

## THE PROMISE AND PERIL OF VIDEO CASES: REFLECTIONS ON THEIR CREATION AND USE

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Jeanne Liedtka  
*University of Virginia*

Video has long been an important tool in case method classrooms. Yet its use has primarily been supplemental to written case materials as, for example, in the Harvard Business School videos of case protagonists doing classroom questions-and-answers. Several years ago, a group of faculty colleagues and I at the University of Virginia's Darden School became interested in the possibilities represented by stand-alone video cases in which the heart of the story would be contained in the video, and written material would be used as supplemental, if at all. Over the past 3 years, we have experimented with the creation and teaching of two different case series, totaling six individual video cases.<sup>1</sup> In this process, we have learned much about the promise and peril of the video case as a learning tool. Having now taught these cases to both MBA and executive education audiences, we have been impressed with what we see as the potential of the video cases as a powerful learning tool and the significant differences in the challenges that they present, both in their creation and in their use in the classroom, relative to the traditional written cases that we have used throughout our teaching careers. This article describes that journey and offers insights gained along the way into the creation and use of these videos, based on the author's own anecdotal observations. In writing it, I have given special emphasis to those areas in which our

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past experiences as case writers and teachers had not prepared us well for the challenges posed by video cases.

### THE IMPETUS FOR THE CREATION OF VIDEO CASES

We set out to create the video cases with a number of objectives in mind, some shared by the two series, others unique to each. Each series was comprised of three individual cases that, taken together, represented a module on a particular theme. The first series focused on managing professional service firms; the second on the development of strategic thinking skills. Both series were designed to be largely stand-alone cases, captured on video, rather than merely video supplements to written cases. Each represented a different kind of case—the professional service firm cases, created for a single company executive program, were primarily illustrative cases, profiling the practices of a set of high performers in the fields of law, medicine, and investment banking. The strategic thinking case series, created for our MBA program, was comprised of decision-making cases aimed at providing students with the necessary information to develop hypotheses and create proposals for the study of particular strategic issues.

In both of the series, we hoped to move beyond the rigor/relevance trade-off that seemed inherent in the choice between the use of traditional written cases and the use of outside speakers. These outside speakers were real to our students—they were usually lively, engaging, and full of anecdotes and advice. They were a great antidote to classroom ennui. They were also (from a faculty perspective) often unpredictable and sometimes simplistic, other times too sophisticated for our students to grasp. It was difficult to build a rigorous teaching plan around them, so we tended to sprinkle them in, in small doses throughout the semester, rather like a dessert that was too rich except for a special occasion.

Our traditional cases, on the other hand, were more precise, coherent, and controllable than were speakers. Their flights did not get delayed, nor did they digress from their assigned topic. Yet, this same orderliness and precision made them seem artificial and contrived. Questions raised by colleagues in the strategy field, such as Mintzberg (1990), about how well these cases prepared our students for the messiness and complexity of the real world troubled us. With practicing managers in executive programs, this seemed less critical. Our MBAs, however, often saw black and white where seasoned managers saw gray, and we worried that our traditional cases and the debates that we encouraged exacerbated this dichotomizing tendency. Yet, our commitment to student-centered learning viewed faculty lectures as a poor substitute for either traditional cases or outside speakers.

Video cases seemed to offer the promise of a better solution. First, our students seemed to like video—they were comfortable with the medium and found it unthreatening and fun, if skillfully done. Hunter (1990) noted the ability of video to offer students a “transcendent” experience—one that transports them across space and time to create a sense of engagement with the speaker and subject rarely achieved with the written page. Thus, we saw great potential in interviewing real managers in depth, in their work environments, about their handling of a live issue. In doing this, we hoped to enhance students’ learning by engaging them more deeply in the subject matter under discussion. Through the editing process, which we describe in greater detail later in this article and which proved to be especially critical in meeting our pedagogical objectives, we could categorize and sort to make the profiled manager’s thoughts more accessible to students. Our challenge was to edit in a way that preserved each manager’s unique approach to viewing and describing his or her world. We could also incorporate various viewpoints on the same subject. We acknowledge that such editing did interject us into the process in a way that made the resulting videos less than perfectly authentic. In doing this, however, our goal was to incorporate a more realistic kind of messy complexity than traditional cases offered, but in a way that educated students without overwhelming them. This tension proved more difficult to manage than we anticipated.

