginners is the so-called 'neutral' case.

It might well be asked, though, how neutral are these cases? Because we try to be impartial, does that mean that we actually produce an impartial case? Can there ever be such a thing? Even if there is, does this necessarily mean that the learning of participants is any greater than it would be if no attempt was made to make the case neutral - or if it were even deliberately biased? It has never been clearly shown that case neutrality has any advantageous or disadvantageous effect on learning.

Any communication, in whatever area, is likely to be made from a particular viewpoint which has biases almost unconsciously included in it; these may be linguistic, but are just as likely to be gender or cultural biases - and with the last, particularly, being unlikely to be recognised and allowed for. There is a need to develop a recognition and an understanding of these biases, which are often built in as part of a case writer's upbringing and environment. Cultural assumptions, particularly, need to be specifically recognised, especially if a case is being used in a culture different from that for which it was written.

Gender neutrality

There has been an increasing awareness about gender bias in written materials over the past few years. This has led to a variety of attempts to get round it, some more successful than others.

The use of artificially constructed pronouns (s/he) or duplicated pronouns (her/his) creates rather clumsy writing effects, while notes inserted at the beginning may

either not be noticed, or may give offence:

"the male pronoun has been used throughout this work for stylistic reasons only: it includes both masculine and feminine genders."

or "when using pronouns, the male should be regarded as embracing the female, and vice versa."

Rather than using any of the above methods, it is probably preferable to rephrase sentences so as to get rid of any gender-specific examples. Instead of, for example,

"In role play, a player receives an outline of the role that he has agreed to assume and is then free to develop the characterisation of the role as he sees fit.....once he develops the characterisation of the role, he cannot change his 'character' while the game or role is in progress."

this can be rewritten so as to eliminate the gender references, e.g. as

".....a player receives an outline of the role that has been agreed will be assumed, and the characterisation of the role is then developed as the player sees fit. It is to be stressed, though, that once the characterisation of the role is developed, it cannot be changed while the game or role is in progress."

Similar ways can be found round most situations where a personal pronoun would once have been used; all that is needed is common sense and a willingness to try to rephrase.

Culturally specific cases

It is not always as easy to recognise any specifically cultural aspects in cases. Tixier and Berridge have identified four principal cultural constituents or areas as especially relevant to the use of the case method, each of which can have a considerable effect:

- a) imputed national characteristics;
- b) typical corporate values;
- c) prevailing economic systems;
- d) the values of the case writers and trainees themselves.

In general, they say, the more realistic a case is, the more difficult it is to adapt or transpose into another culture - its realism is often due to its cultural depth and specificity.

Cases are often translated into another language, and this can cause difficulties even if the language in which it was originally written is understood by those using the case. Despite any translational abilities linguistically, this is not often accompanied by any attempt to ensure an adequate cultural translation. The translation may even, because of this, be regarded as unhelpful by those who have a good command of the original language, and who may prefer to use the original version so as to get a better understanding of both linguistic and cultural aspects.

The way in which a case is constructed - structure, style, amount and format of information, etc. - affects both facilitator's and participant's responses to it. These, in turn, are affected by the educational culture in which it is written. Some educational cultures favour the maximum possible accuracy, order and structure in the so-called facts presented to the reader, so that the analysis then becomes a fairly mechanical process. The same case prepared in a different educational culture might well be very differently presented - with much less order, or even with disorder, and where the skills being fostered may be those of differentiation and creative interpretation of the material rather than dispassionate analysis.

Because of the different approaches to the solving of cases, dependent on the cultural value put on each method, the techniques of case writing may vary considerably. This cultural aspect of the writing stage, and its implications for that and for all subsequent stages, should be always borne in mind.

As was mentioned on p.32, the writers of cases typically are academics, administrators or functional experts in a company. The effect of this narrowness may be the production of cases which are somewhat stereotyped - serious, complex, high-minded, reflecting the culture and work ethic of the writer, rather than cross-cultural, or unethically, indelicate, or written in the much more racy language which tends to be used in everyday life. The lack

of variety instils in the trainees attitudes and approaches which reflect solely the educational, political and business system in which and for which they were written. A conscious effort needs to be made to overcome this limitation.

