# How do you Design a Case?

## Plan

### Consider the purpose.

- How is the case going to be used?
  - exam question
  - individual assignment
  - group discussion
  - group project
  - practice
  - learn new topics

### Consider the objectives.

- What will students gain?
  - Assessment: collects, analyze, interpret data
  - Planning: form goals, objectives, choose intervention/services for care plan
  - Implementation: activate care plan
  - Evaluation: appraise effectiveness of intervention and professional competence

- Allow students to explore primary areas in your discipline,
  - Clinical
  - Education
  - Administration
  - Research
  - Policy
  - Ethics

### Consider level of difficulty.

- Should the case be straightforward or complex?

### Consider what level of thinking you want from the students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Knowledge/Comprehension</td>
<td>- One course or activity is not sufficient, build in several opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Application</td>
<td>- It takes time, so it is better to build activities into a whole program, so that it can develop over time, through experience with challenging content.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Critical Thinking: analyze, synthesize, evaluating, recommending</td>
<td>- Students should be aware of the expectation.</td>
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## Prepare

### Imagine situations.

- Think of several real situations, then pick the best.
  - go talk to people: colleagues, clients
  - examine current events
  - video clips
  - government decisions or policies

### Find necessary details

- Sometimes it is necessary to go and find out details. Students need sufficient background to be able to identify with the situation.
  - relevant details about people: such as age, gender, culture, socio-economic status
  - relevant details about the environment (ex. Private, Public)
  - if appropriate, details about how the problem arose

### Consider teaching methods to prepare students.

- Will you need workshop, activities or handouts?
  - Are the students used to this kind of learning?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Write</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose the point of view.</td>
<td>Usually write the case from the point of view of the decision maker</td>
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</table>
| Choose what facts to include. | Include relevant facts needed to understand the situation and make a decision.  
  - Do not distort real facts, but do disguise real people. |
| Choose the writing style. | Use the ‘active voice’ because it is more dynamic, and takes less space.  
  - “She did it.” rather than “It was done.” |
| Decide how the case will be delivered. | Will the case be given all at once?  
  Will the case be divided up and given one part at a time? |
| Decide if you will include any materials. | • Resources (materials, suggested readings, websites)  
  • List of Learning Goals (it may be best to give these after they have worked on the case)  
  • Instructor's Guide: if more than one person is using the case to teach the same thing, it gives the objectives, the main anticipated issues, possible questions |
| Choose a title. | This will make it easier to refer to the case. |
| Decide how the student will be assessed and write clear instructions. | How much is it worth in grades?  
  How much time should it take?  
  - Exam: multiple choice or short answer  
  - essay, research summary  
  - presentation, group work |
| Revise                 |                                      |
| Revise.               | • Remove unnecessary words or phrases to make the case more clear and exciting, avoid jargon.  
  • Label charts, tables and appendices and identify them in the case.  
  • Make sure that it is clear to the student what is an opinion and what is a fact.  
  • Change any real names and locations.  
  *see checklist for additional points* |
| Present to the students.  
  Revise again! | • You will only know if it is a good case after you have given it to your students! |

Adapted by Erika Kustra, McMaster University (2008) from resources including:
