



Introduction to Case Study as a research approach

Definitions of 'Case Study':

Task:

Read the definitions of case study in the document provided.

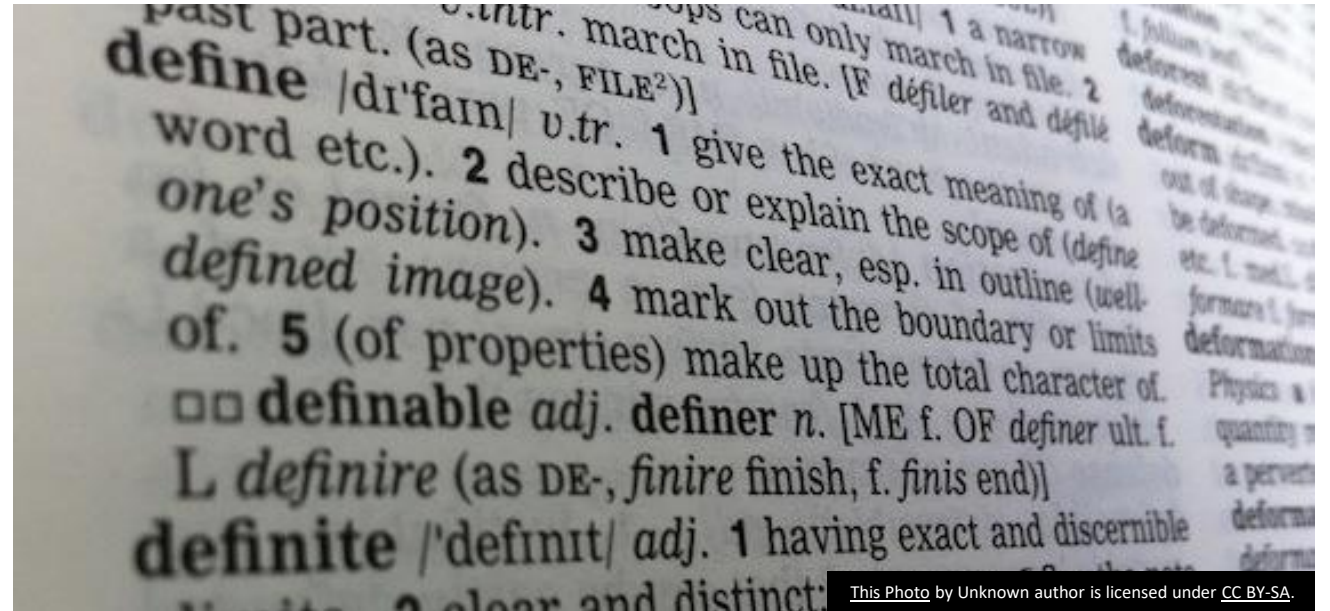
Identify the key words and concepts.

What are the similarities and differences?



Definitions of 'Case Study'

Case study has many definitions and has been termed a 'contested terrain' (Yazan, 2015)



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A rich picture with boundaries:

A case study offers you a detailed picture with information coming from many angles or sources.

It also provides the edges – the direction in which you want your research to go and how far.





