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Promise and Pitfalls: Case Studies and the Teaching of Ethics

Case studies are wonderful vehicles for media ethics discussions. However, when case studies are misused, some of their strengths actually become their fundamental weaknesses. Case studies are vehicles for an ethics discussion, but not its ultimate destination. During classroom use, it is easy to confuse "heat" with "light" in the give and take of a case study discussion. In this presentation I outline the common misconceptions of case studies as pedagogical tools and then propose two methods to use with any case study to maximize its effectiveness in the classroom.