



Case Study-Based Learning: Enhancing Learning through Immediate Application

What is a Case Study?

Case studies are a form of problem-based learning, where you present a situation that needs a resolution. The learner is given details about the situation, often in a historical context. The key players are introduced. Objectives and challenges are outlined. This is followed by specific examples and data, which the learner then uses to analyze the situation, determine what happened, and make recommendations.

A good case study makes the learner think critically about the information presented, and then develop a thorough assessment of the situation, leading to a well-thought-out solution or recommendation.

Remember these tips:

- Case studies tend to focus on why and how to apply a skill or concept, not on remembering facts and details. Use case studies when understanding the concept is more important than memorizing correct responses.
- Use case studies to build problem-solving skills, particularly those that are valuable when applied, but are likely to be used infrequently. This helps people get practice with these skills that they might not otherwise get.
- Case studies can be used to evaluate past problem solving. People can be asked what they'd do in that situation, and think about what could have been done differently.

Writing a Case Study

Here are some tips if you want to write your own case study:

- Write your case study as a structured story. The goal is to capture an interesting situation or challenge, and then bring it to life with words and information. You want the reader to feel a part of what's happening.
- Present information so that a "right" answer isn't obvious. The goal is to develop the learner's ability to analyze and assess, not necessarily to make the same decision as the people in the actual case.
- Do background research to fully understand what happened and why.
- Determine the key challenge. What needs to be resolved? The case study should focus on one main question or issue.
- Define the context. Talk about significant events leading up to the situation.
- Make sure you provide the right data to allow people to reach appropriate conclusions.
- Make sure you have permission to use any information you include.

A typical case study structure includes these elements:

- **Executive summary** – Define the objective, and state the key challenge.
- **Opening paragraph** – Capture the reader's interest.
- **Scope** – Describe the background, context, approach, and issues involved.
- **Presentation of facts** – Develop an objective picture of what's happening.
- **Description of key issues** – Present viewpoints, decisions, and interests of key parties.

Case studies provide learners with an opportunity to solve a problem by applying what they know.

Adapted from https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newlSS_94.htm