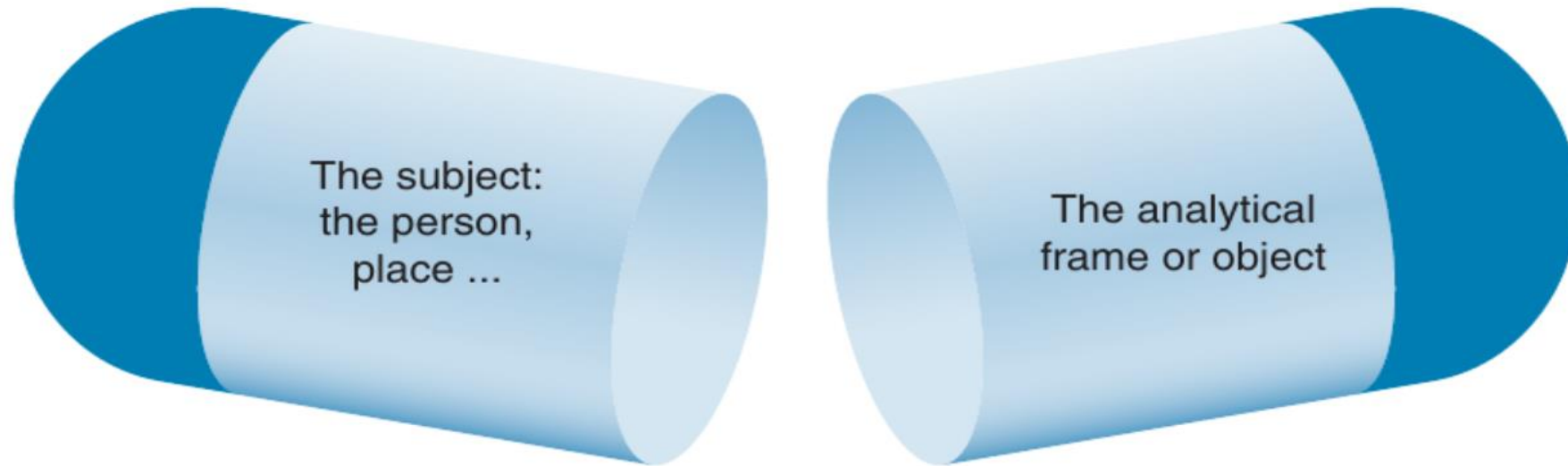
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The word is taken from two similar sounding Latin roots that have arrived, after corruption, at the same word 'case' in English:

- capsā meaning 'box', 'container' and thus 'case';
- casus meaning 'event', 'fall', 'accident' and thus 'case'.

What do we mean by case?

Two parts of a case study, each part needing the other:



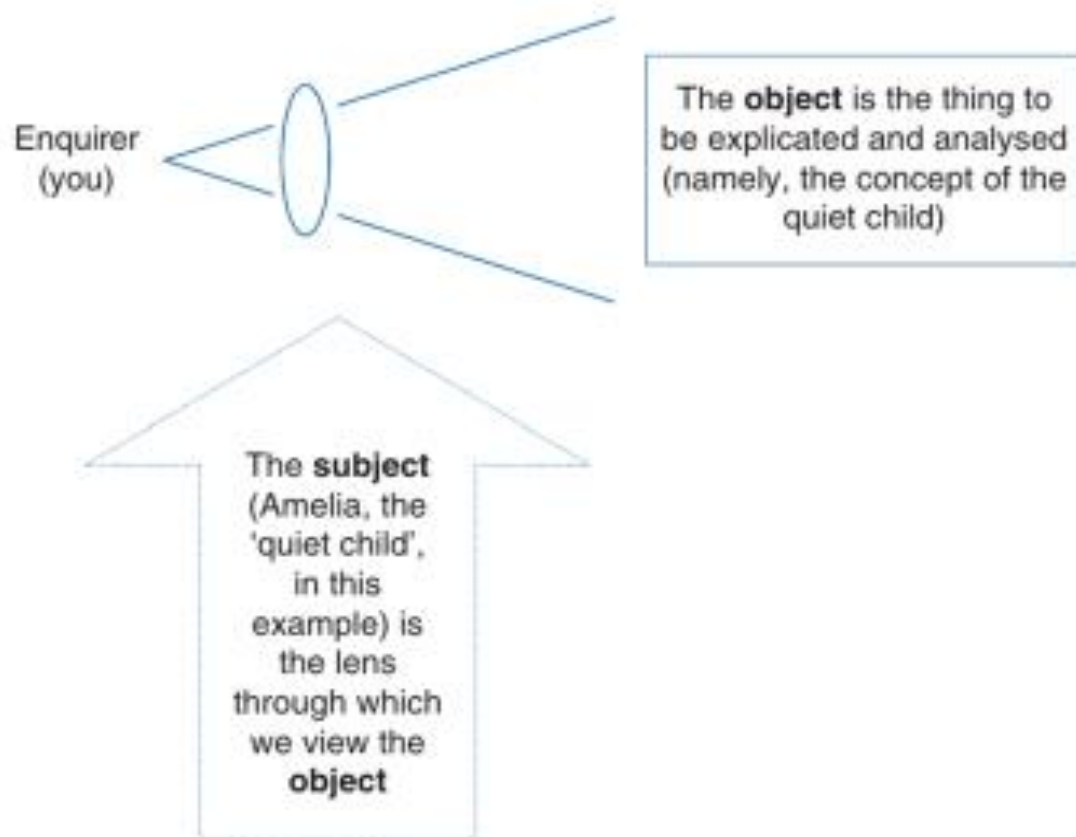
Scenario
(taken from
Thomas 2021)
– bringing the
subject and
object
together

