Case Study Framework

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Working with Cases

- A case depicts a complicated situation designed to closely resemble real life

- There are usually multiple issues in the case, which are not necessarily apparent; you have to determine what is important

- Often there is a significant amount of information that you do not need; sifting through this information is required

Drawing Case Conclusions

- Sometimes there is only one 'right' answer to an issue

- Often an issue has a range of 'right' answers, which are reasonable given the assumptions and arguments that you make

- Not every "best practice" you've studied will be applicable to every case

- Some discussion of standards and "best practice" will always be necessary

Case Reporting Outline

Major Elements of a Case Analysis

1. Context description
2. Identification and description of key stakeholders
   - Needs, priorities, interests for each stakeholder group
   - Potential (or current) conflicts among stakeholder groups
3. Issue/problem identification
4. Issue analysis (for each problem identified)
   - Relevant standards, criteria or "best practices" (including mission-related criteria)
   - Information holes
   - Recommendations with rationale
5. Implications of case (for you, for practitioners in general)

Supporting Details

Understanding Context

Briefly describe the situation:

- What changes have occurred internally?
- What trends are affecting the organization?
- What aspects of the situation are unusual, challenging or of particular interest?
- How do organizational priorities and mission influence the context?

Understanding the Issue or Problem

- State each major problem or issue. To do this it might be helpful to ask: "What consequences are likely to occur if nothing is done about…?"

- Generally, there are several issues in a case; your task is to identify the priority challenge (the issue that will have the greatest impact on mission delivery)

- For our purposes, focus on an issue that is related to a course theme

Analyzing the Issue

- State any "best practices" that are relevant to the issue (draw on readings as needed)

- What are the viable options for responding to the issue?

- Keep everything basic; don't get bogged down by excessive detail

- What information gaps do you need to fill?

Making Recommendations

- The most important part of the analysis is not whether your recommendations are "right," but the strength of your rationale

- Recommendations should be feasible in terms of implementation costs, organizational culture, available information, and technical complexity

- Make concrete, clear recommendations

- Give rationale for each recommendation

Identifying Implications

- What do *you* learn from this case? What lessons might you apply over the course of your career?

- What valuable lessons can practitioners learn from this case?