Another possibility that we saw in video cases had to do with our desire to increase our students’ facility with the process of talk itself. The belief that verbal interaction is developmental is central to the philosophy of student-centered learning and the case method. As Elmsore observes in his foreword to *Education for Judgment: The Artistry of Discussion Mastery* (Christensen, Garvin, & Sweet, 1991), “We have knowledge only as we actively participate in its construction. Students do so by engaging, with each other and with the teacher, in a process of inquiry, critical discourse, and problem solving” (p. xii). One of the earliest works on case method teaching describes what case teachers fervently believe—that “wisdom can’t be told” (Gragg, 1954). Yet, our concerns have grown of late with the extent to which the talk that we engage in in our classrooms is primarily debate-oriented rather than inquiry-driven. As Senge (1990) points out, advocacy (debate) and inquiry are very different ways of conversing. In inquiry mode, we not only listen more carefully, we listen differently. In advocacy mode, students listen to evaluate and to rebut other’s views that differ from their own. In inquiry mode, we listen first to understand and to see the possibilities in alternative views rather than to evaluate. Brownell (1994) asserts that effective listening has multiple components: understanding, interpreting, and evaluating are all distinct and critical aspects of a good listener’s skill set. We hoped that by concentrating

explicitly on the development and practice of their listening skills via the video cases, rather than the reading comprehension skills encouraged by written cases, students could learn to listen more carefully and less judgmentally to each other as well as to the characters in the case.

Yet another objective was to create a set of teaching materials that offered flexibility beyond the usual 60- to 90-minute classroom session preceded by several hours of preparation time. Such a goal necessitated material that could support lengthier discussions without the requirement for significant individual preparation preceding it. The growth of our executive education program, and its extensive use of daylong sessions devoted to particular topics, increasingly required such material. Finally, there was an economy due to multiple usage that attracted us. We wanted to create teaching experiences that, unlike speakers, were replicable across time and in multiple places, as traditional cases were. We wanted our material to be usable off the shelf by other interested faculty, and supported by the same kind of detailed teaching notes that accompanied the written cases in our bibliography.

On a more specific level, we had differing objectives for the two case series. In the illustrative cases that we created on the professional services firms, we wanted to capture and unpack a set of best practices in each profiled firm. Having understood how these practices worked together to create a competitive advantage for these firms, we wanted participants to then examine the applicability of these practices to their own organizational context. And finally, we hoped that our executives would walk away inspired and motivated to act in new ways, having listened to and discussed these success stories.

Our goals for the MBA cases on strategic thinking were quite different. Here, we wanted our classrooms to function as *virtual worlds*, borrowing from Schon's (1983) use of that term, as contexts for practice. We believed that the quality of the practice provided was in part a function of the authenticity and richness of the practice world that we created with our cases.

With these objectives in mind then (some articulated, others understood fully only as we progressed), we set out to create video cases, armed with the optimism of the uninformed.

## Creating the Video Cases

Our initial experiences with the production of the case series taught us a valuable set of lessons about the level of time and expense involved, the particular challenges of the editing and storytelling processes, the selection of actors, and the difficulty in conveying certain types of content.

### CASE SERIES ONE: THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

The first video series featured a cross-section of partners from three well-regarded professional services firms discussing what partnership in the firm meant to them personally, how it contributed to the firm's performance, and how it was sustained through the firm's values, systems, and processes. In creating these videos, we were fortunate to have the sponsorship of the organization for which the executive education course was being designed. The sponsoring organization worked with Darden faculty to select the organizations to be the case studies. All of the organizations selected were current clients of the sponsoring firm. The sponsoring organization also hired a New York-based production firm, with state-of-the-art equipment and significant video production experience, to produce the video. The New York firm handled the filming, transcription, and physical editing of the cases. Darden faculty created the interview guide, conducted the on-site interviews, and made all editorial decisions during the editing process. We were later to develop an appreciation of what a great burden had been lifted from our shoulders by having such experienced professionals handle the production details.

