

## A case study of practice

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### Abstract

*The abstract is normally a single paragraph that states the main themes of the paper, provide some context to the research being described, mention the methods used, and go on to summarise some of the main conclusions. Case studies are context-specific (e.g. subject area, type of teaching being trialled), so try to provide adequate detail which enables potential readers to judge whether the case being described is of relevance to them.*

### Keywords

Your choice of keywords is critical to the discovery of your article from search engines like Google Scholar. Give this careful consideration and select a minimum of five keywords.

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### Introduction

This short section should explain what the paper is for. Remember, case studies are pieces of research where the aim is to describe (with the purpose of illuminating or educating) rather than to make general claims.

### Background

The background section is particularly important for case studies. It might be structured in two or more sub-sections. The first should refer to published research in order to identify the research context of the paper. The second should explain why the

case study was carried out – for example, to illustrate a point made in the first section, to challenge a belief advocated in the referenced research or to develop a deeper understanding of one of the issues raised. The section should go on to outline the characteristics of the case in some detail, so that readers can make an informed judgement about what conclusions (if any) might be relevant to their working practice.

### Methodology

Many case studies are qualitative, but this is not always true. In addition, many case studies use a combination of methods, such

as: observations, interviews, documents (readymade, such as policies, or created, such as reflective journals, online discussion contributions or assessment submissions). Particular care should be taken to point out how the case might be typical (or not) in methodological approach, how ethical issues (such as confidentiality, informed consent, whether ethical approval was sought) have limited the research and what theoretical or (micro)political perspectives have shaped the way the study was undertaken. In addition, any methods/software used to carry out the analysis should be referenced (e.g. use of NVivo, SPSS).

## Results

The results section might be largely descriptive, using excerpts of data (quotes, screen shots, even photographs etc.) to illustrate or exemplify points made. If using quotes, try not to cite long passages. Your results may be structured chronologically (e.g. students' thoughts at the beginning of a course and at the end, after a particular teaching intervention) or thematically. This

largely depends on the purpose of your paper.

## Discussion

The discussion section is a chance for you to explore what you think is the meaning of what has been described. In particular, its relationship to the wider research context should be revisited; it may be prudent to include this in a separate sub-section.

## Conclusions

The conclusions should re-state why this case was considered worthy of investigation (e.g. in light of previous research, university policy etc.). The main lessons learnt from carrying out the study should be summarised. In addition, any weaknesses in the study should be pointed out and the implications of this for practice or for other pieces of research work should be made clear. Alternatively, you may wish to include recommendations (e.g. for teachers, for the sector etc.).