CASE STUDY
Learning in context

Case study is a method that examines specific issues by analyzing a contextual scenario. It can be used to holistically introduce key concepts or learning topics, analyze circumstances, diagnose problems and propose solutions. Case studies are a way of concretely presenting theoretical concepts that might otherwise remain abstract. Case studies encourage the development of individual ideas and the understanding of diverse perspectives through participatory discussion and collaborative analysis. This method is related to storytelling but allows more control over the content.

Purpose: Information exchange

Group size: < 20, 21 - 50, 51 - 100, > 100

Duration: <30

Multilanguage fit: yes

Level of interaction: low

USE THIS METHOD:

- Demonstrate theoretical principles.
- Examine whole systems and communicate complexity.
- Understand real contexts.
- Explore solutions, generate hypotheses, compare challenges and analyze scenarios.

STEPS TO APPLY THE METHOD: ━━━━━━━

Preparation

1. Define the topic, the learning goals, and the learning outcomes of the learning activity.
2. Search for or design a case study relevant to the defined topic, learning objectives, and learning outcomes, which is thought-provoking for the audience. For example, the learning objectives for a case study could be to identify the differences, causes, or symptoms related to one or more cases.
   ○ Consider the following guidelines when preparing information and material for your case:
      ▪ Include an introductory paragraph, background information, an overview of the situation, and any additional key factual data.
      ▪ Incorporate pedagogical elements, such as risk factors or subtle details, to add authenticity.
      ▪ Create an engaging story by applying humor, descriptive dialogue, and characters that participants can relate to.
      ▪ Enrich your case study by incorporating additional visual or audio elements.
      ▪ Be sensitive when referring to specific country contexts.
      ▪ Write in clear and concise language. Try to keep the cases short.
      ▪ Avoid case studies of complex problems without viable solutions because this will create frustration.
3. Identify and define other methods to complement the case study. For example, the Role Play and Round Robin methods that include working in small groups can boost engagement while participants explore and find solutions to the case.
4. Design the learning activity combining your case study and the previously defined method for the available time of your online event.

5. Evaluate the length and complexity of the case and decide whether your participants need to familiarize themselves with it before the online event (variation 1) or not (variation 2).
   ○ If variation 1: Make the material available to your participants in advance and offer clear instructions for them to prepare.

Delivery

1. Present the learning activity, the complementary method (from step 3), and the procedure, including timings.
2. Present the case study to your participants.
   ○ Instruct participants to focus on identifying the problem before searching for solutions.
   ○ Instruct participants to cluster the possible solutions and rank them by quality to facilitate consensus-building.
3. Conclude with the following steps to consolidate the insights.

Recommendations

• Examine actual cases proposed by participants to enhance participation and provide practical solutions to challenges. Collect sufficient details and ensure that the issue discussed is relevant to everyone.
• Should you notice frustration by some participants with the lack of standard solutions, explain the participatory purpose of case studies in which various solutions and perspectives are acceptable.
• Five steps that guarantee effective use of the case study method:
  • Get a commitment from the participants to engage in the process actively,
  • Probe the conversations for evidence-based conclusions,
  • Reinforce positive ideas, approaches, and decisions throughout the learning activity,
  • Provide regular guidance about omissions,
  • Elicit a general principle that reflects the lessons learned.