At each organization, we conducted approximately 2 days of taping, which was reduced over a series of three editing passes to a video case of approximately 30 minutes in length on each firm. Though we did not pay the bill, we estimate that the final cost of each 30-minute video approached \$20,000, without accounting for the faculty time invested.

### CASE SERIES TWO: STRATEGIC THINKING

Impressed with the classroom interaction stimulated by the first video series, we were intrigued by the idea of using video cases to create the kind of decision-oriented, rather than purely illustrative, case that we typically used in our MBA classes. We were in the process of redesigning the required MBA strategy course to be delivered approximately 6 months later and were interested in emphasizing the topic of strategic thinking in the revision. A series of video cases built around particular consulting assignments handled by the major strategy consulting firms would provide very useful teaching material for such an emphasis, we felt. Each case would open with members of the client organization discussing what they saw as the strategic issue before them and why they chose to call in the consulting firm. Industry and product information would be provided as needed. The next clip would feature the consulting team describing how they defined the issue and structured the consulting engagement to address it. The final piece returned to the client team for their views on the final impact of the strategic advice on the firm's decision, an

update on what had happened since, and their sense of the new strategic issues on the horizon.

Funding was not available at a level to support the use of an outside production company. At Darden, we were fortunate to have our own excellent (though small, with a full-time staff of three) audio-visual group. Thus, the second video case series was created in-house. Through the school's relationships, we persuaded three consulting firms to select one engagement each, and to obtain their own client's permission to participate. Somewhat to our surprise, obtaining access was not significantly more difficult than in our experiences with written cases. In fact, most organizations were intrigued by the idea of being videotaped. All asked for copies, and some of the firms have gone on to use the final videos for their own internal purposes.

Arranging and completing the taping also went much as it had with the first series. It was really only when we got to the editing stage that we began to appreciate the challenges of in-house production. Though talented and committed, our in-house staff lacked the sophisticated equipment of the New York production firm and had multiple commitments on their time. This made the production of the second series far more time intensive for the faculty involved and dramatically increased the effort involved in producing new versions. This, in turn, put a premium on getting the edits right the first time around. Our limited experience base as novices with video made this difficult. In-house production did allow us, however, to produce all three video cases with a budget of under \$20,000, again, without accounting for faculty time.

#### THE CHALLENGES OF THE CASE-WRITING PROCESS

Broadly viewed, our creation of the video cases encompassed the same sequence of steps that we followed in writing traditional cases. We began with a sense of our teaching objectives, using these to create a set of criteria for selecting the case to be profiled. Next, we contacted potential sponsors, interviewed them, produced a draft, revised it, and finally created a finished product that we took to the profiled organizations for their approval. Although the steps were the same, we discovered that the skills, timelines, and success factors involved in each step were often very different than in our experiences with written cases.

Colleagues have asked us what we would do differently if we could do it over again. The following three answers, in particular, came to mind: (a) develop a clearer sense of the time, money, and challenges involved with video versus written cases, especially in the editing process; (b) select our actors more carefully; and (c) recognize the limitations of the video format.

Reflecting on the creation of both of the video series, perhaps the most consistent theme would be our underestimation of the time, difficulty, and expense involved. My impetus to capture and share our experiences in this article was in part a recognition of how valuable such information would have been to us as neophytes. The additional time and expense involved in taping the interviews was something that we planned for; our experience base drawn from writing traditional cases, however, proved to be especially inadequate in preparing us for the rigors of the video editing process. As in written cases, multiple edits, we now know, are a fact of life in video production. The New York professionals warned us in advance that we should expect to do no less than three revisions to our original script. Unfazed, we initially attributed their emphasis on multiple edits to their commercial focus and lack of appreciation for our story-writing skills, honed in writing traditional cases. In the end, only a lack of time prevented us from doing a fourth revision.

The editing process itself was far more challenging than we had found it to be working with written cases, however. It was made complex by the fact that it was difficult for us, lacking experience, to develop a sense of how the finished product would flow, merely by reading the transcript. We often selected individual passages that proved, when viewed, to be too long—often because of the pacing and pausing of the speaker. Yet when read on the transcript, these passages seemed sufficiently succinct. It was also possible to cut passages too short, however, with the resulting effect being jumpy—fragmented bursts of seemingly disjointed sound bites—and lively but incoherent in their flow. You could make a clean cut, we found, where participants dropped their voice and paused. Yet, in series one, we had more than 20 hours of tape of each organization and lengthy transcripts that did not show inflections and pauses. It was a process of trial, error, and iteration. We needed to actually see the revised product to develop a sense of whether the individual clips worked together.

