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# Teaching with Case Studies

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# Outline

- ❑ Defining the essential elements of a case study
- ❑ Selecting a case study for teaching and teacher's role
- ❑ Ways of using cases with students
- ❑ A note on physical spaces
- ❑ Assessing students and marking case study work
- ❑ Writing your own case study – getting started

# Defining case study teaching

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Case studies use examples to teach students...

- What do you feel are the essential elements involved in teaching through case study?

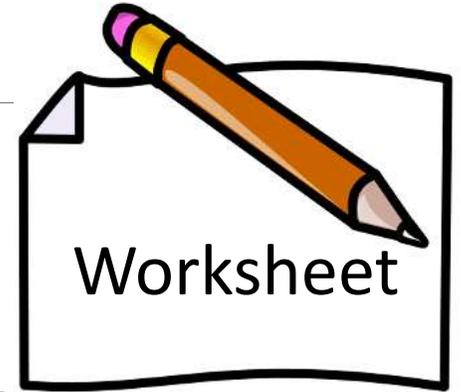
5 minutes



# Selecting a suitable case study

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1. What are your teaching aims?
2. Is it at an appropriate level?
3. How much time do you have/how long is the case?
4. How old is the case study – is it still relevant?
5. Is it interesting to the students?
6. Will you need to 'pre-teach' certain materials?
7. What transferable skills will students acquire?



# Teacher's role in a case study

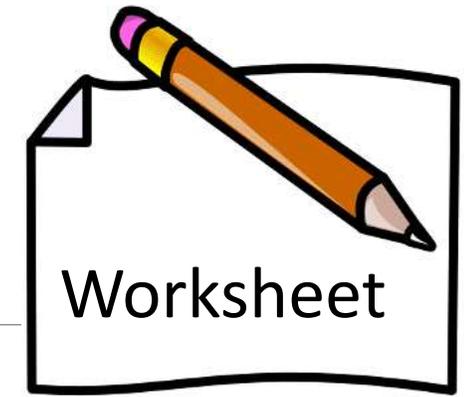
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The teacher acts as a facilitator:

- leading the discussion
- ensuring that students cover the theory and relevant points
- encouraging participation
- closing off incorrect assumptions
- providing opportunities for groups to present their reasoning
- synthesizing the issues raised

# Promoting participation and discussion

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## ***DO***

- Ask open questions
- Ask questions for clarification
- Provide roles within the group
- Use leading questions to open up discussion/issues
- Establish discussion guidelines

## ***Don't***

- Ask closed questions
- Criticise incorrect responses
- Allow students to disregard others
- Expect students to understand what is required without training

# Ways of using cases with students

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You've picked your case study... now you can:

- Prepare yourself: be familiar with all the issues in the case, pitfalls, timing, what must be covered, what may be cut
- Prepare your students: what are their expectations? How might they react?
- Decide how you will use the case: how can you best utilise the skills your students bring to class?
- Establish a clear timeline of activities

# Ways of using cases with students

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## □ Whole class:

- Works well for smaller groups
- Allows for clearer facilitation of discussion (coverage)
- Facilitator can ensure everyone contributes
- Broadens discussion (many viewpoints)

## But

- Stifles student-student interaction
- Students may follow the group lead

# Ways of using cases with students

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## □ Groups:

- Allows students to develop interpersonal skills
- Students develop their ideas while seeing another viewpoint

But

- Students may 'coast'
- Students may be unwilling to participate due to previous bad experiences

# Ways of using cases with students

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## □ Teams:

- Students are put into teams based on criteria
- Teams last over a longer period
- Provide peer pressure to complete any pre-reading
- Teams can be graded or score points over time
- Longer time means peer evaluation can be used

But

- Same issues as group – work may arise

## Other activities within case study analysis

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Group discussions can be made more interesting by:

- ✓ Role – play
- ✓ Voting (particularly good in team discussions)
- ✓ Analysing the case in sections (works well with groups)
- ✓ Students prepare a case (which may be given to others)
- ✓ Online forum, out-of-class activities, presentations



## Teaching tips...

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- ❖ Ensure you have an appropriate case study
- ❖ Allow students time to learn what is required
- ❖ Discuss the benefits of working with cases
- ❖ Give clear guidance and expectations for group or team work
- ❖ Allow adequate pre-reading time for case materials
- ❖ Ensure students have the correct background knowledge
- ❖ Be prepared to reassure and support students

# Physical spaces

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Discussions work best when participants can see each other

- Horse – shoe
- Circular
- Café style

What works in a lecture theatre?

# Assessing students and marking work

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Assessment method is determined by the learning outcome including:

- Knowledge, analytical ability and understanding
- Interpersonal skills / working with others
- Communication (written or presentational)
- Research and time management
- Coverage of the topic

# Tasks

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## Written work (report/essay)

- Opportunity for plagiarism if reusing cases
- Collaboration (or collusion?)