You are interested in the phenomenon of children who are withdrawn, sometimes call 'quiet' or 'silent' children

If 'quiet children' were your topic of interest, they would be your object

Given this object – or topic of interest – it would be useful to choose a case study subject a kind of child who demonstrated these behaviours

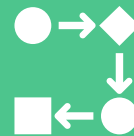
Lens analogy:



Types of case study:



Evaluative – the aim is to find out how well something is working or whether it has worked as expected



Exploratory – where little is known and the principal purpose is to establish the 'shape' of the problem or issue



Explanatory – where the phenomenon in which you are interested needs to be unpacked; the connections between different parts of the issue need unravelling and the case study offers a route to explanation



Exploratory Case Study:

The exploratory case study is used when there is no pre-determined outcome.

According to Yin (2014), case studies are appropriate when asking 'how', 'why', 'what' and 'who' questions.

In the **exploratory case study**, the questions answered are 'how' and 'what'.

Exploratory case studies are also appropriate when you wish to gain an extensive and in-depth description of a social phenomenon. The exploratory case study is used to explore presumed causal links that are too complex for a survey or experiment (Yin, 2014).

Assignment reminder:

An exploratory case study arising from practice (noticing) and investigated further through identified research tools.

The assignment concludes with the identification of an intervention which can be piloted throughout Professional Teaching Experience and evidenced through reflection in the Professional Learning Passport.



Professional learning

Wider reading and research findings

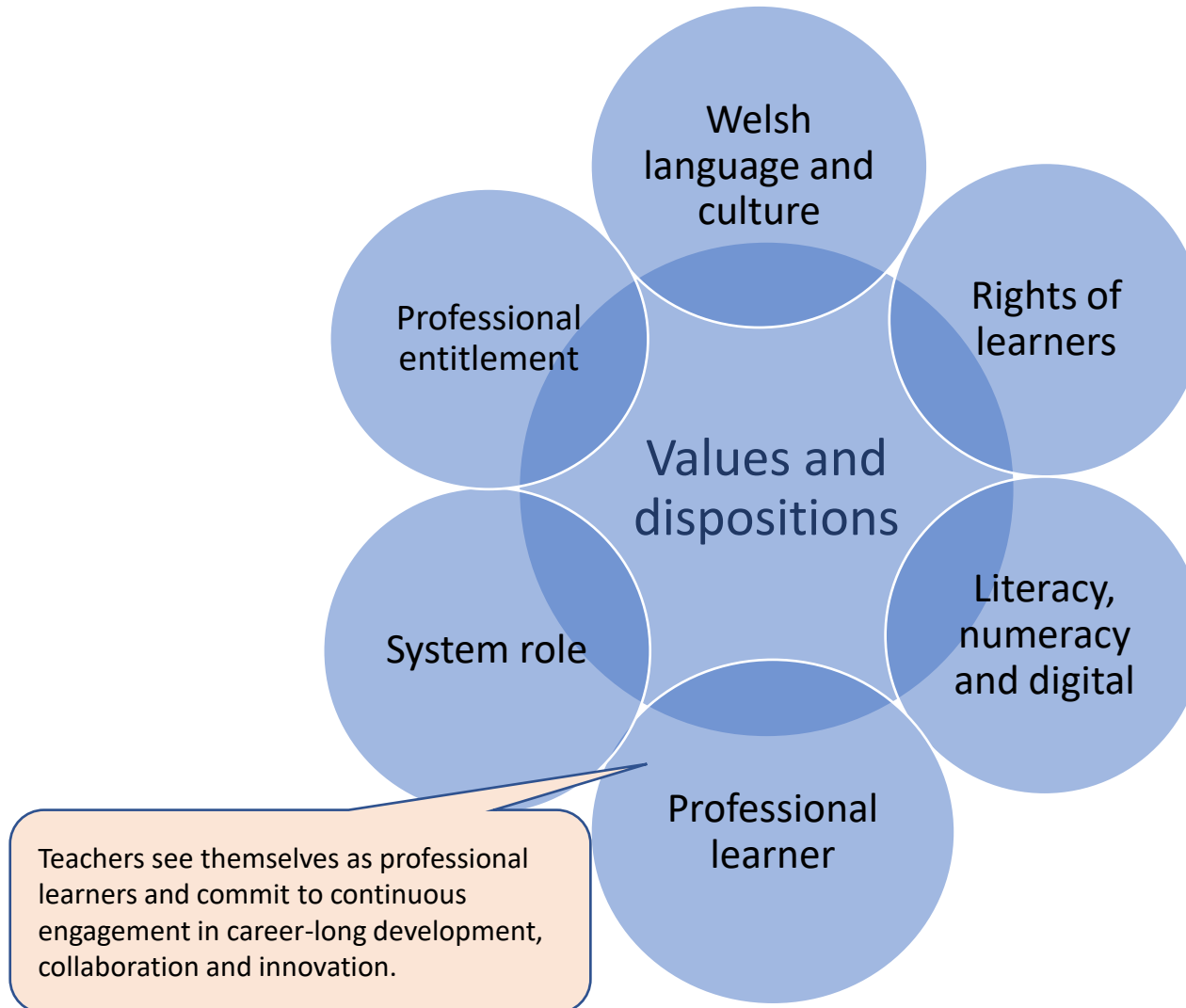
There is structured engagement in an action research community and evidence of practice informed by wider reading and research findings on a national and international scale.