We discovered that technology really mattered. The physical re-creation of the tape was relatively straightforward using the New York firm's computerized process. Our in-house process, on the other hand, necessitated the physical recutting of a new tape with each revision, a time- and labor-intensive process. Equally unsettling was the realization that missing pieces, or holes, in the needed material that were discovered as we looked at a work-in-progress, were far more difficult to patch than in our written cases.

Our story-writing skills were also tested in new ways by the video process. Taylor (1988) observes that we, as an audience, have been conditioned by television's advertising breaks to watch intensely for short intervals. In defining what constitutes good video, Bunch (1986) notes that most people prefer "near-constant motion." Smith (1991) agrees, arguing that a "fatigue factor"

comes into play after only about 10 seconds if the image on the screen remains constant. Salomon (1979) assails the usage of video in a format that he refers to as "photographed radio"—or talking heads in the more familiar vernacular—the CEO speech, or the expert in the armchair. The professionals that we worked with warned us that the attention span of the average audience was only 15 minutes long, and that brief sound bites of multiple speakers and background shots intermixed were preferable to staying with the same speaker. Thinking of the many pages that strategy cases often run, we chose to ignore this warning with the creation of one case in particular. Confident of the high quality of the material in this particular tape, we created a tape that ran for 40 minutes and featured a single speaker. We still recall the ashen face of our teaching assistant who sat through the first run of the tape with a large group of students. "It got pretty rowdy after about 20 minutes," he explained, "and I really think you need to be there to maintain order." Forced to acknowledge the unpleasant reality that entertainment value could not be ignored, we took version two down to 22 minutes with much better results in terms of sustaining student interest. But for veteran case writers trained in a philosophy of "let the student separate the wheat from the chaff," this was a difficult step for us to take, and we took on a new less-is-more philosophy with great reluctance. Throughout the editing process, we struggled to find the right balance in the tension between pushing to extend our students' listening capacity against the risk of losing their interest altogether.

### SELECTING THE ACTORS

We also came to realize in hindsight that giving careful forethought to who appeared on screen, our actors, was key. Series one featured partners from our professional service firms in the fields of law, medicine, and investment banking. The individuals profiled were selected by each firm as representative of the views of the larger partnership. With few exceptions, these professionals were articulate and dressed for success. They looked and sounded very polished, and seemed to engage and hold the attention of our students more easily than some of the managers in the second video series. These managers often had equally valuable insights and information, but students were easily distracted, at times, by their mannerisms, speech patterns, or appearance. This reaction by our students was troubling to us in that it seemed to demonstrate the triumph of form over substance. It also created an opportunity, however, to have a conversation about the kind of unarticulated assumptions that they brought to their listening strategies and the kind of unintended consequences that these assumptions might have on their behav-



ior as managers, a topic to which we turn later in this article. My point here is not that we should select only the most engaging speakers but that we should realize that speaker issues, other than the content of what they say, has an impact on how students listen.

Related to this, and brought to the forefront by the use of video, were issues of race and gender. More so than in written cases in which the race of case protagonists, for instance, is often not even identified, women and students of color wanted to talk about why a largely white male group of professionals appeared on our videos. Accustomed to narrowing our discussion to the course-content-prescribed topic (e.g., the selection of a product/market strategy), we were initially unprepared to talk about the broader set of issues raised. Our first reaction when challenged was to express regret that the featured speakers were not more representative of the class composition and to note that they were selected based on the content of the case and the relevance of their views. Not surprisingly, the concerned students found this answer unsatisfying. The issue remains and continues to reduce the value of the teaching materials with more diverse audiences, though I am now more proactive in acknowledging this deficit before I begin to play the first video clip. It is a problem that I have found very difficult to deal with effectively once the video has been created, however, and not giving more deliberate thought to actively seeking out a set of case protagonists that better reflected the demographics of our student body in advance, we missed a significant opportunity to better engage these students. This has increased the sense of urgency that we feel today to create new materials that mirror more accurately the composition of our classes.

