

Secondary case



How to write your own case

1. Decide on a topic

You may need to consider the School Leadership Capability Framework for inspiration and then begin to draw on authentic situations which you or the writing team have experienced directly or indirectly. The authenticity of the events is important as it assists participants to be drawn into a realistic context

2. Clearly define the problem

Ensure that the situation you have decided to write about as a case actually covers the problem or issue you are targeting. The most effective cases are complex and incorporate a number of issues. They generate wide ranging, vigorous discussions. There may not be a solution to the “problem”. This is not important as it is the process of sharing the analysis of the case when the professional learning takes place.

3. Review research on the topic and get resources

It may be useful to source further information about issues covered by the case and to locate Department documents and policies pertinent to the case.

4. Write a background or introduction

Begin to make a list of events and characters and then write a draft narrative. Ensure that the description of events is a convincing recount of the original situation. There should be a chronological flow to events. The language used should be neutral in tone but reflect the context being described. It should sound as if it actually is a principal, deputy principal or head teacher speaking.

5. Write discussion questions

Make a list of questions for the facilitator which will address each of the domains and throw some light on key issues covered by the case. Other strategies which will lead to a more informed decision can be highlighted such as using a critical friend, setting up a mentoring dynamic, referring to mandatory documents for guidance.

6. Considerations

Make a list of considerations under each domain heading. The considerations will guide the facilitator as they lead the group towards considering some of the obvious issues and other more subtle, significant aspects of the case.

The criteria for a good case

A good case:

- tells a convincing story which participants will relate to
- focuses on an interest arousing situation which may contain a number of issues
- is set in the present and reflects contemporary school scene
- creates empathy with central characters
- includes questions
- has utility and can be used in multiple contexts
- does not contain gender, age or cultural bias
- is conflict provoking and involves an element of chance
- is decision forcing
- contains just enough detail to cover the issues
- plays out against several futures.



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Secondary case fourteen

This case is open-ended and is designed to generate rich discussion about leadership issues affecting all head teachers.

Setting the scene

Individual reflections

1. What are the key issues?
2. As head teacher, what do you do?

Leadership issues

Educational	pedagogy, programs, assessment, reporting, learning styles, learning environment, learning community
Organisational	timelines, resources, management, systems, accountability
Strategic	planning, vision, values, culture
Personal	social skills, ethics, commitment, personal vision
Interpersonal	relationships, team building, conflict resolution, communication

Focus questions

Activity

Develop a series of focus questions under the following headings that will help you plan a strategy to solve the problem.

Educational

Organisational

Strategic

Personal

Interpersonal

Considerations

Notes to facilitators: It is the process of analysing the case and the issues that is important in using the cases as a professional development tool. A selection of DET policy documents made available for quick referencing by participants will support informed decision making.

If participants are from the same school, they may identify with key issues in the case and become snared in a discussion of school-specific problems. Sensitive intervention and guidance back to the case may be required.

Using the considerations or sample solutions too early may defeat the purpose and value of head teachers reflecting on the issues and their own practice. It should be remembered that a single issue case is in fact highly complex. If limited time is available, groups could analyse different leadership domains or focus on just a few issues.

Activity

Brainstorm a number of considerations that should be taken into account when attempting to solve the problem. List these considerations under the following headings:

Educational

Organisational

Strategic

Personal

Interpersonal

Disclaimer

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training.

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