



# How to create a transition case study and use it in the Higher and Vocational Education

## USER MANUAL

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**Version** 2.1

**Date** 12 June 2021

Without language proofreading

*Based on TOBP original application, concept and design, created by Regina Klein*

Please, refer to the document accordingly: Klein, Regina & Sidiropulu Janků, Kateřina. 2021. How to create a transition case study and use it in the Higher and Vocational Education. User manual. CUAS.

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## Foreword

Dear researcher, practitioner, student, volunteer, dear transition mentor! This manual informs you about the nature of transition case study as teaching and research tool. Besides the general overview, it will also give you basic guidelines on how to get ready to compose the case study from original research material and secondary resources. In the Resources section, you will find all the TOBP case studies for your inspiration. Have fun reading the manual, preparing your own case study and using it for research, teaching and further development purposes!



## 1. What is a transition case study?

**Case study in general** is a way to conduct an in-depth analysis of the real life situation of a person, group of people, organization or a social phenomenon, which is delimited in space and time. Case studies are a helpful instrument to closer exploration of the topics that are on the margins of either social or scientific interest. In general, the case study is great instrument to grasp new social phenomena and to introduce the interdisciplinary perspective. Case studies support integrated and in-depth picture of social situations that emphasize perspectives of several actors. Shortly, the case studies are stories that tell what happened, how, why, where, when and to whom. Case studies illustrate issues and factors typical for the kind of problem under examination, reflect theoretical frameworks, underscore prevailing disciplinary assumptions and principles, and reveal realistic complexities and tensions. According to one of the case study pioneers, Robert E. Stake (1995, p. 4), one of the most important questions in making a case study is “what can we learn from the case?”. Therefore, the case studies are also very useful instrument in the higher and vocational education, and they can support taking the proper action in the field of migration and transculturality.

More specifically, the **transition case study** focuses on describing the double transition challenges that undergo the migrant families with pregnant woman/young child in the household and how they tackle them, using their inner resources, gaining help from their peers and being assisted by the health care, family and social workers. The focus lies on both, migrant families and practitioners, while the main areas of need, as well as good practices are being pinpointed. Each transition case study is anchored in the specific cultural and demographic context, as well as time. The conceptual focus varies, according to the professional background of authors and topics being more closely searched.

Case studies are the best way to empower reflexivity and with it transcultural transition skills, specially the ability to act in often uncertain, unknown, ambiguous “trans-actions”. A good case presents the transcultural and social facts of a transition problem and helps readers a/ to grapple with the **multi-layered nuances** of the situation, b/ to **dive deeper into the transcultural water** (Hall, 1976, see Figure 1), c/ to **find transition potentials** beyond yet known pathways.



Figure 1: The Cultural Iceberg. Graphics Regina Klein according to the Edward T. Hall, 1976

For researching double transition, **the active engagement of all the relevant parties in the entire research process and partnership dialogue is essential**, in order to foster the co-creative processes. Therefore, an ongoing dialogue during all the phases of the case study creation, including



the research design, with both migrant families and professionals is highly recommended. Introducing the Participation Action Research (PAR) approach into the case study creation brings the possibility to get access to the currently unused transcultural knowledge and support of the transcultural competences of the transition mentors (Jentsch et Al., 2021). The case study format is well fitting for putting PAR into the practice, because in its storytelling frame, it allows to capture the (life)stories of the marginalized people about health and social care and to explore, what matters from their perspective and what could enrich predominant Early Life Family Care (ELFC) knowledge and practice. It also allows the relevant practitioners to elaborate their daily professional routine and reflect on the wider context of their work, including their own biographical context. In our experience, it often happens that the practitioners working with migrants have a migration experience themselves, therefore giving them a voice not only during the interviews but when preparing the case study elaboration, or while data analysis and preparing the teaching cases can enrich the inputs enormously.

## 2. Before you elaborate the case study

Before you begin writing, follow these guidelines to help you prepare and understand the process of a creation of a case study. If you will use the interview data, follow the existing guidelines on how to conduct a research interview, according to your discipline of study (Gubrium et Al., 2012). You can also use secondary data, like already existent research or other open resources.

### Read

*Read and examine your research documents (transcripts, memos) and your analysis thoroughly.*

- Take notes, highlight relevant facts, and underline key findings: problem, challenges, insights, and storylines.

### Focus

*Focus your analysis according to your research question and objectives.*

- Identify three to seven key findings (on transition events and phases, on resources, on gaps, on needs, on wishes, etc.)
- Why do they exist? What is their process? What is going bad, going well?
- How do they influence the target groups (migrant families, service provider?)

### Uncover

*Uncover hidden transcultural dimensions, open questions, ongoing irritations and possible solutions*

- Review your analysis, integrate discussions of your research workshops, outside research, evidence and your experience
- Dive deeper into “transcultural water”, reflect upcoming differing values and assumption (from you and the other)
- Recognize ethnic diversity and cultural pluralism: How do the cross-cultural areas of tension look like?

### Make a presentation plan

*Decide if you will compose teaching or research case study and who will be your target audience.*

- What are your key findings? What actions need to be taken in order to support transition?



### 3. Transition case study as a teaching case

The teaching case builds on the conducted research and analysis and brings the educational applications in the case study. The teaching case aspires to invite students/trainees/learners to identify possible solutions for presented problems, to formulate strategies in order to reach suggested goals or to decide about the optimal further steps in the described situations. Overall, the teaching case focuses on **training the required competences that are needed for the successful practice** in the given field. The formats of the teaching case studies vary and may combine. There can be a video with role-play, or dialogue, lecture supported by the presentation, handouts to be filled out or a game to be played together or performance art. What matters is fulfilling the didactic goal of stimulating the learning process in its target audience. The TOBP multi-media teaching cases are supposed to support higher education students, ELFC practitioners and volunteers dealing with the migration and integration (including migrants themselves) to gain competences in mentoring the double transition (in family life and socio-spatial) of migrants (TOBP 2021a, TOBP 2021b).

Traditionally used in business studies and management training, case studies play an important role in practice-focused, problem-based and/or research-based education and training material. With the examination of specific cases, learners are given the opportunity to analyse their own professional issues through the trials, tribulations, experiences, and research findings of others. Teaching cases reconsider the analysed events or problems so that students/trainees experience the complexities, ambiguities and uncertainties, confronted by the original participants in the case. As the practitioners working with migrant families “inhabit” the case, they step into the shoes of the actors, teasing out key components of the real messiness of contradictory, complicated and complex situation of a migrant family.

*Teaching cases invite students/trainees/learners to:*

- distinguish pertinent from peripheral information
- identify the problem hand in and understand its context
- formulate strategies and recommendations for action
- make decisions and transcend obstacles for implementation
- look “out of the box” and transcend beyond current knowledge
- think and act critically and with ethical concerns.

A major advantage of teaching/learning with case studies is that the students/trainees/learners are actively engaged in figuring out the principles by abstracting from the examples. They are forcing of perspective – exchange and perspective adoption, while stepping into the shoes of the stories’ protagonists.

We advise you to use simple accessible tools to develop the cases. You may create **audio case**, using parts of recordings of the interviews you realized, in case the informed consent for the interview allows you such use. Alternatively, you may prepare **short video** simulation of the real-life situation, using volunteers (working-life partner participation highly recommended). In case you have more developed digital skills, you may create a short animation, simulation game, etc. Please, keep in mind the **personal data security** while producing the cases. Do not use real names and any other personal data unless you have explicit and written consent to do so! This especially concerns using the research



interview audio and video recording. You may put short note about the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) awareness and sensitivity at the beginning or at the end of the multi-media teaching case, stating that the material does not contain any personal data unless the person explicitly agreed upon using them.

## **Components of the transition teaching case**

### **1. Introduction**

Introduce shortly the situation (of a migrant family, of interaction between a migrant and ELFC worker, of public space situation a migrant finds herself in etc.), visual or oral, according to used media and characters taking part in the situation.