#### LIMITATIONS WITH VIDEO FORMAT

There were also some specific limitations to the video format that we discovered. First, we found that the students' limited attention span made data particularly difficult to deliver. Relative to written materials, video worked best, we discovered, when the complexities in the case were on the people side. It built sympathy for the case protagonist and made each a real person to students. When the complexity was quantitative in nature, written materials seemed more effective, though they could be supplemented with video that humanized the case. In cases in which particular pieces of detailed information were critical, we eventually came to supplement the video cases with written materials. For instance, in one of the strategy cases whose topic was the indirect auto lending business, it was apparent that students would need some detailed information about the sale and lease of automobiles over at

least a 5-year period. We felt that it would be impossible to deliver this information effectively using video alone. This material was placed in a written introduction to the case that students received before coming to class. More broadly, because the amount of data needed to intelligently answer a question is often considerable in a field such as strategy, we have developed a view that video seems to be especially effective in case situations in which the central challenge is framing the issue and outlining a process to address it.

Using a video format also required that we consider the extent to which the look of the final product really concerned both our students and the organizations featured in the cases. Our notion of quality in written cases was comprised of the accuracy of the information and the teaching effectiveness of the material. Quality in our video world now included the clarity of the picture, the music, the lighting—all of which were scrutinized in the permission-granting process. Even the teaching effectiveness of the material itself, as we have noted, appeared to be influenced by the professional look (or “slickness” as described by one reviewer of this article) of the video. Thinking back, we started off on our video adventure with a naive belief that we could always take our home video cameras along and work with them, if we needed to—producing a kind of *Blair Witch Project* effect. Perhaps in other contexts that might be workable, but that would not, we learned, have been a feasible approach with our students and case sponsors.

Video materials also become dated more quickly, we discovered. The leisure suits and wide ties of the past have been replaced today by the black turtlenecks and small spectacles of the late 1990s. We can guarantee that the students of tomorrow will find the latter as hilarious as we find the former. Trendy clothing, language, and even references to current events can all date a video case, and we now avoid these as much as possible in an effort to better ensure the kind of long life that many of our favorite written cases have enjoyed.

To summarize our experiences with the creation of video cases, we have found them to be considerably more time-consuming, expensive, and difficult to create than written cases. The sophistication of the available equipment and the experience base with video production makes a significant difference. Careful forethought about the selection of managers and the pedagogical purpose of the case are key. These concerns raise the following questions: Are they worth it? Do video cases accomplish in the classroom what written cases cannot?

## Teaching With Video Cases

Video cases, I have come to believe, can be extraordinarily powerful teaching tools. They can inspire and motivate as no written case can. They can ground abstract concepts in the reality of real managers' day-to-day experiences and convey emotion and passion too compelling to disregard, regardless of the logic of the decision in play. They can create significant flexibility in a teaching plan and ease the burden of preparation for class considerably. They can also bore students to tears, entertain without educating, and become a source of unintentional comic relief to students and frustration to faculty.

### LEARNING TO TEACH USING VIDEOS

The successful use of video in the classroom requires new skills on the part of both faculty and students, beyond just mastering the projection equipment. Our first teaching experiences using the video cases that we had created held as many surprises as the process of creating them. In particular, the challenges and possibilities around work on listening skills emerged as critical.

At the outset, we greatly overestimated our students' listening skills, even with attention paid to video length. I soon learned that it was important not only to break the video down into bite-sized chunks (I now try to stop the video for interim discussions every 10 minutes or so), but also to give students explicit coaching on listening skills as well. I was stunned the first time that I played one of our new video cases for our MBA class and most students never picked up a pen to take a note for its entire duration; I should not have been. As one reviewer of this article noted,

Students, through their passive watching of television, have learned not to be active viewers of motion pictures and television. To some degree, for students to learn from video cases and films, they have to be taught how to "see" things. When Yogi Berra moved from being a baseball player to managing the New York Yankees, he was asked what was the difference between the two jobs. He answered, "Before, I used to watch players, now I have to see them."

