



Teaching with Case Studies

MRFA Teaching and Learning Series Session 2 – March 3, 2023

Session Summary:

Case studies are used for a variety of purposes in teaching such as promoting critical reflection and helping students integrate their learning. In this session, three of your colleagues will share their experiences in developing and using case studies in their teaching. Please join us for ideas and discussion around how case studies can be used effectively to engage students and promote their learning as well as considerations for case study development.

Panelists:

- [Joyce Totton \(School of Nursing and Midwifery\)](#)
- [Stasha Huntingford \(Child Studies and Social Work\)](#)
- [Shelley Rathie \(General Management and HR\)](#)
- **Facilitator: Jennifer Boman (Academic Development Centre)**

Land Acknowledgement

Land Acknowledgement with a reflection on how by teaching with case studies we can use these case studies, these stories to bring ourselves and our students closer to the land and to build our connections to each other and to our community.

Opening Remarks

The link to [Jamboard](#) was provided and an explanation of how it would be used.

Joyce Totton (School of Nursing and Midwifery)

Case Studies in the medical field

Problem based learning (PBL)

Problem based learning is centred on case-based learning, a way in which we take existing research to bear on solving problems and then developing the skills they need to operate in the real world. This process was initiated in the early 1900s and was renewed and emphasized in the 1990s. This is a

common approach to teaching in the medical field as a way to help people working in this field cope with situations.

Pharmacotherapy - Case Based Learning

Plan, Prepare, Write, Revise

Learners in this class have:

Learning objectives dictated

Follow a prescribed format

Know what the outcome of the case is "expected"

Nibble:

Student creates learning objectives meaningful and relevant to them

The case does not have an expected outcome

The students work as group during the tutorial

Learners evaluate their own learning

Part 1 - Check in	
1000 to 1030	Artichoke Rounds
Part 2 - Tutorial Case	
1030 to 1130	Student Led Presentation of Material
1130 to 1200	Role Play
1200 to 1250	Complete the Social Prescriber Report from information obtained from Role Play as Class
Part 3 - Prepare for next Class	
1230 to 1250	Create Learning Objectives for Next Week

Nibble Step in PBL:

- the students create their own learning objectives that are meaningful and relevant to them.
- Using a case that is loose and open.
- Providing tutorial time to explore the case and students collaboratively explore the problem and then engage in role play.
- The faculty member helps the students meet the outcomes in this process.
- The Faculty member ensures that the course learning outcomes are incorporated by assigning specific discussion topics for the Case.

Stasha Huntingford (Child Studies and Social Work)

Case Study Development

As a white settler developing cases for social work contexts you need to ensure that you keep EDI in mind and write in a way that does not reinforce power dynamics and be mindful of who experiences oppression in our society.

Questions to ask...

Why is it possible to make invisible and to make hyper visible?

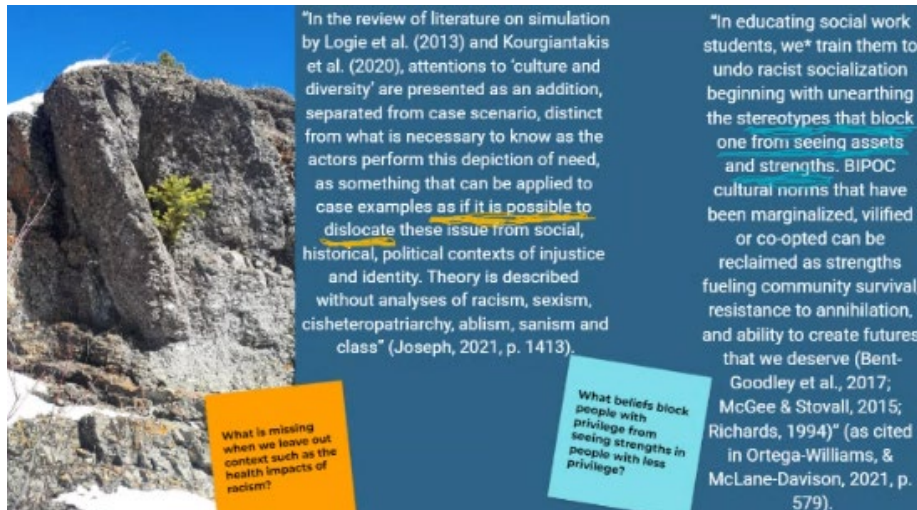
Nobody is neutral, what values are we building into our case studies. How do we identify the assumptions – who is centered as the norm and who is othered? This often can internalize social problems.

White supremacy within social work education "distorts, erases, excludes, stigmatizes, stereotypes, renders invisible, impotent, or makes [BIPOC] hypervisible while Whites are depicted as noble, brave, innocent, and establishes rationale for the current order" (King, 2017, p. 96 as cited in Ortega-Williams, & McLane-Davison, 2021, p. 569).

Why is it possible to make people invisible and hyper-visible at the same time?

As creators of case studies how can we examine how our privilege influences how we define 'success'?

"Marsiglia and Kulis (2009), meanwhile, highlight how problematic and ineffective neutral social service programs are and suggest that many agencies assume and impose heteronormative middle class values and simultaneously overlook and deemphasize the cultural and social strengths among groups who continue to face marginalization and systematic oppression" (as cited in Del-Villar, 2021, p. 646).



We need to ensure that we teach students the importance of context and the sources of knowledge and power around a person.