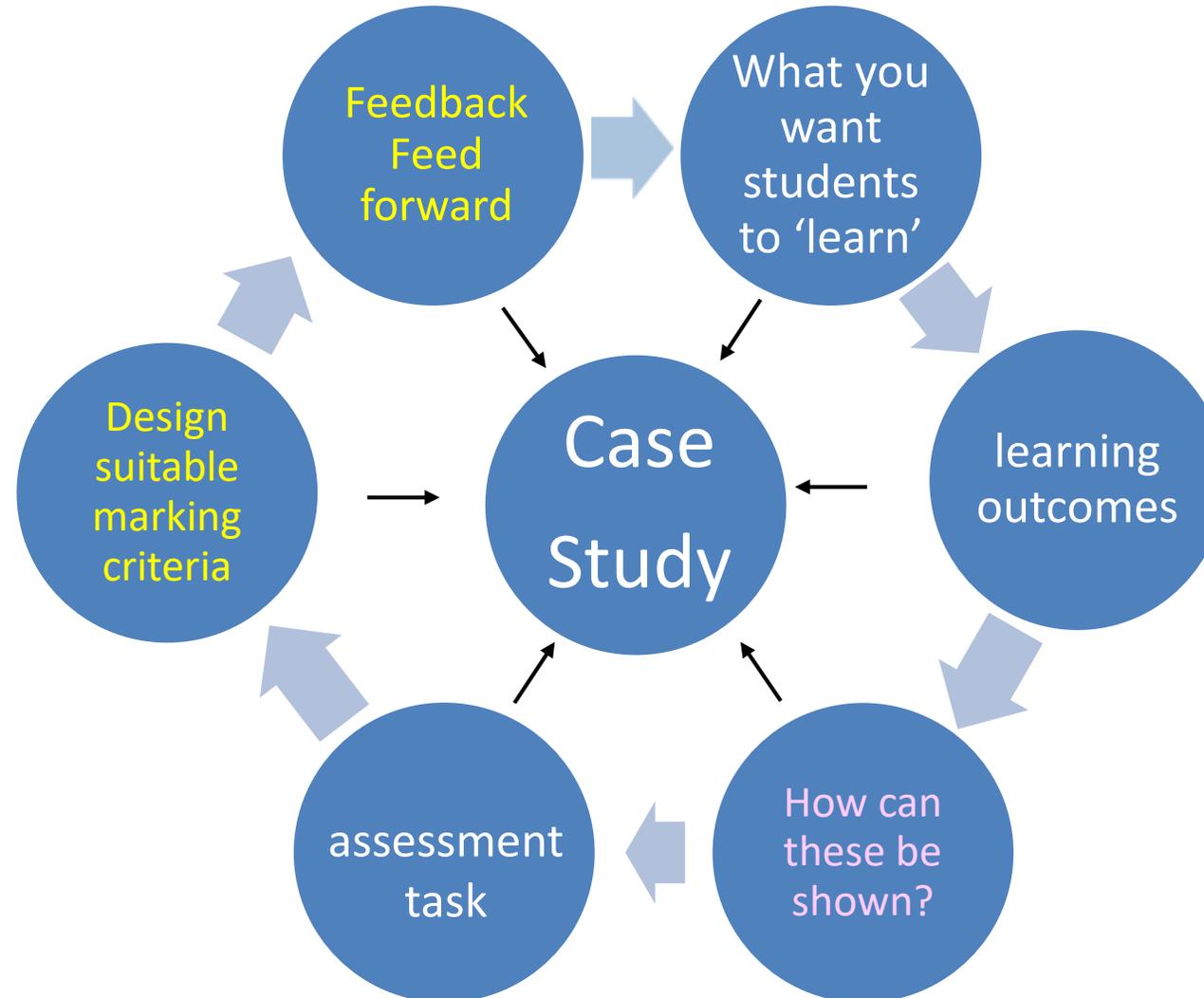
## Presentation

- Time consuming to schedule
- Works well if students prepare different parts of a case

## Soft skills (eg group work )

- Requires some peer input
- Can be difficult to moderate

# Assessment design cycle

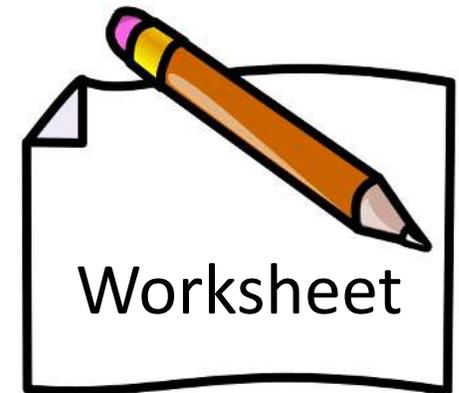


# Assessment scenario

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You are designing the assessment method for a case study on business responses to competitive market conditions. Your learning outcomes include communication skills and understanding business decision making.

- You have final year undergraduate students who completed a work placement in a business last year.
- Your students have been role-playing boardroom decision making.
- What type of assessment might be suitable?



## Writing your own case study

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1. Not the same as a research article
2. Test your case study in class – to debug and refine
3. Allow enough difficulty to be challenging but not impossible
4. Is this based on a real business event? Then include what the company actually did...
5. Provide clear and specific learning objectives
6. Teaching notes matched to the case are essential

# Writing your own case study

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Teaching notes include:

- Synopsis
- Information on proposed audience: level, topics, prerequisite knowledge
- Clear learning objectives
- Teaching plan including timings
- Methods of assessment including sample answers
- Suggested questions/answers
- Detailed plan for the opening and closing sections of a class

# Summary

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- 1 Start with easier case studies to teach students the method
- 2 Set out the brief to students very clearly
- 3 Teach team or group work if necessary
- 4 Allow adequate time to introduce the case and for student meetings (in and out of class)
- 5 Establish a constructive environment for learning
- 6 Support students during the case study if it's new to them
- 7 Seek feedback from students on the case and the method
- 8 Refine the case and the method of teaching



*Thank You* 😊  
*Any Questions*