

Do We Have the Time for the Case Method?

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What is the role of temporality in the case method? This perspective essay argues that it is important to differentiate between 'chronological' time and 'logical' time, as psychoanalysts do, in the attempt to account for both the 'objective' and 'subjective experience' of time. The link between management and psychoanalysis is facilitated by the fact that they both use the case method and the case as a unit of cognition. The notion of time in psychoanalysis does not necessarily move forward since both 'anticipation' and 'retroaction', as modes of subjective processing, are important to understand and to make sense of how the psyche infers causality through modes of temporality, that are referred to as 'inter-subjective' time. In order to teach decision making of strategic import therefore, through the case method, the class must be able to traverse all the three important logical moments in inter-subjective time. These three logical moments are: 'the moment of seeing', 'the period of understanding', and the 'instant of concluding'. It is important for a decision maker to be able to traverse all these three stages without getting fixated on any of the logical moments, and understand the resolve to act as a function of this inter-dependent logical sequence. This is the 'decisiveness' which instructors and participants in a case analysis must try to pick up through the process of learning strategic decision making through the case method

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