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ABSTRACT

This paper describes why the use of a modified case method is useful in teaching concepts of school administration to educators entering public school administration. The paper defines the case method and differentiates it from other techniques and purposes; offers a history of case-study methodology that explains why the method caught on in law and business but not in educational administration; compares the advantages and disadvantages of various methods of instructional delivery; examines several perspectives of case planning and implementation; and presents a program using student-generated case studies. Finally, the paper explains how to use the discussion starter, a modified case study. The discussion starter omits complete narratives or scenarios and simply presents the question or dilemma pertinent to current issues in educational leadership. Seven sample discussion-starter exercises for graduate-level course work are included. (Contains 14 references.) (LMI)

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A Case for Cases: Using the Case Method in the Preparation of Administrators.

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An Interesting Alternative

This paper advocates the use of a modified case method to teach concepts of school administration to educators entering public school administration. To begin, the case method is defined and differentiated from other terms and purposes. Next, an early history of case methodology is presented to offer an explanation for why the method took hold in law and business but not education college instruction. Various methods of instructional delivery are then compared so the advantages and disadvantages of case-based instruction can be explored. Several perspectives of case planning and implementation are examined to further describe this methodology. A program using student-generated case studies is presented to show the wide range of practical application of the method. Finally, the use of the *discussion-starter*, a modified case study, is explained. In the *discussion-starter*, complete narratives or scenarios are not given; just the question or dilemma covering current issues in educational leadership. The use of discussion-starters is suggested for inclusion in graduate educational administration coursework.

An Important Distinction

A distinction between case study and the case method is made by Kowalski (1995). He defines the former as a general description of a situation while the latter has specific reference to using the case study as a teaching paradigm. The term case study itself means different things to different people. Also, some confusion arises when terms such as case history (commonly a medical term) and case work (commonly a social work term) are used.

Malouf (1995) defines a case study simply as a situation or event to be analyzed. But case studies are more than just the case material. Merseth points out that the "cases and the discussions of them are complementary and are both important" (Merseth, 1991a, p.5). The case study, unlike the lived experience, can be held still for repeated examination (Florio-Ruane and Clark, 1990.) It can approximate the immediacy of actual experience while providing a sample of the complexity of the subject in question or dilemma.

When Sykes and Bird (1992) surveyed a variety of cases, descriptions of case teaching and arguments about cases in teacher education, five categories emerged that speak to the diversity of theory and practice surrounding the case idea:

- textbook cases;
- casebooks;
- conversations and videotapes;
- subject-specific cases; and
- context-specific cases.

They found a number of dimensions, in cases, including the medium, the genre, the length, and whether the case is actual or contrived. They see the task ahead for case method users as the "creation and use of rich and interesting case materials in a variety of settings for a variety of purposes" (Sykes and Bird, 1992, p. 509.)

Doyle (1990) states that the use of case methods in teacher education depends on one's understanding of teaching and the learning to teach process. He stresses the importance of theoretical knowledge about teaching when defining, selecting, designing and classifying cases;

"only with this theoretical knowledge can an instance be designated a case of something" (Doyle, 1990, p. 14.)

The Historical Look at Case-Based Instruction

A thorough discussion of the early history of case-based instruction and its relation to teacher education is found in Merseth (1991b). She analyzed the use of case-based methodology by the Harvard School of Law, the Harvard Graduate School of Business and also the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She concluded that while case-based instruction was successfully implemented in the first two Harvard graduate schools, it was not in the Graduate School of Education. "Conceptual clarity about the purpose of case instruction and administrative and financial support for coordinated case writing by faculty" are the reasons why Professor Merseth feels the method took hold in business and law and not education (Merseth, 1991b, p.243). Merseth also reports that the business faculty generated 94,954 mimeographed sheets of problems for their classes supported by individual companies in industry while the faculty of the Graduate School of Education could get no comparable support for their case writing. Those considering implementing case-based instruction should consider how the case-writing will be supported.