The teacher makes reasoned decisions in terms of their pedagogy based upon relevant reading and research findings.

QTS

Teaching

Why should *teachers* research? - Professional Standards



Key elements of case study:

Case study as Research Genre

Bounded unit – a person, a group, an institution or organization

Located within personal, professional, local and national communities

Involves interactions, communications, relationships and practices between the case and the wider world and vice versa

Focus on collecting rich data – capturing the complexity of case

Data may be collected over extended periods with repeated collections or may be collected during an intensive but short period of time

Requires spending time within the world of those being researched

Uses a variety of data collection tools (interviews, observations, reflective journals and others) and different perspectives (child, teacher, parent, researcher) to provide depth

Employs two or more forms of data collection tool and/or two or more perspectives. This helps to triangulate the data and reinforces the legitimacy of the conclusions drawn.





Beginning to
construct your
case study



Purpose of study:

Exploratory research is defined as a research used to investigate a problem which is not clearly defined. It is conducted to have a better understanding of the existing problem but will not provide conclusive results. For such a research, a researcher starts with a general idea and uses this research as a medium to identify issues, that can be the focus for future research.



Object

What is the theoretical topic at the heart of your question that the subject of your study is allowing you to explore in detail?



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The subject of the study:

What is the subject you are actually looking at? Is it a classroom, a child, a particular pedagogy?

- It may be one that you know a lot about from your own actual experience.
- It may be a particularly good example of something.
- It may be an outlier – reveals something interesting because it is different from the norm.

This is the lens through which you are studying the object of your case study.

Approach: Theory building or theory testing?

- Is it to test a theory that you or someone else has developed about a topic? If you start off with a firm ideas or set of premises, you could be said to be *testing* a theory