### **2. Transition phase definition**

Define the transition phase to focus on (Jentsch et Al., 2021), within the context of the concrete situation that is presented (no overall transition competence profile explanation needed at this point).

### **3. Presenting the problem**

Present the problem by the form of role-play, dialogue, explanation etc.

### **4. Explaining learning goal**

Explain simple learning goal (understanding different perspectives, learning how to communicate sensitively and with respect in the unknown context, getting know the tools how to eliminate the language barrier, develop the competence to ask for assistance effectively and with dignity etc.) that is thematically relevant to the transition phase being presented in the teaching case.

### **5. Task**

Give simple task to the audience in order to try to reach the learning goal. This part may take different forms, from short test, following working sheet to be filled in and discussed with peers, watching two alternative endings of the mini-story and evaluating them according the set of given questions. Please, keep in mind that the teaching-cases should be self-driven, therefore formulate the task that no human force is necessarily needed for the final reflection!

### **6. End**

At the end you should summarize what was presented, for what purpose and what was the audience supposed to take out of watching and working with the teaching case.



## CHECKLIST FOR THE CASE STUDY AS A TEACHING CASE

- Connect with target audiences' prior knowledge and help build on it.
- Be presented in a real world context that could plausibly be something they would do in the discipline as a practitioner.
- Provide some structure and direction but not too much, since self-directed learning is the goal.
- Contain enough detail to make the issues clear, but with enough things left not detailed that students/trainees/learners have to make assumptions before proceeding (or explore assumptions to determine which are the best to make). Be ambiguous enough to force them to provide additional factors that influence their approach.
- Have sufficient cues to encourage students/trainees/learners to search for explanations but not so many that a lot of time is spent separating relevant and irrelevant cues. Also, too many storyline changes create unnecessary complexity that makes it unnecessarily difficult to deal with.



## 4. Transition case study as a research report

The case study as a research report brings organized and contextualized analytical narrative that focuses on **thorough presentation of the context, content of the gathered data and outcomes of the case analysis**. Overall, the case study should bring answers to the questions that stood at the beginning of the research conduct. The research report case study should clearly identify the key themes and grasp the nature of the situation or social phenomenon that is being described in a dynamic manner that ideally shows perspective of diverse relevant actors. Typically, the research report case study is being presented in a format of paper, but it can as well be presented as a multimedia (audio, or video), poster, or a newspaper article.

### Components of the transition research report

#### 1. Abstract/Executive Summary

*This section gives a very short, clear and concise overview of the entire paper.*

- Outline the purpose of the case study  
(e.g. what transition/challenges are faced by whom, why and how)
- Describe shortly the field research and design of your research (sample, method/approach)
- Outline issues and findings of the case study without specific details
- Give a short roadmap to illustrate the structure of your case study

*Here the reader should get a clear picture of the essential content of the case study.*

#### 2. Background/Context

*This section develops further the issues you have touched upon in your summary. Set the scene by answering the basic questions:*

- why was the study/case done?  
(outline your research aims/questions)
- where was it done?  
(detail the region, space (anonymised! – e.g. small town/village/centre...))
- who participated?  
(describe your sample/the participants, e.g. ELFC professionals – which profession? What expertise? Migrant families: culture/nationality)
- when was the study/case done?
- what data analysis approach was used and why?

*Here the reader should get a clear picture about the scene, where the case took place.*

#### 3. Findings /Results

*This section presents your research analysis, outlining your main findings/key themes. It is often divided into sub-sections, one for each analyzed key theme.*

- First: Give a short overview of your data-analysis approach and how you worked it out (e.g. thematic analysis, content analysis, in-depth-analysis)



- Identify three to seven key themes: transition events/phases, and corresponding issues/problems/challenges. Example of key themes: transcultural transition challenges and potentials.