Even the balance of emphasis and perceived importance between case analysis and decision-making may vary considerably according to the value attached to decision making in different cultures; the mechanism of decision making will be different, according to the decision making structure employed, whether at the general level of structures of societies, or at the particular level of organisational configurations. The need for a solution to the case on the part of the students will vary; the preference for a type of solution can display cultural influences.

If there is a need to disguise names in a case, an item which gives no problems in e.g. European or U.S. cultures, difficulties can arise where tribe or caste plays a significant part in a culture. Instead of just changing site and names of company and workers, the cast list must have names appropriate to the area, and to the relative status.

Tixier and Berridge thus suggest that the substantial cultural content of both the case itself and of the case method argue for explicit treatment of culture as one of the essential components of the whole case process. They regard it as insufficient to treat culture implicitly or incidentally, but propose that cultural awareness should be fostered at the level of the case writer, the design of courses incorporating cases, and the classroom process.

The case writer needs to keep in mind that the case being created is in part a cultural document, with various facets of culture included both implicitly and explicitly. These could be questioned and analysed in the teaching note along with the technical aspects, and there may well be advantages in adding a cultural note, particularly if foreign students are likely to deal with the case.

Course design can include a range of cases illustrating cultural parameters, if only by a representative coverage of cultural variations. Group composition can also help,

by controlling it so as to aid the group members learning cultural awareness from each other and the group process reinforces the learning experience about culture.

Finally, the students can be encouraged always to include culture in their analysis schemes. In evaluating solutions, the teacher can customarily include the cultural dimensions as an essential element, on an equal footing with more conventional technical analyses.

SOURCE REFERENCES

Those with reference numbers marked with an asterisk, e.g. 035*, have abstracts given in the 'Abstracts' part of this booklet.

035* Liljamo, R. (1987). **Barriers to the use of the case method.** 4th Case Conference (see below).

036* O Cinneide, B. (1984). **Case method problems in smaller countries: a case writer's view.** 2nd Case Conference (see below).

037* Peppas, S.C. & Peppas, S.R. (1987). **Quantitative methods and approaches used in analyzing case studies: an examination of cultural differences.** 4th Case Conference (see below).

013* Tixier, M. & Berridge, J. (1985). **Cultural transfer in case study usage.** 3rd Case Conference. (see below).

the above references are from the Proceedings of the International Conference on Case Method Research and Case Method Application, Centre for Continuing Education, The City University, London, England.
Volume 2, 1984; Volume 3, 1985; Volume 4, 1987.

MORE DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS - SECTION 3

COPYRIGHT

Copyright is the name given to the principle that those who create works of the intellect should have a special relationship with them, in short that they should own them as property. If those who create or produce materials can control the use which society makes of them and can, by implication, make a charge for the value which is derived from them, they will be encouraged to produce more materials and so benefit, especially, education and the arts and sciences.

The U.K. in common with all developed countries which are large producers of published material, has a strong protectionist copyright law while those which produce little but use the products of others tend to have less restrictive legislation. You will need to be clear about the copyright situation in your own country, but it is unlikely to be more rigid than in the U.K. situation, which is taken as an illustration in the next paragraph.

In the U.K. there are eight categories of material protected:

-Literary works.

These include virtually anything in written form and include such things as street directories, business letters and private letters as well as literature in the commonly accepted sense. Also protected as literary works are computer programs.

-Dramatic works

These include plays and the written instructions for ballet or mime.

-Musical works

There is no definition, probably because of the difficulty of devising one.

-Artistic works

These include paintings, drawings, diagrams, charts, maps, engravings and photographs, all irrespective of artistic merit, along with works of architecture (buildings and models for buildings) and works of artistic craftsmanship, such as pieces of jewellery.

-Sound recordings

These include gramophone records and cassettes.