Before playing a video case today, I ask students to jot down points of particular interest to them, as they hear them. "You don't get a second pass with a yellow highlighter, as in written cases," I will remind them.

I have also learned to ask students what they will be listening and looking for before I play the tape. The specific teaching objective dictates the nature

of this listening coaching. Teaching one of the illustrative cases, for instance, I will often introduce a new concept and ask students to listen for its relevance to the discussion at hand. In a problem-solving case, on the other hand, I expect students to develop their own hypotheses about the issues and to listen to test these as the case unfolds.

As with written cases, I find that faculty mastery of the details is key. If a critical point fails to emerge during a discussion, I often find myself prompting students with a question such as “Dr. X made the point that . . . What do you think she meant by that?”

### LISTENING IN INQUIRY MODE

I also ask students what they heard and saw when we turn the tape off before going on to discuss or evaluate it. Beyond enhanced listening skills, I have come to believe that our students need a new listening mind-set. The use of video cases has confirmed my fears, already noted, that I too often use the case method primarily to train my students to be debaters and assessors. They consistently listen to evaluate—to find flaws that might allow them to refute the speakers (or each other’s) points. Although this might make for lively class discussions, I have come to suspect that unchecked, this quality will not make effective managers and change agents, let alone inspiring and imaginative leaders. In an attempt to deal with this, I play the video in segments and force an explicit debrief discussion after a portion of video has been played, asking students to first listen to understand the speaker’s meaning and intention, the assumptions underlying that position, and the possibilities that such a position might hold. This is, of course, possible to do with written cases, but easier to accomplish in real time in the classroom through video. For instance, in the strategy series, I turn the video off after the client has presented his or her analysis of the problem. Before playing the next portion in which the consultants share their approach, I ask students to do the following:

1. Describe what they understand to be the client’s definition of the strategic issue.
2. Ask them to explore why they think the client sees the issue that way—how do the client’s experiences and assumptions contribute to that definition?
3. Develop their own hypotheses about what they think the real issue is.
4. Ask them to develop a plan for testing their hypotheses.

In doing this, my aim is to develop in students, and help them to facilitate in others, the ability to think more deeply about how each of us frames an issue, and to think more creatively about both the framing of the problem and its potential solutions, not just more critically. Holding the impulse to evaluate at bay long enough to explore the ideas of others is critical, and the

unfolding nature of video case discussions can provide an excellent opportunity to practice this approach.

Finally, my colleagues and I have developed a sense that to do a little video in a course may be as problematic as to do a little case method. The new skills that we have identified improve only with continued practice, and mastery requires more than occasional exposure.

#### **DIFFERENCES IN MBA AND EXECUTIVE RESPONSES**

With the two case series described here, I have experienced differences between the use of video cases with executive education versus MBA audiences. In my experience, executive education students have been more receptive to video cases. They have been more willing to look for possibilities in new approaches than are our MBA students, at least in the fields of strategy and change management in which I have taught these video materials. Executives often seem to prefer best-practice to problem cases, welcome relief from preparing multiple cases in the evening, are more tolerant of our video managers' mannerisms, and have better developed listening skills. Perhaps because they bring real problems in need of solutions and identify more with the managers on tape, executives have found the video cases especially valuable.

My MBAs have been more varied in their responses. For some students, the ability to grasp the details presented on video falls significantly below that of written cases. Students whose first language is not English can be especially challenged. Yet I have had considerable success using these videos in teaching situations in both Europe and Asia. Interestingly, my foreign students with a reasonably good facility in English have little trouble with our video protagonists from the Midwest—their speech appears to be the most comfortably paced and easily understood. Other speakers may require more careful debriefing when the video is turned off. When teaching students less facile with English, or in a mixed competency group, I offer to distribute a written transcript of the video (contained in the teaching notes) before class to those who are interested.

In addition, the more rigid time slotting of our MBA program into a series of single 90-minute sessions makes the flexibility that videos can provide more difficult to capitalize on. It is difficult, I believe, to adequately case teach (meaning to engage class participants in a student-centered discussion) a video that is 30 minutes long in a traditional 90-minute class. Thus, I tend to reserve the use of the video cases discussed here for double sessions, or try to use them across a number of single sessions that occur close together. Finally, perhaps because of frequent exposure to commercial video, our students

seemed to have especially high expectations for the look of the video and to be more cynical about its content.

