

## Want to Facilitate a Case Study in *Your* Class?

A Case Study is a way to let students interact with material in an open-ended manner. The goal is not to find solutions, but to explore possibilities and options of a real-life scenario.

### Why should *you* facilitate a Case Study?

Possible learning goals: Have students evaluate real-world scenarios then compare and contrast possible outcomes and solutions. Have students understand multiple sides of a situation. Challenge students to understand that there is no correct answer.

Case Study At-A-Glance	
<b>Prep</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce the topic</li><li>• Prepare several open-ended questions</li></ul>
<b>During</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Based on group size, break into subgroups as needed</li><li>• Lead the discussion with guided questions and discussion</li><li>• Record key pieces of information on the board</li><li>• Keep track of time</li></ul>
<b>After</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final report/project</li><li>• Provide student feedback</li></ul>

#### **Prep**

Introduce the topic

- Before class pick the case study topic/scenario. You can either generate a fictional situation or can use a real-world example.
- Clearly let students know how they should prepare. Will the information be given to them in class or do they need to do readings/research before coming to class?

Prepare several open-ended questions

- Have a list of questions prepared to help guide discussion (see below)

#### **During**

Based on group size, break into subgroups as needed

- Sessions work best when the group size is between 5-20 people so that everyone has an opportunity to participate. You may choose to have one large whole-class discussion or break into sub-groups and have smaller discussions. If you break into groups, make sure to leave extra time at the end to bring the whole class back together to discuss the key points from each group and to highlight any differences.

Lead the discussion with guiding questions and discussion

- During the course of the case study, the types of questions may vary.
  - Early ask questions about the information and facts
    - What is the problem?
    - What is the cause of the problem?
    - Who are the key players in the situation? What is their position?

- What are the relevant data?
  - As students get more confident and comfortable, the types of questions can become more abstract.
    - What are possible solutions – both short-term and long-term?
    - What are alternate solutions? – Play (or have the students play) Devil’s Advocate and consider alternate view points
    - What are potential outcomes of each solution?
    - What other information do you want to see?
    - What can we learn from the scenario?
- Be flexible. While you may have a set of questions prepared, don’t be afraid to go where the discussion naturally takes you. However, be conscious of time and re-focus the group if key points are being missed
- Role-playing can be an effective strategy to showcase alternate viewpoints and resolve any conflicts
- Involve as many students as possible. Teamwork and communication are key aspects of this exercise. If needed, call on students who haven’t spoken yet or instigate another rule to encourage participation.

#### Record key pieces of information on the board

- Write out key facts on the board for reference. It is also helpful to write out possible solutions and list the pros/cons discussed.
- Having the information written out makes it easier for students to reference during the discussion and helps maintain everyone on the same page.

#### Keep track of time

- Keep an eye on the clock and make sure students are moving through the scenario at a reasonable pace. If needed, prompt students with guided questions to help them move faster.

#### **After**

##### Final discussion

- Either give or have the students give a concluding statement that highlights the goals and key points from the discussion. Make sure to compare and contrast alternate viewpoints that came up during the discussion and emphasize the take-home messages that can be applied to future situations.

##### Provide student feedback

- Inform students (either individually or the group) how they did during the case study. What worked? What didn’t work? Did everyone participate equally?
- Taking time to reflect on the process is just as important to emphasize and help students learn the importance of teamwork and communication.

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