No case study is neutral and we need to acknowledge and be mindful of context?

Shelley Rathie (General Management and HR)

Assessing case studies from the business perspective

We need frameworks to hang the information on. We can then assess student's frameworks.

We need to know that students will be able to replicate the processes after they graduate from University. When we work with case studies in business we are determining if students can apply the tools effectively, are they able to pull the applicable information out of the case and integrate it in the framework/tool they are using. The outcomes can be different and different frameworks and tools can be used – what is important is if students understand how to use the tools to assess the case.

From an assessment perspective there is comfort in using case studies to know that students are able to apply their knowledge

There is an additional learning opportunity in using real world case studies in business; that is, the real world case studies can be viewed historically where the students can see the end result of the decisions which were made. Students can then go back and consider what could or should have been done differently.

Giving students more experience in case-based learning gives them confidence that they can replicate their processes to approach a variety of situations. This ability to apply their processes.

Other possibilities:

- Giving audio and visual elements in the cases you present to students rather than text-based cases only
- Using the dynamic case – giving students the opportunity to pick their cases through directing them to real world sources that aggregate cases
- Using real life news stories about workplace events or issues and then having students break it down.

Teaching with Case studies also shows the real-world relevance of what we are teaching.

One challenge in developing case studies is that they can become stale due to the extensive amount of teaching notes required, from a publishing perspective.

Future PD Session suggestion – developing business cases from start to finish.

Discussion (Question & Answer Portion)

Q: How can we use case studies to highlight diverse populations: There are situations where certain ethnic groups will have a higher rate of specific health tendencies / diseases. How do we not target a specific characteristic that could be perceived negatively?

A: *Indigenous people are overrepresented in the justice system. What you can do is link a case to a specific person, while also sharing multiple other stories or links that demonstrate the intersections that people are living, and problematize white people / problematize the centered normalized position.*

- *You can destigmatize individuals in the case by flattening them – making them all have a common factor/variable.*
- *Link to real life experiences like news stories and investigations to complement the case study and to try to reflect the local populations.*
- *It is helpful to ensure that all individuals in your case have names (to not make them othered) to make them human helps to make the situation real and help the students approach them in a real way.*

Q: what to do with students who do not do the assigned readings ahead of class when you are doing a case study in class?

A: *The students will miss out on some of the links being formed with their learning in class. However, our expectations that students always perform 100% all of the time is not reasonable – we do not always meet that level.*

- *There are ways that you can address this by assigning leads in specific classes to specific topics for specific classes to ensure that students feel the need to be prepared for to fulfil their role in the class (esp. when there is role play or simulation learning)*

Q: How do case studies work with different sizes of class (e.g. over 60 people in the class)?

A: *This can be very effective if you break the class out into groups. You can also get creative and combine two classes from different disciplines and have those students apply their frameworks and discipline-based perspectives – this helps them see the variety of approaches that can be taken toward a case.*

- *You can also delineate and then assign different parts of the case to different groups in the class. This allows all to engage in the learning without repeating the findings for each part of the case.*

Q: Does it take a long time to grade case study-based assignments?

A: *when case studies are developed and published, often the answers are provided to the evaluator via a teaching note. The faculty member can then confirm that students meet the mark with each of the points*

in the teaching note, and can also supplement their assessment with other items that students may add to it based on the ever-evolving context

- *If you have not purchased a case that happens to come with teaching notes, then you can engage with the case yourself first before assessing the students. This can take some extra time but not too much.*
- *Students are learning more from the process of engaging with a case study. We need to see how students support or challenge ideas. This can lead to a different approach to marking where you assess the understanding and comprehension more than you assess the correct answer.*
- *What is deliverable from a case study assignment could be a decision tree rather than the final outcome.*

Q: How to use case studies to promote unlearning? How do we challenge the status quo through use of case studies?

A: *We do need to challenge stereotypes and be true, at the same time, to awareness of social constructs. We need to write case studies, in social work for instance, about straight white people – we need to make visible those centered and we can use case studies to bring these out.*

- *Use case studies to challenge assumptions.*
- *Use social media to find a source for case studies as this is current.*
- *Use case studies that are local to your students to show that they are part of these communities and there are real implications of the decisions made.*

Q: What years of students do you introduce case studies?

A: *It is good to have them in all years. Especially if you are in a practice-based profession.*

- *It is also good to do case studies in groups so that students have the real-world experience of being able to discuss and bounce ideas off each other.*

Q: are there differences in process or learning outcomes from 1st to 4th year students?

A: *Perhaps in the first year you would do more work to set the framework and assess based on how they follow the process.*

- *In the first-year courses the language would be more leading than in fourth year courses. The case in first year may suggest the tool or framework to use and the fourth year would just provide the case only.*
- *In the first year you may have the class decide which is the best framework or theory to use to consider the case and in the fourth-year individual students would be responsible for deciding which to use*
- *Scaffolding the level of support for students*

Q: Is it possible to teach with case studies in a short amount of time – a single class point of contact without the ability to reconnect later. Can you teach with a case study in one lesson, or does it need to be a course based approach?

A: *Yes, you can. The case needs to be designed in such a way that it leads directly to the desired outcome. You need to prepare adequately by having a pre-meeting/detailed instruction provided in advance to clarify expectations. Also, allow some time in class to do some review of the material in the class to support student engagement in the material in the class.*