Comparison With Other Instructional Methodologies

How does the case method fit in with what is known about traditional instructional delivery methods? Malouf (1993) analyzed traditional methods used to deliver instruction and how much student involvement or participation was involved. While his work is primarily geared toward assisting business people in delivering dynamic presentations, an overview of the

various methods of instruction used is useful:

- Lecture: a verbal presentation by one person.
- Lecture/Discussion: a lecture followed by a large group discussion.
- Modified Lecture: a lecture mixed with student activity, individual or small group work.
- Forum: a large gathering of participants expressing a range of ideas.
- Debate: an organized argument between persons with opposing points of view.
- Group Discussion: a structured exchange of ideas and knowledge.
- Buzz Groups: leaderless groups with set mission and time limit.
- Brainstorming: the expression of many ideas without discussion or evaluation.
- Role Play: the portrayal of activities that mimic real-life action and events.
- Demonstration: a presentation "of how it should be done," normally step-by-step.
- Demonstration with Practice: a demonstration followed by practice by the students.
- Independent Study: the instructor becomes an additional resource in the student's pursuit of his or her goals.
- Exhibit: a display of materials to aid learning.
- Field Trip: a planned tour.
- Simulation/Game: experimental learning where students discover concepts and principles.
- Case Study: a situation or event to be analyzed.

Some Advantages and Disadvantages

Malouf's (1993) view of the case study yields the following advantages:

1. involvement and interaction by students;
2. material can be covered in depth and detail;
3. application of knowledge and skills is possible; and
4. most closely resembles reality.

Two disadvantages that he found were:

1. "stereotyped" answers might be produced; and
2. the additional time required for reading of the case study itself.

Merseth (1991a) offers the following advantages of the case study method; cases:

1. help students develop skills of critical analysis and problem solving;
2. encourage reflective practice and deliberate action;
3. bring reality into the arena of theory;
4. involve students in their own learning; and
5. promote the creation of a community of learners.

How They Make It Work

Welty (1989) cites cognitive psychologists in suggesting the theory that active, experiential learning is the most effective. He uses discussion-based teaching (a variation of the case method) and reports that is an excellent way to provide experiential learning. He also states that the discussion method can be one of many techniques that can be mastered by college teachers to be used at the proper time to maximize learning. Some of his implementation strategies include

watching experienced discussion method users; having colleagues sit in on classes to provide feedback and joining with colleagues to share ideas and talk out important teaching issues.

Tillman (1995) offers some reflections on how she uses the case method with pre-service teachers enrolled in a class designed to teach diverse student populations. Tillman (1995) analyzed the four broad areas of decision-making developed by Sykes (1989.) She recommends case method teachers consider:

1. conceptual structure of the subject matter;
2. pedagogical structure;
3. cognitive structure; and
4. social structure.

Tillman (1995) developed a fifth area that she calls student feedback. She gains insights about students' perception to aid her in course refinement. She further recommends that educators examine their own decision-making processes to acquire more informed conversations within their institutions and the profession. She stresses the extensive research and preparation necessary to each case discussion.

Kowalski (1995) views the case method as a tool to: bridge theory with practice; develop skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making; and practice reflection as an administrator. His case studies on educational administration are quite intricate, with multiple foci and "provide a novel set of variables affecting the choices available" to students (Kowalski, 1995, p. 8). Following each case there are three components: "The Challenge, Key Issues/Questions and Suggested Readings" (Kowalski, 1995, p.10). Kowalski (1995) offers an

innovative goal for the use of his cases; to help his students become proficient at filtering information.

Florio-Ruane (1990) teaches her pre-service teachers to observe and document their participation in field experience classrooms. This helps the pre-service teachers gain new insights into the ways teachers and learners think and act. The pre-service teachers become participant-observers while they observe and record the case study of the teaching and learning experience.

Why Did I Assign This Case?

Merseth (1991b) agrees with Welty's (1989) advice to instructors planning to use the case method. In order to produce the necessary outline of concepts and subconcepts, the planners should answer the key question, "Why did I assign the case?" Merseth (1991b) adds to this advice and cautions that not only the case material must be planned but consideration must be given to the discussion process itself. She suggests observation of experienced case method users, employing videotaped lessons and establishing a faculty discussion group.

20-20-10

Merseth (1991a) mentions a veteran case instructor's rule of 20-20-10; twenty hours of preparation for the first time a case is taught, twenty hours for the second time and ten for each additional time the case is used. Tillman (1995), while not mentioning the actual time spent, acknowledges that using the case method pedagogy was far more complex than she realized initially. She cites a melange of questions and concerns that arose as she prepared the cases. Malouf (1993) has experienced the need to spend eight hours of preparation for every one hour of traditional presentation. He has been able to reduce the planning time to five hours using

organizational principles applied from seminar development. Whatever the correct number of hours for planning purposes, it is clear that the case method will require more preparation than traditional formats.

