



SIES School of Learning and Leadership Development (SIESSLLD)

TRAINING NOTE (005/2024-25)

on

Writing A Mini Case

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Backdrop:

Case study analysis as a pedagogic tool has, in recent times, assumed significant importance particularly in social science, business studies and other allied disciplines like law, etc. This is primarily because it simulates a real-life business situation / problem and offers ample scope for generating discussions in the class setting for alternative perspectives / approaches to solutions. For developing critical thinking and problem-solving acumen among learners, case study pedagogy has proved to be one of the better methods of teaching particularly in the parlance of higher education.

What A Mini Case Is:

As the name itself suggests, a mini case is a smaller version of regular case.

A typical case of a large multi-division company might run into 15 to 20 pages, and it often represents a comprehensive analysis of the various lines of production / related figures over a period and presents a single or multiple complex issue(s) from various dimensions / perspectives / specializations. Such cases also contain substantive data of various aspects related to the business operations.

In the above context, it may, sometimes, become time consuming for students to go through complexities of the case and come to a meaningful conclusion. Besides time, such cases also need a high degree of conceptual clarity and understanding on the part of learners and may require work experience on their part.

It is in this context that mini cases have come into existence, and these are much simpler versions of a regular case. Without compromising the academic rigor, the mini cases are usually focused on a single or maximum two business issues and are “argument centric” rather than “data driven.” The typical size of a mini case is around two to four pages (600 to 1000 words approximately). Such cases are based on a solid theoretical framework so that they do not become purely anecdotal in nature. These are easy to read and comprehend and useful for intense discussions in the classroom and generate debates / alternative perspectives.

Types of Mini Cases:

Mini cases are normal cases, and hence regular classifications hold good for them as well. The four main types of mini cases are as below:

1. **Analytical / Problem Solving:** These are traditional cases that dwell with business problems based on data collected from primary / secondary sources or combination of both. There are always reference points in terms of theoretical framework.
2. **Exploratory:** These cases deal with new unexplored and emerging areas / domains like AI, ML, IOT etc. where adequate theoretical grounding is not available and try to explore issues / solutions.
3. **Armchair:** Here the case is developed through the personal experience of the case writer of an issue in the business that requires a solution. These can be developed by people with deep understanding of a business.
4. **Social Topics:** A mini case can also be written with reference to a topic of social interest rather than a business. Some examples of these areas can be reading habits of students, mobile addiction among the young generation, climate change, sustainability issues, population concerns, demographic aspects, problems of special categories of people like orphans, children with special ability or elderly people, among others. These cases can be powerful tools to generate debate / discussions in the classroom settings.

Format of A Mini Case:

There is no universally prescriptive format for a mini case. However, some of the guiding principles are given below:

1. The title of the case should be catchy as that is the starting point of attracting the attention of students.
2. A mini case is a data-driven or problem-centric “story.” Therefore, it should be written in an interesting story-telling manner so that the students will love reading it from beginning to the end.
3. Introduction to the problem / issue in hand should preferably be told in the beginning (first para) itself so that the learners are aware of the problem(s) that they are expected to deal with.

4. The body of the case should contain the context, business details and other aspects including narration of the problem and solutions / action taken / required to be taken.
5. The case may contain certain leading questions for generating the first round of discussion. This, however, is not a must as one may leave the case open ended for the students to frame their own questions and take the discussions forward.
6. It is suggested that the authors put a disclaimer at the end of the case that it is being written purely for classroom discussion.
7. The charts, figures, data, etc., should be given as a part of the annexure to the main body of the case. Sources of these data must be mentioned.

Training Note:

Every mini case must be accompanied by a training note. This is a guiding note to any trainer (other than the case writer) as to how to deliver the mini case. It should, therefore, contain the following broad points:

1. Main proposed learning outcomes of the mini case
2. Theoretical framework(s) kept in view while writing the case
3. The actual decision, if any, taken by the decision maker in real life and the ground thereof
4. The multiple approaches / perspectives the case wants to bring out
5. Interpretation of data / chart, etc., if any, and their calculations for solving the case
6. Pointers for driving the discussions
7. Limitations of the case if any

Feedback and Updating:

The faculty is expected to teach the case in his / her own classes. The faculty should take feedback on the case discussed on a regular basis and may like to update the same from time to time.
