

TYPES OF CASE STUDIES

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	ILLUSTRATIVE	EXPLORATORY	EVALUATIVE	DECISION-FOCUS	CRITICAL INCIDENT	RESEARCH
Intent	Transmit knowledge	Explore facts & data about a particular topic prior to a larger scale investigation	Learn lessons from the results of actions	Develop judgment & values	Use judgement to develop a course of action	Develop & test hypotheses & assess results to stretch boundaries of current knowledge (for self & others)
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concepts are explained or worked out • Facts & data are chosen because they relate to the example • Facts & data are arranged to make it easy for learners to see the relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condensed case study • Content designed to generate questions on particular concepts or theories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of events and decisions that have occurred in the <u>past</u> (from 1 or >1 events or situations) • May be aggregated in a way to permit greater generalization • Facts & data are typically grouped (likely chronological & may or may not be: complete, relevant, equally important, or contradictory) and not in order of need • Can be simple or short, complex or long • Relationships between case information and more abstract concepts or theories are not as clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem has not been solved, and may not yet be identified • Many facts of varying importance, relevance, use, and requisite detail, which may support a variety of plans • Learners may be placed in the role of a decision maker • Constraints are detailed • Quality of acceptable & unacceptable solutions provided • No one solution is necessarily correct and learners may see issues and decisions differently from one another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A provocative real situation described as an open-ended problem • May include a description of the situation and the results • Raw data only, no suggested solutions • Little depth of background and organizational or situational information • Provide opportunities for analysis and synthesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant objectives are provided • Contains the raw materials on which the hypotheses are being tested • Describes the results of the testing process • In-depth investigation of a situation • Iterative process
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become more familiar with the topic in question • Become acquainted with terminology associated with the topic • Explain how facts in the case apply to various concepts or theories in “the real world” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather basic, initial data that could be used to identify a particular question, or define a problem to be solved by a larger study • Select types of measurement prior to the main investigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop analytical skills • Assess & sort information for relevance • Draw connections between events & models from many fields • Gain skills in applying theories • Choose relevant techniques or concepts that apply • Weigh & interpret what is being read • Choose & begin to apply theories or concepts independently • Develop skills in considering what information might be needed • Analyze & evaluate the events described in the case • Exercise one’s own values • Answer the dominant questions: “What is happening here? Can you explain it in terms of theories or concepts? Do you agree or disagree, and why?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice analytic & evaluative abilities to develop power to evaluate & judge • Develop ability to deal with new or unfamiliar experiences • Make predictions about what might happen, or might have happened • Develop a sequence of actions needed to affect the outcome • Use analysis to serve as a basis for creating actions to ultimately make decisions • Use facts & known concepts to make decisions & create plans • Discover that multiple plans could exist and be viable • Recognize that not all decisions are equally effective and others may have different decisions that are also valid • Evaluate decisions & make judgments according to goals of the decision maker (model values & comply with constraints) • Learn to make good decisions (& right decisions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learner brings their background and knowledge to arrive at a course of action • Reporting should be limited to behaviours which make significant contributions to the activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and present a multitude of facts about a specific situation • Ask additional questions in order to clarify the important facts and relationships • Test hypotheses • Discern relationships between variables that may not have a clear or simple explanation regarding causality • Develop hypotheses based on investigating interactions among identifies, and other obtained facts from research or testing (requires sufficiently rich situation, subject, or resources)
Cognitive Processes*	(2) Comprehension (Practice) (3) Application (Develop)	(2) Comprehension (Practice) (3) Application (Practice)	(4) Analysis (Develop) (5) Evaluation (Develop)	(4) Analysis (Practice) (5) Evaluation (Develop) (6) Creation (Develop)	(4) Analysis (Practice) (5) Evaluation (Practice) (6) Creation (Practice)	(6) Creation (Practice)
Degree of activity	Low Active Learning					Highly Active Learning

* Cognitive process dimensions listed are from Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy, and only the highest levels in which developing and practice activities occur are listed (other lower levels will likely be active).

How to decide which type to use?

Consider:

- The quantity of information to be given;
- The amount of guidance to be given to the learner;
- The degree to which the learner should acquiesce to or decide what is important;
- Time available:
 - To prepare;
 - To get through the case;
 - To reflect on the case and learning outcomes;
 - To complete the required items for assessment.

Aspects of case studies to consider:

- Single: a single situation or event
- Cumulative: multiple cases condensed into an agglomerated case to showcase similar concepts, theories, or ways of thinking
- Unfolding: certain details, facts, or data revealed over time and/or when questions arise for which additional information will support further and deeper learning

This resource was developed, in part, from the following sources:

1. W. Naumes and M.J. Naumes, “The Art & Craft of Case Writing,” (2012) M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, N.Y.
2. L.E. Lynn, Jr., “Teaching & Learning *with* Cases: A Guidebook,” (1999) Chatham House Publishers of Seven Bridges Press, LLC, Chappaqua, N.Y.
3. Case Study Method, Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching, Grand Canyon University, accessed online Nov. 2, 2018 from: https://cirt.gcu.edu/research/developmentresources/research_ready/descriptive/case_study n.d.
4. Types of Case Studies, Writing @CSU: The Writing Studio, Colorado State University, accessed online Nov. 2, 2018 from: <https://writing.colostate.edu/guides/page.cfm?pageid=1290&guideid=60> n.d.