Planning to Plan

Welty (1989) outlines the entire planning process and identifies the following steps:

- read the assigned material;
- decide important concepts;
- prepare a question outline;
- prepare a blackboard outline;
- consider the students; and
- consider the whole semester and institution.

In summary, Welty (1989) says that the "preparation for a discussion class must marry process and content" and "to find ways to help the students internalize the theory" (Welty, 1989, p.42).

Student Generated Case Studies

Researchers Reed and Hannaford (1991) have successfully implemented a discussion-based graduate class using student generated case studies. They reviewed the literature typically used to prepare public school administrators and concluded that, in general, the literature is limited to abstractions and lacks a realistic view of public school administration. In response to this situation, Reed and Hannaford developed a system for managing the development of student-conducted cases. They add three levels to the characteristics of today's literature foundation: practical, substantive and theoretical. At the practical level, students generate detailed pictures

of authentic and competent school administrators; at the substantive level they generate detailed pictures which contrast the work of administration with administrators as *leaders*; and finally, at the theoretical level, pictures are composed to aid in a more theoretical understanding of the work of the public school administrator at work in schools, districts and communities. Several parameters guide the students in developing the case studies of educational administrators and include written and oral requirements, progress reporting and summaries of field data. Students view the experience as beneficial and worthwhile.

Discussion Starters and *Exercises in Educational Administration*

When contemplating whether teaching is an art or science, Eisner (1994) gives four reasons (or senses) why teaching is an art:

1. teaching can be performed with such skill and grace that the experience can be characterized as aesthetic;

2. teachers, like painters, composers, actresses, and dancers, make judgements based largely on qualities that unfold during the course of action;

3. the teacher's activity is not dominated by prescriptions or routines but is influenced by qualities and contingencies that are unpredicted; and

4. the ends that are achieved are often created in process.

The use of the case method can expand the second sense that Eisner (1994) proposes. As the case discussions unfold, student experience and insight are merged with the qualities of the instructor and relevant knowledge base materials. He feels in this second sense that qualitative forms of intelligence are used to control pace of discussion and foward movement. The instructor must "read" the emerging qualities of the discussion and guide it to meet the ends

sought or the direction he or she wishes the students to take.

Additionally, courses in educational administration lend themselves to the use of case methodology. Sykes (1989) refers to the content of some courses in educational administration courses as "open textured." He means that the "topography of such knowledge terrains are uncharted and ill-structured"(Sykes, 1989, p.9).

A Word of Caution

Sykes (1989) tries to integrate the use of case study in some part of most of the classes that he teaches. First, he finds case teaching "deceptively difficult" and that it is "not easy mastery but steady improvement" in learning how to properly use case methodology. His experiences led him to questions whether any learning actually took place during the discussions of the cases. While the discussions were lively and engaging, he saw some discussions as "involving nothing more elevated than the swapping of opinion, leading to the tacit conclusion that one student's view is as good as another's or that 'it all depends,' with what it depends upon left unspecified" (Sykes, 1989, p.7). He calls for closer textual analysis since the students may not understand the connection between the case study discussion and the assigned readings and reports that he had trouble allocating the proper amount of time for discussions and for presenting material. He identifies four axioms to address what users of case teaching must do:

1. we must invent a conceptual structure for the material to be covered;
2. we must clearly formulate a pedagogical purpose for case teaching that will firmly yet flexibly guide planning;
3. we must, like symphony directors, attend to individual roles in the discourse of case discussion. This will produce a unity of effort and create a community of discourse that

supports teaching through the case; and

4. we must address the nature of student learning from the cases. This knowledge of student learning will influence case teaching including the nature of the case employed.

For Limited Use

While traditional methods may be effective in covering many aspects of educational leadership, the case method offers an interesting alternative. It seems that the use of cases is more difficult than one would expect. As a novice user of the case method, I have developed the following case studies as *discussion-starters* for limited use with graduate classes in educational administration. Complete narratives or scenarios are not given. The discussion-starters contain just the question or dilemma of the selected issues in educational leadership. This is to facilitate in-class use of the problem description without prior reading assignments and study.