-Films

These include videos

-Broadcasts

This is opposed to, and in addition to, the material actually in the broadcast.

-Published editions

These are the typographical layouts which a publisher uses when setting a literary, dramatic or musical work, e.g. a new typographical layout of a work which may have been published many times previously.

There are many complicating factors in copyright law, and specialist information should be obtained if you are in any doubt.

By the very nature of many of their sources, cases will incorporate materials which have been published by others, and are thus protected by the laws of copyright. If you have also included interviews and other items obtained from organisations, you will need to get clearance to use these; though not necessarily all covered by copyright, this is advisable for both courtesy and to maintain good working relationships.

Copyright also applies to the case you produce. If it is written as part of your job as an employee, then the copyright normally belongs to your employer unless you have made an agreement to the contrary with your employer.

Despite this, if your case study includes materials which are the copyright of others, it is you as the author who has the responsibility for ensuring that copyright clearance has been obtained for those materials, regardless of who actually owns the copyright of your case study, or who might publish it.

Thus, any of the sources which were mentioned in the section on writing cases should be regarded as being in copyright, and permission should be sought if using more than a very small part of any. In addition, although a case may be based on published material, part or all of that material may have been obtained from unauthorised sources. In such a circumstance, the case writer should check the validity of the source, if possible; cross-check

the accuracy of the information, again if possible; and check that the material can be used.

Even where your entire case is based on fully authorized materials from an organisation, you should think several times about whether you should send a copy of the case to that organisation for correction of any errors, particularly if controversial issues are involved.

If you have collected information by means of discussions and interviews in an organisation, you should ensure that the situation with regard to this material is clear both to you and to the organisation. Before you start, indicate that some or all of the material may be used in a case study, subject to final approval by the organisation, and have it confirmed in writing that this is acceptable to the company.

When you have completed your case, submit it to the organisation in which you did the research for their written approval and confirmation of release. There may sometimes be problems - some material may be confidential; the organisation and/or particular individuals may not wish to be identified or identifiable in the case; aspects may be sub judice - but generally there are not problems with release. In fact, organisations are often sufficiently interested to send someone along to observe on, and maybe take part in, the use of the case.

Should your case be dealing with problems and problem areas which are very sensitive, you may suggest or it may be suggested to you that the identity of the organisation and of any individuals should be disguised. Doing this may affect the interest and involvement of the trainees because it is that much further removed from reality. Consequently, changing aspects such as the type of organisation, its location, the persons involved, the timing of the problem, should be done with considerable caution and care. However, if the request for disguise comes from the organisation, you as the case writer must honour that request.

Copyright laws apply as much to non-print material as to printed sources. Any photograph, slide, film, audiotape, videotape, or off-air recording will need clearance, and perhaps a copyright fee to be paid, before you can lawfully use it.

Failure to obtain copyright clearance and formal organisational release can result in, at the least, loss of cooperation from the organisation which provided the information (and probably from other organisations as well), or at the worst an expensive law suit for breach of copyright or the unauthorised publication of confidential information - or both!

To assist you in keeping within the law, sample letters are reproduced in a number of publications, e.g. those by the Case Clearing House of Great Britain and Ireland.

(The above information is based, with thanks, on that contained in the Council for Educational Technology Information Sheet No. 6).

SOURCE REFERENCES

Those with reference numbers marked with an asterisk, e.g. 038*, have abstracts given in the 'Abstracts' part of this booklet.

038* A Note for Case Study Authors on Copyright and Permissions. The Case Clearing House of Great Britain and Ireland, Cranfield, England.

039* Council for Educational Technology.(1985). Copyright. CET Information Sheet No. 6, Council for Educational Technology, London, England.

040* Council for Educational Technology.(1985). Guideline Two: Copyright Clearance, a Practical Guide. Council for Educational Technology, London, England.

011 Leenders, M.R. & Erskine, J.A.(1978). Case Writing: the Case Writing Process. 2nd Ed. University of Western Ontario, London, Canada.