One incident, in particular, stands out in my mind as a student in the contrasts between the two audiences. In the professional services video featuring physicians, one of the doctors attempts to explain the values that he and his colleagues share. He says, "The purpose of medicine is to take care of people. And care means more than an appointment or a bottle of pills or an ointment, it means . . . (long pause as he struggles to find the right word) to care." We had taught this case to executives on numerous occasions and the response was always the same—the silence as the young physician paused was full of anticipation. When he finally says, "to care," it is with such a mixture of frustration and emotion—that the answer is so obvious and yet so difficult to achieve—that the effect produced in the classroom is one of the most powerful moments of the film. The first time we played the tape for our MBA students (in two sections meeting in separate classrooms at the same time), a whole group of students in each section laughed out loud when he said, "to care." I half expected someone to shout, "Buy a thesaurus!" This so horrified us the first time that it happened that the faculty were literally speechless. We now expect it and have learned to probe for why they laugh.

## Final Thoughts

In summarizing our experiences to date, we have found both significant promise and potential perils in the creation and use of video cases. Their creation is not for the faint of heart or the short of capital (both human and financial). They are not the universal solution for classroom ennui across all subjects. They cannot be taught in the same way as traditional cases, nor are many students' skill sets currently well suited to maximizing their learning potential.

On the other hand, the best of them can be spectacular. They have the potential to be powerful and memorable. They have enlivened my classroom discussions with the richness and complexity of real people and encouraged the development of critical skills that we have often ignored. They may cost more, but we think that they are worth it.

### A NEW SET OF QUESTIONS

Perhaps the most interesting set of questions arising from our personal experiences with the creation and teaching of video cases relates to what our experiences with video might portend about the use of the array of new technologies on the horizon. Given the pace of innovation in technology today,

the video case is most likely a way station on the road to another medium. The CD medium and new Web-based technology present dramatically new possibilities and have become a central focus for case development efforts in our institution. These formats allow the incorporation of video and text more efficiently and make them usable outside of the classroom. Even more compelling, they allow the instructor to shape the flow of the discussion as he or she and their students' see fit, and to access the video material in the order that makes sense in the discussion at hand rather than the order preordained by the video's creator. CD-ROMs and Web technology will both make it increasingly easy for students to view the video on their home computers in advance of class, much the same way as traditional cases are prepared today, especially as increased bandwidth becomes available. Such enhancements surely open up dramatically new possibilities for the kinds of discussions that we create in our classrooms. Distance learning of an entirely different kind is also becoming a reality; the use of videoconferencing has increased significantly already at our school. In some ways, our enthusiasm for this high-tech future might be constrained only by the fact that we still seem to have problems getting our low-tech VCRs to play properly when we need them to—making us wary of trusting a whole teaching plan to the vagaries of our in-classroom computers.

Yet, these possibilities raise important new questions as well. How do we keep student interest engaged and sustain in-depth exploration of our admittedly sometimes less-than-exciting topics when not only the case, but the instructor himself or herself, is a talking head? How do we maintain, in this digitized visual world, the inevitable tension between education and entertainment in a way that enlivens education without creating an MTV version of a strategy class?

Case method teaching, I believe, is intensely interpersonal. How do we sustain that sense of a learning community over physical distance when we all appear on screens to each other? For example, I find myself ambivalent about the technology that will allow my students to watch the video at home by themselves rather than as part of our community in the classroom, in a way that introduces a time lag between seeing and responding. The vividness of video, I suspect, comes in part from its immediacy. Rather like food heated in a microwave rather than a conventional oven, it gets hotter faster but seems to cool more quickly. I confess myself to be perplexed, standing on the verge of this great frontier, about what it all means to both how and why I teach. What does seem clear, based on our experiences with video, is that the ongoing arrival of new technologies will continue to confront us, as educators, with new sets of challenges to master.

## Note

1. All of the teaching materials discussed in this article are available through the Case Clearinghouse at the University of Virginia's Darden Graduate School of Business Administration, Charlottesville, VA 22906-6550; phone: (804) 924-3009.

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