One teaching strategy that has proved successful is to divide classes into small discussion groups (four to five students) who read the problems and brainstorm for solutions and then present findings to the whole class. Classes typically begin with a mini-lesson presented by the professor followed by the introduction of a relevant discussion-starter.

The problems presented by the discussion-starters may be used as adjunct aids to traditional texts or provide the basis for group discussion coverage of key areas of educational

administration. The "worksheet" format of the text enables students to record notes and comments for evaluation and response by the instructor.

The title of each case is designed to indicate as much as possible about the topic of the exercise. As in all case study materials, there is no one "right" answer to the questions presented. It is safe to say though that these issues will not be answered by "it all depends!" The discussions usually will take no more than 20 minutes and do require skill on the part of the instructor to control the direction, pace and ending.

Most educational administration classes contain experienced teachers preparing for leadership positions. Their expertise proves invaluable in the problem-solving process and can best be brought out by classroom discussions. In many instances, the combined wisdom of the class will provide immediate solutions to the problems, while in other situations there may appear to be no solution at all. With these concerns in mind, the following cases from *Exercises in Educational Administration* (Diamantes, 1996) are offered as examples of discussion-starters.

How can teaching effectiveness be determined?

The Board of Education believes that annual teacher pay increases should be tied to merit. Accordingly, at a recent meeting it has adopted a policy which appears to them to provide a "measurable basis" for judging the merit of teachers. The following points are contained in their proposed rating scale that they expect to be implemented this school year:

1. The teacher's standing in the community.

2. Rating of teaching rather than teachers.

3. Reliance on several judgements rather than the judgement of just one person.

4. The utilization of every available means and method of determining the efficiency of teachers.

5. Analysis of the teacher's record of attendance and illnesses.

6. Inclusion of feedback from parents.

a. What method is normally used to evaluate teachers?

b. What method should be used?

c. Can desirable teaching qualities be determined quantitatively?

d. Would a self-rating scheme work?

e. Is "pupil progress" the best measurable outcome?

f. Is it reasonable to assume immediate implementation of such a plan?

g. Which of the items should be used?

h. Which of the items should be deleted?

How can the school best meet the needs of the gifted child?

Recently, there has been a feeling on the part of a school community that considerable work is being done to meet the needs of the "special education" students, while gifted students are being ignored. After all, the argument ran, meeting the needs of students with handicaps has been well addressed by the school system due to federal law. Parents have been inquiring about the formation of classes for the gifted. Several teachers have expressed desire to teach these classes and have even offered to help formulate a curriculum and course of study.

a. How can the school community solve this problem?

b. Should classes for the "gifted" be established?

c. How can the district determine which students should be included in this group? Ask the parents?

d. Which teachers should be involved in this program? Just the ones that say they are interested?

e. Should a separate program or a separate school be established for these youngsters?

Is student-initiated segregation permissible in school?

You are principal of a racially diverse junior high school. During cafeteria lunch duty, you have noticed groups of white students sitting at tables only with white students and black students also eating in isolation. The assistant principal comments that most students seem to associate with students from their own neighborhoods and therefore also eat lunch with them. Since most students are from same race neighborhoods they tend to associate in racial isolation.

a. Is there a problem here?

b. What should you do about the situation?

c. What can be done about the situation?

d. Who could be of assistance in this matter?

e. What role do the students have in all of this?

What can be done to provide equitable sports programs?

You are principal of a high school with over 900 students. The school has a full interschool athletic program for boys. The girls however, have only tennis and volleyball. Parents and womens' groups are requesting that you look into the situation. The girls have recently asked coaches if they could try out for the teams; the coaches told the girls to see you.

a. How do you proceed?

b. What should you do about the parent requests? the girls' requests?

c. Who should be involved in the discussions? the decisions?

What censorship power does the school have over student publications? Part I

Spectrum was the school-sponsored newspaper at Hazelwood East High School in Missouri. It was published six times per semester and included stories of interest to students and written by students in the Journalism II class. The paper was sold during lunch periods for 25 cents per copy in the high school "commons" area. The newspaper staff was restricted to students in Journalism II -- and most of the work on the paper was done in class. Students could get a pass to leave class to do research and investigation, and they did some work outside of class just as they did homework for other classes. Spectrum was an integral part of the Journalism II class and not akin to an extracurricular activity, such as student council, sports, or cheerleading.