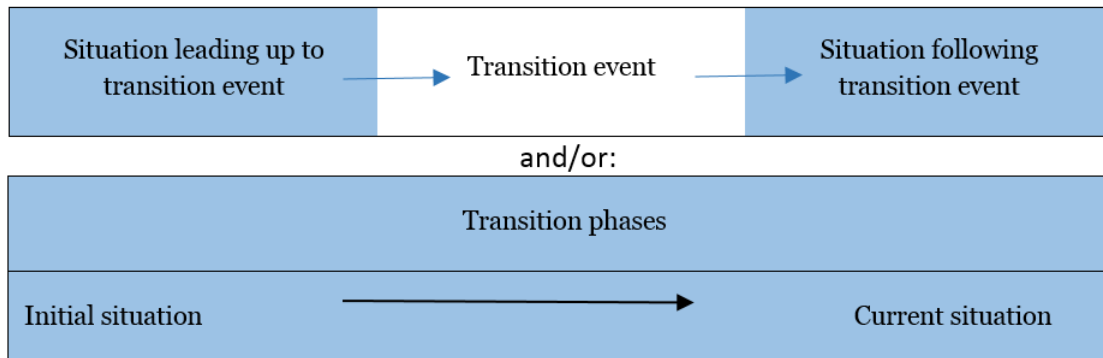


Figure 2: Analysing the transition event and phases. Graphics Regina Klein

- Each analysis of a key theme should be supported by facts given in the case (interviewee's quotations) together with relevant theory/context information/evidence. Guiding questions for the analysis: What has been going badly/well? How have migrant families been affected? What was irritating you, the interviewed persons, the research group? What implications arise for the action requirements for the transition mentor?
- Illustrate and support each key theme by evidence, which has emerged from the case (interviewee's quotations, as well as national/regional context-knowledge).
- Search for underlying issues e.g.: cross-cultural conflict may only be a symptom of the underlying problem of inadequate policies, practices and/or differing cultural values).
- The data you include, should directly reflect the challenges faced by your protagonists.

*Here the reader should get a deep insight about how and why things happened with/to whom.*

#### 4. Discussion

*This section is the "heart" of the paper – where the writer develops and argues the case.*

- Establish the main points of your findings
- Uncover hidden transcultural dimensions, open questions, ongoing irritations, possible solutions
  - Review your analysis, integrate literature (other relevant evidence) and your experience. What action requirements for transition mentors have emerged? Here, it is crucial to consider families' resources, 'self-capacity' and resilience, which may be linked to cultural contexts (e.g. different approaches to mother-child bonding).
  - Dive deeper into "transcultural water" of the Cultural Iceberg, reflect on emerging differing values and assumption (from you and the other).
  - Identify ethnic diversity and cultural pluralism: How do the cross-cultural areas of tension look like?
- Briefly outline alternative scenarios to the ones you found in your data and evaluate them in terms of advantages/disadvantages.
- Discuss alternative solutions/scenarios to these major challenges in terms of its advantages and disadvantages.
  - What could be lessons to learn about new transcultural concepts on transition mentoring to expand traditional Eurocentric knowledge for the ELFC professionals and their clients?

*Here the reader should be engaged in this multi-perspective discussion.*





## 5. Conclusion

*This section is attempting to reduce the challenges/problems surrounding the key question for the future.*

- Ask what recommendations can be made based on your research analysis and why.
- Choose which of the alternative solutions/scenarios could be adopted/further work out/trained (action and competence requirements).
- Briefly justify your choice explaining how it will solve the major problem/s/ in our case: empower needed competences, skills, resources of transcultural transition mentors in ELFC.
  - This could be written in a forceful style as this section is intended to be persuasive argued with theoretical references.
  - Here you could add questions/themes to be answered/solved/analysed, also in teaching/learning/training situations.

*Here the reader should be empowered in reflecting and implementing alternative plans of actions, respectively in teaching/learning.*

## 6. Annexes

*This section provides important documents to argue your case.*

- Attach direct quotes from the interviews. This is as a great way
  - to let the interviewees tell their own story in their own words
  - to provide further validation and credibility by including the participant's perspective
  - to put up real world scenes in order to co-create productive plans for actions or teaching cases/learning scenarios

*Here the reader should be given all the relevant additional and supportive materials in order to dive deeper into the analysed case.*



## CHECKLIST FOR THE CASE STUDY AS A RESEARCH REPORT

- Analyse the problem.
- Analyse the context of the situation.
- Identify the key variables.
- Seek to understand the dynamics of situation retrospective in its environment.
- Attempt to reduce the uncertainty surrounding the key questions for the future.
- Highlight coherent strategic options and actions requirements.
- Assess strategic options and actions requirements.
- Support strategic choices that mean moving from thinking out of the box to making a decision.
- Support implementing the plan of action.



