Case Study Research
as important now than ever

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Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this workshop the participants will be able to:
- describe what a case study is.
- identify the format and types of case studies.
- discuss the typology of case studies.
- compare and contrast existing case studies.
- identify the different sources of data.
- plan a case study.
What is a Case Study?

- Fry et al (1999) describe case studies as complex examples which give an insight into the context of a problem as well as illustrating the main point.

- What case study research have you found MOST useful? (as a researcher, participant or reader). Please describe the case study.

Case studies as research

- Intrinsic
- Instrumental
- Collective
  (Stake, 1994, 1995)

What would be the difference between Intrinsic and Instrumental?
What is a collective case study?
Case studies as research

- Intrinsic
  - Understand the particulars of a case.
- Instrumental
  - Understand something more general.
- Collective
  - Combine multiple cases into a single study.

Case study research is by and large situational, and not generalizable to other situations. (Mann, 2006)
What’s missing?

- Intrinsic
  - Understand the particulars of a case.
- Instrumental
  - Understand something more general.
- Collective
  - Combine multiple cases into a single study.
- Comparative
  - Similar cases across different entities, countries or cultures.
Types of case studies

- Illustrative
- Exploratory
- Critical Instance
- Program Implementation
- Program Effects
- Cumulative

Illustrative Case Studies
- are descriptive; they utilize one or two instances to show what a situation is like. (Mann, 2006)

Exploratory Case Studies
- are condensed case studies, undertaken before a large-scale investigation. (Mann, 2006)
Types of case studies

- Critical Instance Case Studies
  - Examine one or a few sites for one or two purposes… the examination of a situation of unique interest, with little or no… generalizability. (Mann, 2006)
  - A rarer, application entails a highly generalized or universal assertion which is called into question. (Mann, 2006)

The most serious pitfall in this application is inadequate specification of the evaluation question. (Mann, 2006)

- Program Implementation Case Studies
  - Help discern whether implementation is in compliance with its intent. (Mann, 2006)

- Program Effects Case Studies
  - Can determine the impact of programs and provide inferences about reasons for success or failure. (Mann, 2006)
Types of case studies

● Cumulative Case Studies
  ○ Aggregate information from several sites collected at different times. (Mann, 2006)

Opinions vary as to the credibility of cumulative case studies… publication biases, misleading positive view, verifying the quality of data… (Mann, 2006)

QUIZ:

● Starting on the next slide, quickly look at the picture on the left of the slide.
● Reflect upon the six different types of case studies.
● Enter the type of case study the picture best represents into the Direct Messaging Window.
Types of case studies

- Illustrative
- Exploratory
- Critical Instance
- Program Implementation
- Program Effects
- Cumulative

Types of case studies

- Program Implementation

- Has standardized testing met its goal?
- What was its goal?
Types of case studies

- Illustrative
- Exploratory
- Critical Instance
- Program Implementation
- Program Effects
- Cumulative

Two different views of the same thing.
Types of case studies

- Illustrative
- Exploratory
- Critical Instance
- Program Implementation
- Program Effects
- Cumulative

Types of case studies

- Cumulative
- A whole lot of data
Types of case studies

- Illustrative
- Exploratory
- Critical Instance
- Program Implementation
- Program Effects
- Cumulative

Types of case studies

- **Critical Instance**
  
  Examination of a situation of unique interest.
Types of case studies

- Illustrative
- Exploratory
- Critical Instance
- Program Implementation
- Program Effects
- Cumulative

Types of case studies

- Exploratory
  
  The beginnings of a large scale (life-long) investigation?
Types of case studies

Which one did I miss?

- Illustrative
- Exploratory
- Critical Instance
- Program Implementation
- Program Effects
- Cumulative

Some types are missing!

- Prospective case studies
- Narrative case studies
- Specialized case studies
  - Continuing Medical Education (CME)
  - Continuing Legal Education (CLE)
- Embedded case studies?
Typology of Case Studies

- Snapshot case studies
- Longitudinal case studies
- Pre-post case studies
- Patchwork case studies
- Comparative case studies

Multi-design approach (patchwork) and multi-observers highlight the increase of reliability when tools and approaches are combined.

Evidence

- Artifacts and Documentation
  - Plethora of items
- Data
  - Archival, Interview & Direct Observation
- Participant Observer

But it wasn't just blogging. Creating an online community became a snap with tools such as Plone and Drupal... wiki (Wikipedia)... Audacity (RSS, Podcasting).... (Downes, 2005)
Quantitative vs. Qualitative

- Quantitative (Chptr 6.)
  - Intrinsic case study
  - Design included a participant observer with open discussion
  - Attempts and verbalizations were analyzed / codified

- Qualitative (Chptr 7.)
  - Methodological framework, qualitative techniques and the participant observer
  - Phase Theory
    1. Lesson enhancement
    2. Online resources
    3. Online environment
  - Data Collection
  - Data Analysis
  - Credibility
  - Limitations

Which are Qualitative and which are Quantitative?
Rolling your own… case study.

- Define research questions
- Select case(s)
- Determine data gathering and analysis techniques
- Prepare to collect data
- Collect the data
- Evaluate and analyze
- Prepare the report

Things to consider…

- Circumstances;
  - Possible disruptions
  - Access to people and places
  - Data ownership and release

- Consequences;
  - Anonymizing of the research

- The actual case study;
  - Primary and secondary sources
  - Opportunities to check data
  - Triangulation
  - Data collection methods
    - Interviews, observation, narrative, documents, diaries, etc
  - Data analysis
  - Report writing
as important now than ever

- plethora of approaches
- ease of application / execution
- size and needs of potential audience
- in relation to Web 2.0
- growing number of data sources
- as a socio-constructivist activity
- ability to be applied across disciplines

References


