



Knowledge to lead

Case Study

Developing a case study

This type of activity is suitable for both face-to-face and e-Learning contexts.

Structure

Case studies generally have four sections:

- Situation
- Problem
- Solution
- Evaluation

General guidelines

An effective case study is one that:

- tells an engaging and compelling story to learners
- raises thought-provoking issues
- provides meaningful insights about the characters and the context
- features elements of conflict and portrays actors in moments of decision
- encourages students to think, express their opinions and find potential solutions to problems



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Step by step

Planning stage

- Determine the area and/or issues you want to address
- Plan your analysis techniques and data gathering
- Whenever required, collect field data and carry out interviews
- Carry out evaluation and analysis of the collected data.

Writing stage

- Structure your case into different sections (e.g. introduction, background, description of problem or conflict situation, indication of possible solutions)
- Use a compelling style and present information so that learners are in a position to form their own opinion freely and are not bound by pre-determined solutions.

Implementation

- Introduce the case and provide learners with guidelines on how to approach it
- Make sure you break down the steps you want learners to take when analyzing the case
- Create groups and ensure everyone is involved
- Have groups present their solutions and opinions about the case; ask questions and encourage communication in order to stimulate a lively discussion
- Synthesize the issues raised and bring the strands of the discussion together so that learners can visualize the bigger picture of what they learnt.

Common problems with case study writing

- Lack of clear objectives
- Poor organization of content
- Lack of conciseness and presence of irrelevant/unnecessary information
- Lack of clarity or writing style that puts too much strain on the reader

Practical tips

- When planning your case study keep your audience in mind: consider what their interests are and what their knowledge of the subject is



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- Try to formulate the case problem in a few sentences: if it takes longer than that, it might be too complicated and therefore not easily understandable by learners
- Present your ideas logically
- Prepare thoroughly in order to be able to anticipate where students might encounter problems
- Write your case study using a compelling writing style and draw from short-story writing techniques: this will help keeping learners interested and involved
- Including conflicting situations or scenes is the most effective way to depict a problem: portraying characters in situations of contrast or disagreement stimulates learners to find potential solutions
- Describe characters who learners can empathize with and provide insights into their personality and reasons for behaving in a certain way
- If you present potential solutions, avoid suggesting that one might be preferred to the others
- Leave some questions open and keep readers challenged to find their own path and solutions.



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