Or

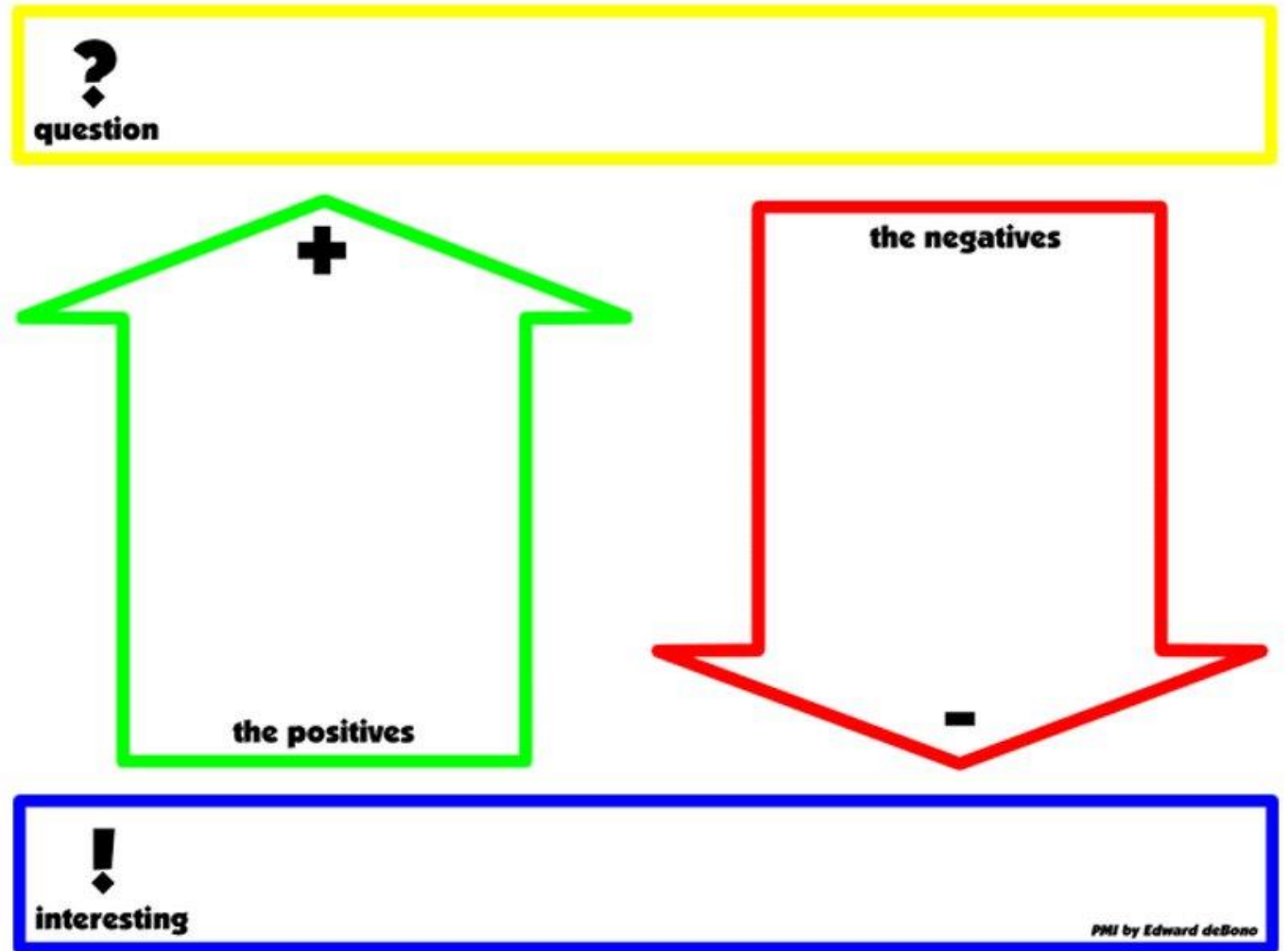
- You may simply be aiming to illustrate something

Or

- Is it to develop a theory from new about a topic? If you are seeking to see what ideas emerge as you immerse yourself in the situation you are studying, you could be said to be *building* a theory



Evaluating case study as a research approach:



Any
questions?



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Assignment

Discussion of research design: Case Study

500

Refer to relevant literature to explain the purpose of using a Case Study approach.

What is Case Study research?

What are its strengths and limitations in relation to your research question?

Discuss your 'case' - who will the participants be in your case study? If relevant, discuss the method that you used to ensure a representative sample.

Ethics form

(this box should expand as you type)

Proposed methods (maximum 600 words)

Provide a brief summary of all the methods that **may** be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed.

(this box should expand as you type)

References

Simons, H. (2009) *Case Study Research in Practice*, London: Sage.

Stake, R.E. (2005) Qualitative Case Studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 443–466). Sage.

Thomas, G. (2021) *How to do your case study*. Sage.

Yazan, B. (2015) Three Approaches to Case Study Methods in Education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake, *The Qualitative Report*, Vol 20, pp.134-152.