The Journalism teacher was in charge of the paper. He was the final authority with respect to almost every aspect of the production and publication of Spectrum, including its content. Board policy required that a copy of each issue be submitted to the high school principal before sending it to the printer. The board policy was quite specific in regard to guidelines for submission and evaluation of materials.

The principal deleted two articles from the May 13, 1983 issue of Spectrum without consulting the teacher or students. One article consisted of the personal accounts of three Hazelwood East girls who were pregnant. Each girl discussed her reaction to becoming pregnant, her plans for the future, her relationship with her father, the reactions of her parents, and details about her sex life and use or non-use of birth control methods. Although fictitious names were used, the principal thought the girls might be identified. (There were about eight or ten pregnant girls in school at that time.) The other article the principal deleted dealt with the frequency and causes of divorce, as well as the effect of divorce on children. It included quotes from students (not identified by name), giving their perceptions of why their parents got divorced. The principal thought the stories constituted an invasion of privacy in that the parents of the students involved did not give their consent to the article nor were they provided an opportunity to present their side of the story.

The students claimed that the newspaper was a public forum for free expression and brought suit, charging their First Amendment rights were violated. Continued in Part II.

What censorship power does the school have over student publications? Part II

To help you decide how the court would rule, consider A Legal Memorandum, by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, May 1992. It reports that the following factors are likely to increase the probability that courts will uphold school officials in exercising editorial control over student newspapers.

1. Financial support from the school.

2. Awarding student grades and academic credit.

3. Instruction rather than mere supervision by faculty.

4. Discretionary control over management issues by instructor regarding the paper, i.e. length, story assignments, printing arrangements, etc.

5. Time spent by students during regular school hours rather than during non-school times.

6. Regular editorial control by school officials, especially through rules and regulations adopted and publicized in advance.

7. School acceptance of responsibility for the contents of the paper, i.e. absence of a disclaimer that the contents do not necessarily represent the views of the school.

a. Predict the outcome of the Spectrum case.

b. Which of the NASSP factors did you take into account?

c. How would these factors influence off-campus publication by students? How about high school yearbooks?

d. Can an "underground" newspaper be banned by school officials?

How can priorities for school administration be decided? Part I

A group of central office supervisors are meeting to discuss professional development activities for administrators for the upcoming school year. They have brainstormed and arrived at the following list of topics for consideration.

School Environment

School-based Decision-making

Budgeting

Curriculum Design

Staff Personnel

Assemblies

Master Schedule

Irate Parents

School Health Program

School Guidance

Science Fairs

School-wide Discipline Plans

Parent-teacher Organizations

Textbook Selection

Classified Personnel

Fighting in school

Fire Drills

Vandalism

Maintenance

Security

Open House

Legal Concerns

How can priorities for school administration be decided? Part II

Food Service	School Sponsored Events
Transportation	Confrontations
Politics	Student Teachers
Appraisal of Teachers	Lockers
Substitute Teachers	Vandalism
Administration of Pupil Personnel	Volunteers

a. Narrow the list to the ten most important topics for presentation to the area's new principals.

b. Separate and prioritize the list into three different lists; early elementary, middle school and secondary school. Are the most important concerns the same for all levels?

c. Should any areas of concern be added?

d. How would the list change if professional development activities were being planned for teachers instead of principals?

Summary

This paper advocates the use of the case method to teach concepts of school administration to educators entering public school administration. To begin, the case method was defined and differentiated from other terms and purposes. Next, an early history of case methodology offered a possible explanation for why the method took hold in law and business but not education college instruction. Various methods of instructional delivery were then compared so the advantages and disadvantages of case-based instruction became apparent. Several perspectives of case methodology, planning and implementation were examined to further describe this methodology. A program using student-generated case studies was presented to show the wide range of practical application of the method. Finally, the use of discussion-starters was explained. The use of discussion-starters is suggested for inclusion in graduate educational administration coursework, such as:

Introduction to Educational Administration

School Finance

School Housing and Facilities

Personnel Administration

School Law

Instructional Supervision

The Principalship

The Superintendency

School Community Relations

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