## Resources

Gubrium, J. F., Holsein, J. A., Marvasti, A. , McKinney & Karyn D. (2012). *The Sage handbook of interview research : the complexity of the craft*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press.

Jentsch, B., Klein, R., Paulus, M., Sandner, E. & Bignami, F. (2021). *The TOBP Transcultural Competence Profile*. NZFH, SUPSI, CUAS.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. SAGE.

TOBP. (2021a). *Mental Health Promotion. Katja Raitio, R.N. Family Therapist, Senior Lecturer, JAMK*. [online] <https://youtu.be/rFBQME6I5Dw>.

TOBP (2021b). *Discussion with migrant family advisor (TOBP Project). Katerina Sidiropulu-Janku, CUAS & Gerald Steiner, Impuls*. [online] <https://youtu.be/ZtOKNYvqGz0>.

## Further resources

### Case studies in general

USC Libraries *Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: Writing a Case Study*. [online] <http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/casestudy>.

Writing@CSU Guide: Case Studies. [online] <https://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=60>

Yin, Robert K. (2000): *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*. SAGE.

### Case studies in migrant sector

British Academy for the humanities and social sciences. (2017). *Case studies “If you could do one thing...” The integration of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers*. [online] [www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/British%20Academy%20IYCDOT%20Case%20Studies.pdf](http://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/British%20Academy%20IYCDOT%20Case%20Studies.pdf).

Esterhuizen, L. *Doing case studies for the refugee sector. A DIY handbook for agencies and practitioners*. Information Centre about Asylum and refugees in the UK (ICAR).

### Case studies for teaching purposes

Golich, V. L., Boyer, M., Franko, P. & Lamy, S. (2000). *The ABC of Case Teaching. Institute for the Study of Diplomacy*. [online] <http://researchswinger.org/others/case-method-teaching.pdf>.

Norton, L. S. (2001). “Researching Your Teaching. The case for action research.” *Psychology Learning and Teaching*. 1:1, pp. 21-27.



## **TOBP transition case studies\***

Bignami, F. (2019). *Transition in Switzerland: Key thematic areas for citizenship enhancement. The TOBP Case study research paper.* SUPSI, CUAS.

Jentsch, B. (2019a). *Transition in Germany: Migrant families' first contacts with ELFC services. The TOBP Case study research paper.* DJI, CUAS.

Jentsch, B. (2019b). *Transition in Germany: Meeting the needs of migrant families in the prolonged phase of arrival. The TOBP Case study research paper.* DJI, CUAS.

Kokkinen, K. & Punna, M. (2020a). *Transition in Finland: Obstacles of family wellbeing and getting social- and health care services. The TOBP Case study research paper.* JAMK, CUAS.

Kokkinen, K. & Punna, M. (2020b). *Transition in Finland: To find a way to be a family in new country. The TOBP Case study research paper.* JAMK, CUAS.

Pula, A. & Hysenaj, A. (2020a). *Transition in Kosovo: Perspective of migrant families. The TOBP Case study research paper.* Heimerer College, CUAS.

Pula, A. & Hysenaj, A. (2020b). *Transition in Kosovo: Perspective of practitioners. The TOBP Case study research paper.* Heimerer College, CUAS.

Sidiropulu Janků, K. (2021). *Transition in Austria: Getting on a supportive spiral of integration. The TOBP Case study research paper.* CUAS.

\* All the TOBP transition case studies are accessible online at <https://tobp.eu/case-studies/>.



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

*The TOBP project was supported by Erasmus+ higher education program in years  
2018-2021 with the **Grant Agreement nr. 2018-1-AT01-KA203-039332***